

WHAT FUELS YOUR FLAME?

by Linda Ensley



Recently I attended an outdoor pre-Christmas event. Scattered around the grounds there were small fire pots that not only added to the atmosphere, but also invited those passing by to stop for just a moment and take in the warmth and experience the aroma of the burning wood.

I love the fragrance of a burning wood fire. I love the color and the way the flames move in a dancing fashion around the logs. There is something about the fire that draws me in. The movement of the flames can sometimes be mesmerizing. A fire can create a warm and cozy atmosphere that makes you want to stop and rest.

By one of the fires there were marshmallows and metal sticks, inviting those who came near to engage in the fun of roasting marshmallows and enjoying the sugary treat. Nearby this fire there was an area where hot chocolate and popcorn were being offered. Over the laughter and chatter, Christmas music could be heard in the background.

Some of the fires had died down, leaving only the cold, charred logs. Others were trying hard to hold their own, but the flames were gone and the logs glowed with only red and gold embers. The most inviting fires were the ones that steadily gave off heat, and blazing flames, filling the air with a rich aroma.

The size and longevity of a fire is measured by the type of wood used to fuel it. Softwoods will ignite quickly and thus work well as a fire starter. However, they tend to give off less heat and burn fast. Hardwoods are very dense. These woods pack more BTUs of potential heat energy. Therefore they tend to make better fuel for heating and cooking. Combining these two types of wood will give you a fire that lights quickly and provides both heat and lively flames that can last long into the night.

What kind of wood are you? Does the fire of the Holy Spirit burn in you? Can the people in your life see it and feel it when they are around you? Is it steady, or does it need constant refueling?

If you identify with the softwood, then you are quick to show others your spark. Do you come to life when the name of Jesus comes up in conversation? Do you add your testimony of His love to those of others. Do you share the trust you have in Him with those who are looking for answers?

If you identify with hardwood, then your life is probably fueled with private prayer. The more you talk to God, the closer you grow in relationship with Him and the easier it is for you to hear His voice. Your faith is deep, but it is also personal and private. It keeps you going in the hard times, but you keep it to yourself.

We need to be both softwood and hardwood. We need to come close to Christ and be refueled daily. We need to talk to Him and hear His voice, through His Word,

through others, and in our hearts. But keeping it to yourself will only warm yourself. We must share our flames with others.

The Shepherds, in Luke chapter 2, went to see the Savior. They had been set on fire by the angel's words and they had to experience this wonder in person. Once they reflected on God's fulfillment of His promise to send a Messiah, they couldn't keep the good news to themselves, but shared it with everyone they met.

Luke 2:17-20 tells us that ***“When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ... The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”***

As we celebrate Christmas, and another year draws to a close, let us recount all that the Lord has done for us. Make a list of all the ways God has blessed you this year. Has He brought new people into your life? Have they been warmed by the flame within you? Have you introduced them to the Christ Child?

