



FIND YOUR FIRE

Never let the fire go out ... When you hope, be joyful. When you suffer, be patient. When you pray, be faithful.

Share with God's people who are in need. Welcome others into your homes.

- Romans 12:11-13 (NIRV 1998)

Fire is a tool utilized only by human beings. Since the beginning of time, humans have congregated around its warmth for light, protection and company. Every other creature on the planet fears fire, but we've been given the unique ability to harness it, to use its power to improve our lives. Not only that, but poets and artists have used fire to describe the God-given spark that wakes us up in the morning and fuels our purpose and passion. Whatever the context, fire is not to be ignored.

Sisters, this is a year we will tend the fire in our hearts.

We will stop inhaling the fumes of our mistakes that tell us we are not enough, not a good enough mom, not pretty enough, not brave enough, not smart enough, not wealthy enough. Instead, we will choose to tend our God-given fire. We will love our children with an all-consuming love and use our words to warm the world. We will hold the torch up high and shed light on what matters most.

When our homes feel cold, we'll light a fire.

When a friend has lost her spark, we'll fan her flame.

When the world seems dark, we will be an ember of hope.

In order to do this we will:

LIVE EXPECTANTLY: *This is the bold reminder to think about what could go right.* We will renew our minds and choose to trust that God is good. Hope will be on the tip of our tongues. Passion will flow from our hearts and we will pray big prayers. It takes tending to keep the fire alive, so we will fan our flame by choosing to do more things that make us forget to check our phones. We will choose to play with our kids instead of crossing one more thing off our to-do list. We will be women whose passion and patience inspire the people we love most.

SURRENDER DARINGLY: *This is the bold reminder to let things go.* Fire is a tool of transformation, and often the most life-improving thing we can do is surrender. Surrender is often misunderstood as an act of weakness, when in truth it is an act of courage. What would it feel like to let yourself off the hook from living like it is all up to you? Let go of unhelpful expectations and the need to control the people and situations in your life. When we surrender, we become in tune with the swift but gentle timing of God. This year, we will take a daring step into the fire of transformation, so we can emerge truer and braver than we ever imagined we could be. We will be women who trust that God is fighting for us, so we need only to be still.

BREATHE FREELY: *This is the bold reminder to let yourself be loved.* Even though we aren't enough in our own mind, we are enough in the mind of God. There is nothing that you can do, or have done, to ruin or fracture God's love for you. There is no amount of striving or performing that will earn you more. Breathe freely and joyfully, and be refreshed. We will be women and moms who stand out because we live loved.

MAY THIS BE THE YEAR YOU FIND YOUR FIRE

EXEGESIS:

Fire has always played an important role in the kingdom of God, because it serves to guide and transform.

GUIDE. God used fire to lead his children through the desert, providing a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night in order to lead them toward the Promised Land. The fire provided light and heat during the cold desert nights, as well as protection and guidance during their travels. Additionally, fire has served as a visual symbol of God's presence. When God descended on Mount Sinai in fire, the whole mountain shook because of God's presence. Fire is a reminder that God is present and provides for us.

TRANSFORM. Fire is both all-consuming and purifying. Throughout Scripture, we see fire being used to bring about transformation, like the fire of a potter who makes useful vessels out of damp clay, or the fire of a jeweler who refines pure gold from ore. Remarkably, just like Moses witnessed in the wilderness the sight of a bush engulfed in flames, but not consumed, we see that God's transforming fire of love is a flame that doesn't cause destruction, but instead offers spiritual renewal.

Our theme verse this year comes from a letter written by Paul, addressed to followers of Jesus living in Rome. Chapter 12 is often referred to by scholars as the "chapter of transformation," as it is a charge regarding how to tend the fire in our hearts, increase our awareness of God's presence, and live well.

Paul says that to tend the fire in our hearts we might consider these actions ...

Hope Joyfully. (Live Expectantly)

Suffer Patiently. (Surrender Daringly)

Pray Faithfully. (Breathe Freely)

Share what we have and welcome others into our homes.

This year, may we be transformed by the fire of God and may our spark be renewed as never before.

**SOME WOMEN FEAR THE FIRE, OTHERS TEND THEIR GOD-GIVEN
FIRE AND USE IT TO LIGHT UP THEIR HEARTS AND THE WORLD.
LET'S BE THOSE WOMEN.**