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How can we have a faithful fire for the Lord? How does any relationship have a faithful fire, a constant kindling of the flame so that it never dies out? With intentionality, affection, tenderness, sharing deepest thoughts, listening, and understanding. It's sticking to each other no matter what the world is doing around us. I have all that from the Lord. He is faithfully stoking the fire of our relationship. He has to. He has promised to, and He doesn't break His promises. The question is, am I?

One of the ways I stoke the fire of my faithfulness to the Lord is to listen to Him... through His word. REALLY listen... not just let His words go in one ear and out the other, but taking to heart everything He says, always remembering how He has proven His love for me even though I've never done anything to deserve it. Psalm 19:7-14 helps me to understand why listening to Him is so important and powerful. Anything I do to pursue our relationship, the Lord lavishes more blessing on me. I cannot outgive Him. So... what's in it for me? Why listen to Him through His word?

Psalm 19:7-14 ~

Before I jump in to hear this passage, I want to make an observation of the overall psalm. Vs. 1-6 are all about the glory of God as seen in His creation. Vs. 1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God..." The first part of the passage is all about what we can observe. And definitely, everything I observe about the Lord, when I'm paying attention, will inspire awe.

But vs. 7 takes me deeper. It's not just about what I observe in His word. It becomes about how I'm changed by it. God's word does something for me that I could never do for myself... though I along with the rest of the world search for all the things that would already be ours if we would let His word be the life changing gift that He promises it can be.

Vs. 7-9 ~ "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean,

enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether."

The question is, do I need my soul to be revived so that my soul is refreshed and restored, and not broken? The law... the whole of God's word, perfect and complete without a single blemish, is what brings restoration to my soul no matter how hard the circumstances are.

Do I need wisdom? For sure! I am simple minded without it, always making wrong choices based on feelings that take me in all kinds of crazy, destructive directions if I don't have wisdom. God's testimony from His word, His witness of what is sure and faithful, will generously take my simple mind and make it wise.

Do I need joy in my heart? Absolutely! My heart is where my feelings, desires, motives, and choices are made. The joy God offers me through obedience to His righteous precepts and revealing of His will for me is far greater and lasting than any kind of joy the world offers. His joy changes my heart so that nothing can steal my joy. The world's joy is based on circumstances all lining up perfectly. When does that ever happen consistently? The world is selling a lie. God is freely giving the truth.

Do I need my eyes to be enlightened so that I can truly understand the truth? If I'm being honest, sometimes I don't want that. But ignoring what's true only delays what I need to face, and not facing things makes them worse. God offers me a greater understanding through obedience to His commands. His commands are pure and holy. He will never take me down a path that ruins me. Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, His commands will light my path and lead me to safety.

Fearing or being in awe of anything other than the Lord as I find in His word will taint my heart. But fearing Him, worshiping and trusting Him, will always be pure and clean and forever... because He is forever. His faithfulness is forever. The absolute truth of His word is forever.

His judgments, His rulings as found in His word are ALL righteous. I never have to worry that I'm coming before a Judge who has a hidden agenda or a desire to make an example of me by being too harsh with His judgment. Truly, He is the most gracious and merciful Judge. What other judge would have his son pay my debt with his own life? It doesn't matter how innocent I want to believe I am. I was born with the disease of sin running through my veins. This merciful Judge sent His Son to not just free me from that disease, but also revive my soul, give me wisdom, put joy in my heart, enlighten my eyes so that they shine with a brightness that could only come from the true light of the world.

Vs. 10 ~ "More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."

What kind of joy does the world offer? Gratifying the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and pride of life... what looks good, feels good, and shows me off... wealth and indulgent pleasure... money and honey. They don't last. "The grass withers, the flower fades (as well as

money and honey), but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

O Lord, it's YOUR word that satisfies my soul and lasts forever. Please help me so that I don't just observe it, or even be in awe of it... help me also to embrace it, to be changed by it. Let Your living and active word do all that it's meant to do for my heart and mind and soul.

Vs. 11-13 ~ "Moreover, by them is Your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression."

O Lord, You warn me through Your word. You shine the truth on me so that I can avoid the traps that take me to SELF sabotage. And then You greatly reward me for my obedience! What part of this don't I want??? O Lord, please help to know Your word better so that I can have the wisdom and understanding to keep following Your paths of steadfast love and faithfulness (Psalm 27:10).

Jeremiah 17:9 says that my heart is deceitful above all things. By my own understanding I can't discern right from wrong. Maybe I can on some things, but not on A LOT of things. How often do I NOT know the right answer when making a decision? I have so many hidden faults, I can't even begin to know them all. But because of Jesus, You've declared me innocent... and now You are doing in me what You've declared over me. I would be crazy to go anywhere else but to You!!!

"Keep me back from presumptuous sins." This means, "Hold me back from blatantly sinning against You because of my pride." O Lord, pride is the root of all evil. It is both arrogance and shame... thinking I AM all that or thinking I SHOULD BE all that. Both arrogance and shame drive me away from You. Both make me ignore Your word. Please help me to be humble before You so that neither arrogance nor shame rule my spirit.

The only way I can be innocent and blameless before You is if You help me. I praise You for Your mercy and patience in helping me to change from one degree of glory to the next.

Vs. 14 ~ "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer."

Lord, the only opinion that matters is Yours. Not even my opinion matters more than Yours. So I pray that what comes out of my mouth, which also comes from my heart, will be pleasing to You. I pray that the things I let my mind dwell on will be pleasing to You. Help me to dwell on the things that are "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise" (Philippians 4:8). Your word is all these things. In doing this, You reward me with Your blessings that are far greater than the temporary pleasures of life.

O Lord, You are my rock. With You, I can stand firm in faith and not be driven to self

sabotage. You are my Redeemer. You have "delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to the Kingdom of Your beloved Son" (Colossians 1:14). You are my greatest reward. You reward me simply for putting my faith in You. Your word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, does all the rest of the work in me to revive my soul, make me wise, bring joy to my heart, and enlighten my eyes. Let me grow in faith and awe for You. You endure forever. Praise You for Your word.

*Blessings,
Jonna*