

Fire Extinguishers

2 Timothy 1:5-7

Introduction

- As you set out toward your goals for the upcoming year, you might be filled with excitement and optimism about what you might accomplish. Like a fire within you, your passion and enthusiasm for growth usually starts out big. But often, sadly, that zeal dwindles and fades with time.
- Like with all fires, we can either stoke the flame or extinguish it. Paul once encouraged the young evangelist Timothy to "*fan into flame the gift of God*" he had within him (2 Tim. 1:5-6). The more we stay "hot" for the Lord, the less likely we'll become "lukewarm" or even "cold" (Rev. 3:15-16).
- As we prepare for another year of service to the Lord, let's look at four ways we can extinguish our zeal and enthusiasm for the Lord. And we'll take our inspiration from the helpful acronym for using a fire extinguisher — P.A.S.S.:
 - P-ull the pin
 - A-im at the fire
 - S-queeze the handle
 - S-weep side-to-side

Pull the Pin of **Presumption**

- We might say, "I'm sure I know all I need to know."
- Presumption attacks our thinking and stand for the truth. We feel like there's nothing more to learn, and reading the Bible loses its appeal.
- But even Jesus learned from his suffering (Heb. 5:8). As God in human form, Jesus became more for us — a more perfect mediator — through his experience on the cross.
- Stay curious about God's Word, like those Bereans who searched the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:10-11). Plant yourself beside the waters and soak your heart daily in the life-giving stream of truth (Psalm 1:2-3).

Take Aim With **Anxiety**

- We might say, "I'm afraid of what might happen."
- Anxiety attacks our affections and priorities. As much as we might say we trust in God, fear immobilizes us and leaves us ineffective.
- But even Jesus let his love for God and humanity conquer his fear (Matt. 26:36-46). His love and sacrifice give us the confidence to rise above fear (1 John 4:18-19).
- Worry clouds our true focus on God's kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33-34). Let tomorrow worry about itself, and instead focus on what you can control today.

Squeeze the Handle of **Selfishness**

- We might say, "I'd rather be comfortable than get involved."
- Selfishness attacks our behavior and good deeds. We've developed a comfortable routine and don't want to be bothered with taking action for Jesus.
- Jesus accomplished God's plan, becoming a selfless sacrifice (John 17:1-5). It wasn't easy or comfortable for Jesus to obey God completely, but that's the point!
- Serving yourself leads to ruin in judgment and the moment of trial (Matt. 7:17-27). Bearing good fruit, doing the Father's will, and obeying Jesus' words are the only way to health and stability.

Sweep Side-to-Side With **Segregation**

- We might say, "I'm all alone, and no one cares."
- Segregation attacks our relationships with the church and the lost. We pull away, isolate ourselves, and feel like we're the victims.
- Jesus draws all to himself (John 12:32). There's not a person you've ever met who Jesus hasn't died for, in this church and throughout the world.
- We welcome each other as Christ welcomed us and draw closer together in harmony (Rom. 15:1-7). We connect with each other, share our lives with each other, and bear each other's burdens as a family (Eph. 5:32).

Conclusion

- Our little ones know the old song so well, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine! ... Don't let Satan *whoosh* it out!"
- Presumption, anxiety, selfishness, and segregation can all extinguish our zeal for discipleship. But whatever excitement and enthusiasm you start with in this new year, let's tend to the fire and be sure to fan the flame. Take a stand for truth, watch out for your heart, take action for Jesus, and build closer bonds with the community of the Lord's people!
- "*The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace*" (Num. 6:24-26).