



## **Fan the Flame**

*by Priscilla Shirer*

*This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you...*

*2 Timothy 1:6*

My sons watched their uncle walk back and forth from the bricked fire pit to the wooded yard beyond it, gathering branches to put in the hollowed quarry.

*“What next, Uncle Anthony?”*

His eager nephews wondered with genuine curiosity how they, too, could get involved in this masculine display of testosterone. Fire making. Man’s mastery over the elements.

This fire would not blossom with the flick of a switch. This outdoor flame had to be crafted and carefully calculated, manipulated and scrupulously tended. This fire wasn’t fueled by propane gas. It would not be automatic or coincidental. It would be the outcome of hard work. This was *that kind* of fire. The kind that Boy Scouts brag about and grown men quietly revel in. The kind that made Tom Hanks’s character in *Cast Away* beat his chest in a frantic response of bravado, when raw kindling finally responded to his long attempts to make it roar.

This kind of fire takes work . . . if it’s ever to reach its full potential, that is.

The Apostle Paul – mentor, father figure, kind pastor – spoke to a young, eager apprentice nearly 2,000 years ago and whispered a challenge that should still echo in the ears of anyone who dares live a life robustly alit for God...

*“Fan the flame.”*

Ah! This kind of fire takes work.

It's a holy fire, given and entrusted to each unique soul as a gift from God. It is His own Spirit and the fruits and gifts that He has come to give. And yet, this flame, this gift will wane if it is not carefully tended, if it is not . . . fanned.

He will not be fully responsible to maintain it. He has given *us* the privilege to partner *with* Him in that holy task. Our deliberate and well thought-out plans are required. If this ember is to burst into full flame, *we* are responsible to do the fanning. We must put some skin in the game, some sweat equity into the goal.

So as we begin another new year, don't forget that God's work in you requires your work! Be intentional in the coming days about how you will steward the gifts, opportunities, and desires God has given you.

Lazy, apathetic Christianity just won't do. *Fan The Flame!*