

*"Behold, I am going to kindle a fire in you, and it will consume every green tree in you, as well as every dry tree; the blazing flame will not go out and the entire surface from south to north will be scorched by it. And all mankind will see that I, the Lord, have kindled it; it will not go out."* Ezekiel 20:47–48

## 1. The Dry Tree Controlled Burns

- Controlled burns are done with intentionality.
- We walk through the process, ensuring it is done properly.
- A controlled burn improves the soil, removes debris, and allows for rejuvenation.
- Walking with God requires transformation, and transformation can be a painful process.
- In the verse, the green trees represent the closed doors of that year, a career, and God's protection.

### Neglecting the fire

- There is a difference between a controlled burn and a forest fire.
- Neglecting the fire allows it to grow out of hand and out of order.

*"But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."* 1 Corinthians 14:40

- Neglecting the fire is reckless.

Did you know being reckless in behavior can be a crime?

RCW 46.61.500 — Reckless Driving: Any person who drives any vehicle in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property is guilty of reckless driving.

- When we do not take responsibility for our lives, we become reckless and disregard the safety of those around us, especially those closest to us.
- The closer we are to fire, the hotter it is. The fire affects what is closest to it the most.
- We can be guilty of reckless burning, regardless of our intent.
- Burning with the fire and favor of God requires intentionality.

### What are our intentions?"

*"Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet, And all your ways will be established."* Proverbs 4:25–26 NASB

- We must look straight ahead and stay focused. As men, we are to be providers.  
A provider has proactive vision. We are to look ahead, see an obstacle, and adjust to protect those around us.
- We must be proactive in our approach to serving God and His people.
- There is a difference between the fire of God and our avoidance of His warnings.
- The way we choose to respond to trials will dictate how fruitful the outcome will be.
- We can either come out the other side producing more fruit, or we can come out as a pile of ashes, having lost everything.

## 2. The Green Tree

Sometimes there needs to be a stripping away of the things in our lives that we think are flourishing and that we have become comfortable with, in order to make room for true growth.





- We may draw comfort from the shade of that tree, and it may look the same to us from the outside as the other tree. There are sometimes good things that we think are of God, but are not.

*"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" Matthew 7:11*

- He wants us to have good things, not take them from us.
- Being burned by God is ultimately a good thing, but it requires maturity and obedience because it demands faith.
- We often associate the fire of God with suffering, but sometimes it is simply because our lives are out of order, and redirection can be painful.
- Serving God does not mean we will not encounter trials.
- Obedience, with the fire of God, is the best way.
- There are things that are green and flourishing, but if our lives are not laid down in surrender to God, it will be painful for nothing.
- When encountering trials, do we intentionally lean in and face them, or do we neglect them?

*"All the ways of a person are clean in his own sight, But the Lord examines the motives. Commit your works to the Lord, And your plans will be established." Proverbs 16:2–3 NASB*

**God sees our intentions.**

**How do we identify the green trees?**

- Others making us aware.
- Deeper deliverance.

When removing both dry and green trees, the process can be painful. However, green trees can be harder to identify, and sometimes it takes the help of someone pointing them out from the outside. Fire is coming either way, but when we walk through it in obedience, there is favor.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Matthew 23:27–28 NKJV*

**Jesus always stressed the importance of the heart.**

**Physical Appearance:**

Looks, clothing, and style may seem good from the outside, but what is the true motive and intention of the heart?

**Alcohol:**

- For many, alcohol is an obvious dry tree. But when it becomes a green tree, it is even more dangerous because we grow comfortable with it. We agree with it, and it blurs our vision to the danger.
- Alcohol can feel like shade — it may seem to "work" for a time, but it only takes one strong wind for everything to come crashing down.
- What is our intention with alcohol? God has revealed opportunities for growth to some of us, yet we may hesitate to step out because we know the process will be painful.

**NOTES**



- Removal is painful, but it is better than the alternative.
- It will be even more painful if we ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- If we must suffer, let us suffer in a way that honors Him.

### 3. Pursuing God

- Our closeness to God determines the depth of our consecration.
- People often wonder how someone “walked away” from God. The truth is, they simply stopped walking with Him. He never moved — we did.
- Our mission is to lead people to encounter God daily.
- Walking with God is not accidental. It requires intentionality.

### Fire Breaks

- There are over 160 miles of fire breaks on base, and the base experiences over 100 fires each year.
- What would the outcome be without proper preparation?
- They know fires are inevitable. But putting in the work to create these fire breaks provides protection from something that cannot be avoided.
- Digging those breaks was probably not easy. The process may have been painful, but it was for their good.

### If We Obey God

- There comes a point where the fire can only come so far.
- Think of addiction. It may have run in the family for generations — until it ran into us. We can decide that it stops here. We will take the steps and allow Jesus to bring ultimate healing.
- We want to be consumed by the fire of God.

*"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28–29*

- When something is exposed to fire, it changes whatever it touches.
- The closer we get to Him, the more we should be affected by His presence. And if God truly is an all-consuming fire, then when we intentionally draw near, His fire will burn away the clutter in our lives.

*"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:7*

### Upper Room Lesson

- That exact tree was right outside our window in the Upper Room.
- It could have taken what we love most. The closest things to us—the tree we were comforted by in its shade and the hammock—were, in reality, only a matter of time away from taking what mattered most.
- We see that the same tree we thought was flourishing was actually threatening what we cared about most.
- We could have neglected it and allowed it to affect our secret place.
- Ultimately, we said yes to the process, but we had to pay the price for the tree to be removed.
- This process, although painful, was for our good. We would not have even been made aware of it unless another man pointed it out to us.
- Because we were intentional and wanted to prepare the trees, we were ultimately made aware of the condition of the dead tree.



## Call to Surrender

- What are the green trees in our lives that need to be surrendered?
- We are here to give a warning to take the step toward God. Allow Him to refine us before we are faced with a process that is far worse.
- God gives us the opportunity of surrender. We could have chosen not to cut it down.

There is a difference between:

1. Intentionally stepping towards God and placing ourselves in positions that may be difficult, such as the pruning of dry trees.
2. Facing fiery trials that are painful because they are harming us and must be completely removed.