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**AIM FOR THE
HIGHEST**

inspiration for your

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KEEPING SPIRITUALLY WARM

Winters in the Midwest can get pretty cold! When the Little Brown Church was completed in 1864 the folks in this area didn't have electric heaters or natural gas piped directly their homes equipped with automatic, thermostat-regulated heating systems. In 1864 it took a lot more work to stay warm during an Iowa winter. Most people had only one way to keep a house warm...and that was to build and tend a fire. Life during winter revolved around tending fire, because fire was key to surviving the cold. Tending a winter fire was a lot of work. It began during the warm seasons, because you had to think and plan ahead for the winter fire. So you were cutting down trees long before the first flurries, chopping them into logs, and figuring out ways to keep them secure and dry. So every day, besides the rest of life's demands, you split wood, restocked the fireside, kept the fire fed, and cleaned out ashes. The fire was the first thing you tended in the morning and the last thing you tended at night. Tending the fire was a lot of work, but it was necessary work because fire was key to survival...to stay alive!

In Matthew's gospel Jesus talks about a different kind of cold. He is talking about the last days where he says, "*Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.*" (Matthew 24:12). Today's spiritual climate is more like Iowa in February than Miami in July! The spiritual temperature is dangerously low and if we are not careful, our love, just like Jesus said, will grow cold. The key to surviving the spiritual polar climate we live in is fire. We've got to stay spiritually warm and it takes a lot of work. You don't just wing it in the winter. You've got to dress for the weather and keep your fire burning, which requires preparation and maintenance. The fire is your faith-filled love for God...and the fire is fed through spending time in the Word of God and fervent prayer. Just like folks in the 1800's who, in order to keep warm had to chop down trees, split logs, and protect them from the elements, it takes hard work to keep spiritually warm.

Keeping our spiritual fire burning in a cold spiritual climate needs to be forefront on our minds, no matter what else we are doing. If we don't fuel the fire, it will go out. If the fire goes out, the temperature in our souls drops quickly and it takes a lot more work to reheat us.

Spiritual cold is a stealthy killer. It lulls people to sleep and they lose consciousness not realizing their peril. That's why our lives must revolve around tending the fire, because the fire is key to surviving the cold. And the fire should be the first thing we tend in the morning and the last we tend at night.