

The Fires in our Lives – by Lorelei Pepe

It was a bitter cold evening on January 30, 2019 and I was glad to be sitting in my cozy easy chair with a blanket on my lap, watching television in my living room. I was dozing on and off when I awoke to see reflections in my TV of bright flashes of orange light. When I turned around to check it out in my windows behind me, I saw the sky was turning black. The wild winds were carrying orange fireballs and embers through the sky!

I was frightened as I had no idea what was going on. I wondered where was the fire? I was hoping none of these fireballs would land in one of the many huge old trees out front and start a fire. Not long after, I heard the blasting of sirens both police and fire engines. Then there was a news flash on the television and the newscasters were reporting from a fire at the Marcal Paper Factory, a few miles away from me. The images they showed were horrifying as the fire looked like a huge roaring inferno and I watched as the huge iconic Marcal Sign that was a landmark for so long, went down in flames!

Other buildings also collapsed as this was a huge complex covering a few blocks. The gusting winds were blowing these embers throughout the neighborhood and some local homes caught fire too. The iced over fire hydrants complicated the process and the firemen had to pump water from the nearby river on Route 80. It became a nightmare due to the 30 degree temperature and over 400 firefighters (mostly volunteers) from 5 counties endured through the night into the next morning battling this blaze.

This was hard for me to comprehend as I stood motionless staring at the TV and looking out my window. I started to pray for everyone, all workers, homeowners and myself to be safe. It was a long night and I could not sleep well as I thought of these brave firefighters who toiled all night long. Thank God, the fire was finally put out, and no one was injured or killed. What a miracle! God listens for sure. That was pretty amazing. I would like to add that although everything was destroyed, two years later they are up and running again.

This made me think of how God used fire to impact the life of Moses with the burning bush. The story, told in the book of Exodus in the Bible tells us how Moses was supposed to go on a mission back to Egypt and lead his people out of bondage. Moses was reluctant as this was an incredibly difficult task. He did not want to do this. But I think God shocked him when he saw the burning bush and heard the voice of God. He then realized how powerful a moment this was and that God chose him to rescue the nation of Israel.

I don't think God uses such phenomenal demonstrations for most of us, but when He wants to get our attention He does speak to us sometimes through His words in the Bible, or through other people. I think we have to pay attention and listen, although at times it can be painful, it can be a great lesson in life.

I remember going through another car accident (I have been in 3 or 4) and got hit from behind and pushed into another car. I ended up with a neck injury and went to see a

chiropractor. He not only helped me with my neck and back, he helped me with myself esteem. I was overweight and had high blood pressure and did not feel good about myself, but said this to no one. But God knew this as this man also taught me about nutrition. He made a big difference in my life. God brings the right people to us even when we don't realize it. This is why I trust in God so much and count on Him in every situation.

I have come to depend on God in every area of my life. I open up honestly and just talk to Him, mediate on His word, read the Bible and pray. I find when I immerse myself in the Bible I can actually get "lost" and see other things and situations differently. God helps me when friend or family cannot.

So, each day I will continually give Him my cares, burdens and worries and I look to Him and in Him find my peace.

**1 Chronicles 16:11 – “Look to the Lord and His strength,
see HIS face always.”**