Smoking Out the Enemy
1. The Altar of Incense was at the center in the Holy Place, suggesting that prayer is an integral part of maintaining a close relationship with our God.
2. The Hebrew word for incense is connected with the idea of “fumigation in a close place and perhaps thus driving out the occupants.”¹
3. Just as there can be no burning of incense without fire, there can be no transforming prayer without the Holy Spirit. Prayer is an act of worship that transforms us as we surrender ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. Matthew 4 reveals the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ, to provide not only strength in our weakness and victory over the enemy of our souls, but also empowerment for ministry.
5. In order for something to burst into flame there must be **fuel**, **oxygen**, **heat** and an **ignition point**; the ignition point being that moment of **transformation** when these three things come together at the same place, at the same time and in just the right way.
6. For our purposes, the **fuel** is our passion and desire for God. The **oxygen** is the breath of God.
7. The **heat** is the time we spend in God’s Presence through prayer.
8. Here, then, is our formula for transforming power:

DESIRE + PRAYER + BREATH OF GOD = HOLY SPIRIT FIRE
9. The transforming power of the Holy Spirit does not show up on its own. We must **position** ourselves to receive it. Presenting the whole of ourselves to God is an act of **worship** which takes place when we **pray**.
11. Smoke occurs when there is not enough oxygen to burn the fuel completely.
12. Why pray? Because we need more exposure to the Presence of God to burn cleaner and hotter for Him.
13. As long as there is smoke, we have not had enough exposure to the breath of God to burn up everything that is not like Him.
14. Remember, the ingredients of the incense were crushed and ground into powder, which symbolically indicates the personal processing we go through when we pray. This type of incense is sprinkled over burning coals and produces intense smells but only for a short time.
15. Prayer is not a “one and done” exercise in the life of a true God seeker.
16. Our responsibility is to place ourselves before God in prayer, allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work in us, whether it is to change and transform, to consume, or to purify. When we pray we are smoking out the enemy and the strongholds he has established in our lives.