

Cold is not a thing. Heat, on the other hand, is a measurable thing – it is a quantity of energy. Cold is really only the absence of heat. To help understand this, you can think of it like light and dark. When you open the door to a dark closet, the light from outside enters the closet. The opposite does not happen - **the darkness doesn't spill out** and darken the room. I am pretty sure that theoretically, heat can infinitely be added to something...The Earth's core is about 6000°F, a bolt of lightning can reach 11,000°F, our sun's outer corona can reach 2 million degrees F, and the core of a supernova star is thought to be something like 100 billion degrees Fahrenheit. But you can only take away from something the amount of heat that is there – until there is none left. This **temperature where there is no heat is called "absolute zero."** Nothing can get any "colder" than that. I imagine that temperature was the low and the high and the average before God spoke some energy into existence.

*Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1:3-4)*

And even after those ancient days of creation, we are assured that God will provide us with the energy to keep us from freezing:

*He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes. He casts forth His ice as fragments; Who can stand before His cold? **He sends forth His word and melts them;** He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow. (Psalms 147:15-18)*

I recently heard a speaker judging people who like to experience cold weather. The comment was something like, "Those people are just showing off, trying to look tough." Even though I am one of those people, I did not take [offense](#). I get it. Most people don't like to be cold. I was not offended, but I [was](#) instigated to consider why I like it. A couple of days later, **I was enjoying the cold, showing off, trying to look tough...** and I figured out how it is that I am able to like cold temperatures.

I regularly watch the weather forecast for morning conditions that may produce a good sunrise. There is a local spot here where a short hike brings me to a beautiful vantage point. I can even see the Boston skyline on the horizon about 35 miles away. Not long after hearing the speaker's comment I mentioned above, I saw that the sky would be clear on a Sunday morning and the temperature was to be in the single digits so, I set my alarm. Sure enough, in the pre-dawn hours, the thermometer read 1.5°F (-17°C.) I put on my Smartwool socks, long underwear, fleece pants and sweater, heavy canvas pants over the fleece, my Northface liner and shell, my trusty Sorel winter boots, a neck warmer, ski gloves, a hat, and I slid a thermal flask of hot coffee into my jacket. I headed out. It was cold up there... I felt it. Hiking was great, with the snow squeaking like Styrofoam and the otherwise quiet forest. I would stop occasionally and **listen to the quiet and feel the biting on my cheeks**. Getting to the top of the cliff, I cleared the snow off the tree root I usually sit on and settled in to wait for the show. I was blessed with a beautiful sunrise and a stimulating conversation with God. I was out in that weather for a bit more than an hour. The 30 minutes or so of sitting ended with me feeling discomfort in my fingers... But then, hiking back to the car, the numbness and pain subsided. It was on my hike back that I realized why – or [How](#) – I enjoyed it.

There are other things that some of us humans willingly do that are uncomfortable, frightening, even painful. We look forward to them and sometimes even pay money for them. I am thinking of things like spicy food, saunas, roller coasters, deep tissue massage, acupuncture, even pregnancy... **The discomfort is knowingly temporary**. I knew that morning that I had only a short trip back to my warm house. I am certain that the enjoyment of that cold morning would have evaporated if I had not been so well dressed, or if I had gotten lost

in the forest. A simple element of unpreparedness, uncertainty, or fear would have changed everything. There have been times in this life when I have been unprepared and felt uncertainty and fear. I truly suffered through those instances. I was not capable of enjoying them because of my lack of faith in that moment. But **our faith needs to be unwavering and relentless**. We've been given a promise and we can lean on that.

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)*

This concept of seeing the temporary nature of a situation and having the confidence of knowing how and when it will end is **the tool that we unconsciously use to persevere** through some level of discomfort. It may be why I like to put cayenne pepper on my food. I can let my chiropractor inflict pain on my deep muscles. My brother regularly enters a 150°F sauna. And I am convinced that is what James was suggesting at the beginning of his letter.

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that **the testing of your faith produces endurance**. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)*

Do you think that God's spirit behaves a little like heat? God is the source and is so strong that we mortals cannot even look upon the face of God and live. (Exodus 33:20) Just as the energy of the sun is stored in trees and can be released later in the form of fire, **can we store some of God's spirit in us and release it later** – maybe in the form of love toward a neighbor?

*"At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Matthew 24:10-13)*

Surely, the absence of God is like a coldness that cannot be endured for long. Just before Jesus was given over to be crucified, He foretold that Peter would deny knowing Him. This account is recorded in all four of the gospels, Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. In these stories, Peter is asked if he knows Jesus, and he denies it. This denial could only be committed in the absence of God's spirit, what was surely a cold state of being. Three of the four gospel writers decided to include the detail that **Peter was warming himself by a fire**. Was he feeling the coldness of not having God's spirit at the time?

*The slave-girl therefore who kept the door \*said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He \*said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. (John 18:17-18)*

This world can be a really cold, hard thing to deal with, but with confidence that it is temporary, the promise of God's mercy, and the heat of His spirit, we have the ability to enjoy it!

*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)*

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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