

# The Olympic Flame Went Out

Harley Sheffield gained celebrity status through an unusual mishap.

He was part of the 15,000-mile relay that carried the Olympic torch to the 100<sup>th</sup> gathering of the Games in Atlanta. His section of the relay went over the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in Washington on May 7, 1996.

While carrying the flame in a special stand on his bicycle, the rear tire blew out. Sheffield lost control of his bike, and the Olympic flame went out. People gasped in disbelief, but the attenders of the torch knew exactly what to do.

They simply reached into the van that accompanied the traveling torch, pulled out a new torch and lighted it from the “mother flame” that always stays in the van. The procession continued, and Sheffield earned a spot on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno.

What occurred on that Washington bridge happens all of the time in our Christian pilgrimage. We stumble, and the flame of spiritual zeal is doused. We stare at the extinguished torch and wonder if we can ever again burn with spiritual passion.

But here’s the good news ...

When we turn in repentance of our sins, we find that the Holy Spirit has been with us all of the time, and He carries the “mother flame” that can never go out.

Our zeal can be reignited, and the standard of Christ – the light of His love and redemption – can burn brightly in our lives.

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:6-7 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter

