

## Part 2: Feel the Passion...for God!

### *I Really Love the Lord!*

**Text:**

**Ecclesiastes 10:7 (The Message)** - Seize life!

**Ephesians 3:14-19 (NKJV)** - "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [15] from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, [16] that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, [17] that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, [18] may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, [19] to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

- A. Paul prayed that the members of the church at Ephesus might be consumed with a passion for Christ.
1. Speaking of passion, I love the Psalms. They are so full of passion! Notice this psalm written by David, Israel's worshipping shepherd and king.
    - a. **Psalms 27:1-6 (NKJV)** - "The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? [2] When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. [3] Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I will be confident. [4] One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. [5] For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His

tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. [6]  
And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around  
me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will  
sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.”

2. The word “passion” is a Latin word that actually means *suffering*.
  - a. Over time, people have forgotten its meaning and now think of it as a romantic interest or a strong feeling about something. But it's much more than that. The true definition is: to want something so badly, it hurts.
  - b. People who **really** want something will not be denied. They will continue believing long after others have quit and given up.
3. People with passion have breakthroughs—whether it concerns their finances, family, ministry, or spiritual issues.
4. *Passion moves God*. I believe He is urging us to live with passion this year!
5. You may have more passion than you realize. Just let something go wrong and—whoa!! You realize that you really **do** have passion!
6. **Joke:** “The Broke Blonde”

This blonde was seriously broke **and** desperate. After knocking loudly on a doctor's front door, she confessed how badly she needed money and that she would be willing to work for it. The doctor asked if she would be willing to paint his porch. If so, he would give her \$50 for the paint job. The blonde agreed that would be fine. But the doctor's wife said the blonde must be really dumb to consider such a big job for only \$50. “Does she realize that the porch goes all the way around the house?” “I guess so,” the doctor replied.

A few minutes later, the blonde knocked on the door. “All done,” she said, “and by the way, it's not a porch; it's a Ferrari.”

B. We can have passion for many things. But the greatest should be reserved for God!

1. We have allowed society to affect our feelings about what's really important. It's okay to have passion about **anything** but Him!
2. Go to Amazon.com and you'll find hundreds of book titles using the word 'passion.'
  - a. Some of the titles are: *A Passion for Birds, A Passion for Books, A Passion for Cactus, A Passion for Chocolate* (that one is quite understandable), *A Passion for Fashion, ... for Fishing, ... for Flying, ... for Gardening, ... Golf, ... Hunting, etc.*
  - b. You can find, *A Passion for Mushrooms, A Passion for Needlepoint, ... Pasta ... Ponies.*
  - c. There's even titles like, *A Passion for Potatoes ... for Roses, ...for Shoes, and—A Passion for Steam.*
3. In our American culture, it's okay to be passionate about anything—except your faith or relationship with God.
  - a. If I attend a rock concert, a political rally or baseball game, I can shout until I lose my voice because it's alright to get excited there!
  - b. If my team loses, I'm even permitted to cry—and nobody thinks it's a big deal. If my team wins, I can jump up and down, dance, and wave my hands in the air. And the people will say, "He's a real fan!" But if I do that in church, people say, "He's a religious fanatic! That guy needs help!"
  - c. Just don't get too emotional about your faith. Anything else is alright—but not about God.
  - d. But who has done the most for us? ... steam? ... chocolate? ... our team? ... our political party or candidate?
  - e. Who woke us up this morning in our right mind? ... needlepoint? Who constantly watches over us? ... Jayz? ... Linkin Park?

- f. Who do we call when there's no way out and no one to turn to? ... the Seahawks? ... the Broncos?
    - g. David said in **Psalm 120:1 (NKJV)** - "In my distress I cried to the LORD, And He heard me."
  - 4. All these other things are fun and entertaining. But they can't save you when you've lost your way or heal you when you're sick. Neither can they deliver someone who's strung out on drugs or alcohol, heal their broken heart, or restore their broken marriage.
- C. Because David had such passion for God, he attained spiritual dimensions that would otherwise have been impossible.
  - 1. David had such tremendous passion to know God, it hurt!
  - 2. **Psalm 27:4 (NKJV)** - "One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple."
  - 3. Technically, some of David's actions would have demanded the death penalty—if not directly by God, then by the nation of Israel.
  - 4. The only explanation for God allowing David to make such offenses is to acknowledge that God was moved by his passion.
  - 5. Some of the most serious penalties for breaking the law were associated with Israel's form of worship and God's House.
    - a. God destroyed two of Aaron's sons—in the House of God—for attempting to present an offering from the wrong source.
    - b. Though a king, Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for clothing himself with an ephod and performing priestly duties in the temple.
    - c. Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, did all manner of evil, including the enslavement of God's people. But his greatest offense was to demand that the golden vessels intended only for the priests be used to serve wine at his banquet.

- d. That very night a hand began writing on the wall before Belshazzar and his drunken guests. The message was that his kingdom would be immediately removed and he would be killed.

D. On three occasions, David did what only the priests were permitted to do—one of which he repeated over and over the entire time he served as king.

1. The first was when David fled to the Tabernacle to ask that the shewbread or 'bread of His Presence' be given to him and his hungry men.
  - a. From Matthew chapter 1, we clearly understand that David descended from the tribe of Judah and was **not** a Levite.
  - b. Jesus said that what David did was only lawful for the Levites.
  - c. **Matthew 12:3-4 (NIV)** - "He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them."
  - d. Amazing! David was not required to suffer the penalty demanded by the Law.
2. He worshipped God in a priest's ephod when the Ark of the covenant was transported into Jerusalem.
  - a. **2 Samuel 6:14 (NKJV)** - "Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod."
3. The third instance, often repeated after becoming king, was to worship before the Ark of the Covenant—with no veil to shield him.
  - a. So flagrant was this violation, only the high priest was allowed to offer a sacrifice in the Holiest of Holies—and only once a year.

E. There can only be one explanation for God permitting these violations. He allows those who have passion for Him to draw much closer.

1. Non-worshippers and those who have no passion must stay at a distance. The greater your passion, the closer will He draw you to Himself.

- a. **Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)** - "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."
  - b. **Fullness** of joy and the pleasure of **knowing** God can only be found in His presence.
  - c. The text also infers that the further away you are from Him, the less you really **know** Him!
2. Another illustration would be the incredible temperature at the core of the sun, which is 27,000,000° Fahrenheit. At that temperature, nuclear fusion occurs. But the surface of the sun is 10,000,000° F, which is 17,000,000° F cooler than at the core.
  3. The further you move from the sun, the cooler the temperature. For example, Venus is 67,240,000 miles from the sun with an average surface temperature of 864° F.
  4. Travel another 25,000,000 miles or so and you'll arrive at earth. It is 92,960,000 miles from the sun with an average surface temperature of 57.2° F.
  5. Neptune is 2,798,000,000 miles from the sun. But its average surface temperature is -361° F. In that distance of 2,798,000,000 miles, the temperature decreases from 10,000,000° F to -361° F.
  6. David learned to stay near the SUN!
    - a. **Psalm 73:28a (NKJV)** - "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

F. By staying so close, David also learned how to make God his Source.

1. Early in life, David learned to trust in God. Do you know how? Through adversity!
  - a. **Psalm 27:1a (NKJV)** - "The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?"

2. He recognized that fear can immobilize you. However, when all is going well, we learn nothing about trust. Only in adversity, when you survive what you know you shouldn't have, can you begin to really value God's faithfulness.
3. No one wants to face a lion or a bear, but David encountered both. Only after being challenged by a powerful enemy and experiencing God's deliverance can you begin to realize, ***"I can face a giant!"***

G. By staying close to God and allowing Him to be his source, David learned that circumstances were no longer terrifying.

1. **Psalm 27:1b-3 (NKJV)** - "Of whom shall I be afraid? [2] When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. [3] Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I will be confident."
2. David's decision to seek God was not made while all was going well and few problems were distracting him. He declared that his decision to seek God was in the ***midst*** of distractions and enemy attacks.
3. Verse 2 explains what happens when the enemy's attack comes while you're in the 'secret place'--they stumble and fall.
4. Verse 3 talks about his confidence. Confident of what? Answer: even if an army should come against him, he would not fear. David had been through so much, he knew he could trust God for deliverance.
  - a. Notice that he didn't imply that the army wasn't real or that it would eventually go away.
  - b. He stated that even though the army remained, he would not submit to fear.

H. By staying close to God and focusing on Him rather than the problem or the enemy, David discovered that God would always change the outcome.

1. **Psalm 27:5 (NKJV)** - "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock."
2. David said that when trouble arises, it causes him to draw closer to the entrance of the "secret place" than at any other time. In fact, the enemy can't touch you once you've entered the "secret place".
  - a. **Psalm 27:6a (NKJV)** - "And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;"
3. So what would David do when confronted by a frightening situation? Worry about what's about to happen? ... or drift out into a cold and barren place? No! He determined to worship God and stay close to Him!
  - a. **Psalm 27:6b (NKJV)** - "Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD."

#### **I. Life Application Points:**

1. Let's make God our greatest passion this year!
2. How? By drawing CLOSE to Him!
3. In every situation, put God first!