

These days, it's okay to be passionate about the Super Bowl, your favorite team, or just about anything. It's time to become passionate...for God!

Blessings and favor!

PASSION!

Part 3: Feel the Passion....for God!

Text:

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (The Message) - "Seize life!"

Exodus 21:1-6 (NKJV) - "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: [2] If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. [3] If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. [4] If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. [5] But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' [6] then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever."

- A. This year is already shaping up to be our greatest at CT!
1. Our theme for this year is "Feel The Passion!"
 2. Passion is what separates the winners from the "also rans" and makes our lives powerful and worth living.
 3. Passion is the guiding force for every breakthrough that has ever occurred, whether in medicine, science, education, finance, entertainment or any other area of life.

- a. Passion motivates you to become a master in your vocation rather than merely being a wage earner.
- b. It can drive one person to launch a successful career while another decides to call it quits.
- c. Passion can motivate the most unlikely candidates to achieve brilliant accomplishments.

4. **Joke:** The Centipede

At a football game between the Big Animals and the Little Animals, the Big Animals dominated the game. At the end of the first half, with the score 60 to 0, the Big Animals quickly ran from the field.

Noticeably exhausted and dejected, the Little Animals limped off the field with some having to be carried away.

In the locker room, the coach for the Big Animals yelled, "In the second half, let's humiliate them even more! Show no mercy!!! Let's score another forty points, and make it 100 to 0!"

In the second half, the tiger said, "Give me the ball." Suddenly, the ball was taken from the tiger's hands, and he was slammed to the ground.

Dazed and confused, the tiger asked, "What happened?"

The other animals said, "Oh, that was the centipede."

Then the lion said, "Give me the ball."

Wham! He too was stripped of the ball and slammed to the ground.

Shakily he rose to his feet and moaned, "What in the world was that?"

"Oh," the other animals replied, "that was the centipede."

Just then, the big, bad, cocky rhinoceros said, "Pass me the ball. I'll show them!" As he reached to catch the ball, something hit him so hard, he was knocked out cold for five minutes. When he came to, he asked, "What was that?"

"Oh, that was the centipede," said the other animals.

Finally, the coach for the Big Animals walked over to the Little Animals' coach and asked, "Where was the centipede in the first half?"

"Oh," replied the coach for the little guys, "he was still putting on his shoes."

5. Like the centipede, when passion shows up with all of its shoes intact, things begin to happen!
6. Continuing our discussion of passion for God, today we'll speak about:

God's Love Slave

B. Slavery is a terribly ugly word. Having been made in the image of our Heavenly Father, we believe that all mankind has been created equal.

1. The forced subjugation and servitude of other human beings is repugnant to us all, especially believers. It is something we can neither accept nor condone.
2. Not long ago, the news media posted details about a man who had kidnapped and then imprisoned several women in his home to use as he pleased. When they managed to escape and tell their story, the media referred to them as "love slaves."
 - a. I strongly disagreed with the term "love slave" and wanted to pull a 'Tina Turner' and ask, "What's 'love' got to do with it?" Love had nothing to do with the atrocious acts committed against those helpless women!
3. Slavery has grown to be a much greater problem than most people realize.
4. According to Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and founding director of the Hutchins Center for African and African-American Research at Harvard University, more than 29 million people are in slavery at this very moment. That's more than at any other time in history.
 - a. He further states that by contrast, according to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, edited by Professors David Eltis and David

Richardson, between the years 1525 and 1866, there were 12.5 million African slaves shipped to the New World.

- b. Of that 12.5 million, surprisingly only 388,000 were shipped directly to North America with the remainder sent to Latin America, the Caribbean and South America.
 - c. Brazil, alone, received 4.8 million slaves.
5. Slavery was and is a terrible thing. It's just not right to hold another person against their will and force them to work for you.
 6. I've visited some of the cells and dungeons in ports, such as Mombasa in Kenya and Stone Town in Zanzibar, where slaves were held captive before being shipped to distant slave masters in foreign lands. Seeing the shackles and manacles that kept them securely bound was horrific.

C. Today, slavery is rife in the Sudan and other North Africa countries, the Middle East, and Asia.

1. A group in the Sudan known as "Ganja Weed," will sweep down upon unsuspecting villages, kill the elderly, kidnap its inhabitants and then sell them into slavery.
2. In Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other nations, employment opportunities are advertised to attract the poor. But upon arriving, their passports are confiscated and they become slaves.
 - a. These people are beaten, starved, sexually assaulted, and denied wages—with no privilege of ever returning to their homes.
 - b. Slavery is a common and accepted practice in many Middle Eastern countries today.
 - c. Huge numbers, especially women and children, are being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
3. This is happening in locations that would surprise you. According to the FBI, Houston, Texas, is a primary human trafficking center in the United States!

D. It's hard to imagine that someone would intentionally choose to become a slave. Yet, on occasion, that is exactly what happened in the Bible.

1. A common practice, still being observed in impoverished places around the world, is for the poor to sell one or more family members into servanthood for a specified number of years, either to pay a debt or gain enough money to survive.
2. For a debt to be paid, a person would work enough hours as a servant to cancel their obligation.
3. If a family had no funds to purchase seed and equipment to plant their fields, the father would bargain with a wealthy person like this: "If my son can work for you the next six years, would you allow his wages to help our family survive?"
4. This was by no means a perfect, or even desirable system. But as harsh as it may seem, it allowed a family to survive.
5. In the 17th and 18th centuries, this practice was very common. An estimated 50 per cent of white settlers came to colonial America as indentured servants.
6. It is still a common practice in impoverished areas of the world. Unfortunately, many who have these agreements are not set free when their contract expires. They are kept as their master's property. I've met both men and women who have been involved in this process.
7. I can vividly recall an emotional situation in the restaurant of a 'so-called' hotel in India. Two small boys, about 7-8 years old, were serving us.
 - a. I assumed they were the children of the restaurant owner, but they weren't! They were kids who had been sold into slavery.
 - b. When I heard this, I was so appalled, I slipped a handful of rupees to them. But somehow, their owner saw what happened.
 - c. From where I was sitting, I saw a man in the nearby kitchen grab one of the boys and forcefully snatch the money I had given him.

- d. Having grandchildren of my own, I was ready to confront the man. But the pastor I was with stopped me and explained that this practice was perfectly acceptable.

E. Occasionally, a person sold into servitude would discover that his master happened to be a kind and considerate man.

1. Perhaps this servant had fallen in love, married one of the girls in the home, and now had children. At the end of the six year indentured servitude when he had become legally free, a man may think, "I love it here. My master has been good to me. This is better than when I was on my own, so I don't want to leave."
2. After making this unusual—and almost unheard-of decision, he would tell his master, "I love you and I want to serve you forever."
3. The law of Moses then required the master to take this servant who did not want to depart to a doorpost of the home and drive an awl through the lobe of his ear. From that day forward, he would forever be a personal servant or slave to his master.
4. The act of driving an awl through the ear had several meanings:
 - a. The servant was saying: "I am now marked for my master. All who see me will know that I am no longer my own; I belong to him!"
 - b. He was also saying, "I am forever connected to this house and this master. This is not just a passing thought—I'm here for life!"
 - c. Because the blood from his ear had been smeared on the doorpost, the servant now had ownership in the house and was partly responsible for the well-being of the home.
 - d. The servant was expressing love for his master. Others may hate their master, but he loved this man who had been good to him.
 - e. It also meant this was the servant's personal decision. No one had coerced him into making this choice.

F The law of an indentured servant forever staying with his master is a striking analogy of the believer who has truly fallen in love with God.

1. Most of us came to God for the same reason: we had no other options. We were in trouble and needed help for a troubled marriage, an alcohol or drug problem, poor health, or some other desperate situation.
2. I don't know about you, but He found me in a hopeless condition. Lovingly, He reached down and lifted me out of the miry clay. That was **my** reason for coming to Him.
3. But there comes a time when our situation improves. He has saved or healed us, fixed our broken marriage, or directed us to a fantastic job. What do we do then?
4. Just as the indentured servant was free to leave after serving for six years, if we so wish, this could be our time and opportunity to walk away.
5. One day Jesus turned to the multitude whom He had healed and delivered . . . the same folks He had supernaturally fed with a few fish and loaves, and said: "If you don't eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no part with Me." The very ones He had healed of leprosy, opened their blind eyes or solved their problems, . . . began to walk away, leaving only the twelve.
6. That's when Jesus asked, "Do you want to leave, too?"
7. You see, at any time we are all free to leave! But like the servant in the Book of Exodus, ***I don't want to go!*** My Master has been ***so*** good to me, I couldn't think of leaving! But during those years of service, I've also come to understand what I didn't know before. I've found Him to be so wonderful, I ***must*** stay. I've fallen in love with Him!"

G. This principle of becoming God's love slave affected many relationships in the New Testament.

1. For example, Paul referred to himself eight times as a "prisoner of the Lord."

- a. **Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV)** - "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,"
 - b. Paul wasn't just referring to his imprisonment by Roman authorities. His heart had been captured by God!
 - c. **Philippians 3:12 (KJV)** - "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."
 - d. To apprehend means to take into custody; to capture; to seize.
2. May God capture our hearts as He did for Paul!

H. Contrast the servant who never wanted to leave the master he loved with the enemy's servant in 1 Samuel, chapter 30.

1. When David and his men returned to the city of Ziklag after fighting a battle, they found that the enemy had destroyed everything and abducted their wives and children.
2. While pursuing the enemy through the wilderness, David's men stumbled onto their enemy's servant who had been abandoned and left to die because he was sick.
3. As a type of Christ, David treated the servant and helped him regain his strength. He then asked if the servant would help them find the men who had captured their families and goods.
4. Notice the servant's reply:
 - a. **1 Samuel 30:15 (NIV)** - ". . . Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them."
 - b. What a request! Whatever you do, don't force me to return to my former master!
5. My feelings are the same! I would rather perish in the wilderness than go back to my former master. I never want to see him again!

- a. My enemy used me, abused me, and left me to perish—until Jesus came and saved me!
- b. Because Jesus found me, picked me up, turned my life around, and restored me, I shall forever serve Him. ***I am His love slave!***

I. Life Application Points:

- 1. Consider how good He has been to you.
- 2. If you've never completely surrendered your heart to Him, why not do it now?
- 3. Remember—He purchased you with His own blood!
 - a. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)** - "You are not your own; you were bought at a price ..."
- 4. Live a 'surrendered' life every day!