

## I. The Importance of Passion

To do anything that is going to last, you may start shooting 100 yards, then 150, or 200, and then get up to 600 yards. I told the sister, I said, "I can't even see that far." That is an amazing ability, but that is a passionate goal to receive that. I believe God is looking for us to be passionate people for His glory.

I appreciate in the Bible study back there, some of your dads had your sons with you. Teach them passion for prayer. I love the musicians; they ought to be recording. I think maybe they do already. That is good. Somebody is going to leave me and say, "You won't believe where I was today. It was country music, it was serious music, it was gospel preaching, and all these things." I have said this often: you are in a very wonderful, unique church and need to thank God for it. Don't lose sight of it.

What a bookstore you have here, the materials that you can read and learn. If somebody has a question, give them the material as well as teach it to them. Be passionate about your church. I watch young people who start liking each other; they have a passionate attitude towards each other, and that is a good thing to have. Passion is important.

Anybody here a teacher? He is tired. He said, "I am a teacher." Let me say this though, and now the trick question: all of you are teachers. All of us are teachers because someone is watching your life. You are the light of the world.

## II. The Cost of Passion

I read the story of a teacher. Teachers have got to be passionate. What grade do you teach? High school. All grades. Boy, okay. Do you carry handcuffs in with you? High school. That is great. What do you teach them? Science. Next year will be geometry. Wow. Geometry. I took it and wondered why.

I read the story of a teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on. It was cold and so on. He asked for help, and she could see why because she was pulling up and trying, and he was pushing. The boots did not want to go on. When the second boot was on, she was already sweating. She whimpered when the little boy said, "Teacher, they are on the wrong feet." She looked, and sure enough, they were. So then she had to pull the boots off and try to put them on the other feet. She was trying to keep her cool while she was doing those things. This time, they got them on the right feet. Then he announced, "These are not my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you tell me so?" But she said, "Okay." Once again, she struggled to pull off the ill-fitting boots, and she got them off. He said, "They are my brother's boots. My mom told me to wear them." She did not know whether to laugh or to cry. So she got the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again. And she said, "Now where are your mittens?" He said, "I tucked them in the toes of my boots." She learned that commitment and passion cost.

If you are going to do anything for the Lord, it will cost you. Passion is a very important thing in life. Most people, and it is difficult for me to remember this fellow's name, I am going to be in the story in the book of Matthew, and it is in chapter five, if you are going to turn there in verse 22.

Bertoldo Giovanni, anybody who is in art, you may not even know who he was. He was a pupil of Donatello, who was the greatest sculptor of his time. He was a teacher also of a man by the name of Michelangelo, who was probably the greatest sculptor of all time. Michelangelo was 14 years old. Anybody 14 years old here and wish you were or something like that? 14. Okay. Michelangelo was 14 years of age when he came to Bertoldo. He always had the genius attitude; he just knew everything. Bertoldo was smart enough to realize that gifted people are often tempted to coast rather than to grow. We need to be there that way. You know, "I will go to church and get all I need." Passion says you need to learn everywhere.

He knew he was tempted to coast, so he kept pressuring him to work seriously at his art. One day, he came into the studio, and Michelangelo, he just saw him toying with a piece of sculpture far beneath his abilities. Bertoldo grabbed a hammer, stomped across the room, smashed the work into pieces, shouting this unforgettable message: "Michelangelo, talent is cheap, but dedication is costly." Dedication takes passion. Whatever it is, if you want to do it right, it is a passionate thing to see it done.

### III. Biblical Examples of Passion

Passion is only mentioned one time in the Bible. Did you know that? One time you find the word passion. We just had Easter, and the Bible talks about Jesus in Acts chapter one, going through His time of passion.

*Acts 1:3*

*To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

Boy, what did passion cost Jesus? That passion that was so focused to do what God wanted Him to do. He was willing to give His life to give you and me life. We sang about it this morning. Passionate people draw the Lord's attention.

I see many people who will go to church if there is nothing else happening. They will go if there is nowhere else to go, if there is no one coming over, if the weather is good or bad. I do not think that impresses God very much, but God likes passionate people according to the Scriptures.

Matthew 5:22. It is a unique story of an individual who, quite frankly, he was a ruler of the synagogue. Now the Jews were not supposed to care for Jesus because the rulers of the synagogue were to hold to the Old Testament teaching, at least they thought they were. Jesus was making them very uncomfortable. This man, one of the rulers, his name was Jairus.

Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

The speaker is referencing a story in Mark 5:22, not Matthew 5:22. The context is Jairus, not anger.

*Mark 5:22-23*

*And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,*

*And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.*

Imagine this was the ruler. It was not just a member. It was an individual that had the prestige of what was going on in the synagogue. And he immediately, in the presence of Jesus, fell at His feet and began begging Him. He was passionate. The Bible tells us that Jesus went there and healed the daughter. It is amazing how that passion meant to Jesus.

*Mark 7:25-26*

*For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:*

*The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.*

She came and she begged the Lord to cast the devil out of her daughter. I can imagine what it must have been like, but she was passionate for what she wanted to see take place. That word passion carries the thought of a purposeful attitude that I cannot stop unless this takes place.

I believe that God looks at all of us as believers and He asks us, "Will you be passionate for Me? Will you be passionate in My Word?" Many people who call themselves Christians have little or no passion for the Lord. They will come if the weather is right. They will come if there is no sports program for the kids going on.

I read a story of a fellow by the name of Wilbur Rice in sarcasm. He said, "I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal the cup of warm milk or snooze in the sunshine. I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, but I am not interested in the new birth too much. I want to buy a pound of the turtle in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please." That is what a lot of folks want to do. They look at a church and, "Well, I want to come and just take the curse off and come and leave. And then I have done my due."

"Get involved." "I am not interested in that." "Learn something, get in a Bible study group, get there early for prayer." "I am not interested in that." You know, the joy to the heart of God are those people who are all in for Him.

*Colossians 3:23*

*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

Wow, heartily. Heartily means, you know, somebody that you want to please with all of your heart, you do that. And God says, "Be that way to Me." And I have to ask myself sometimes, "Am I doing this heartily, or am I doing it because I am supposed to do it?" Heartily, heartily.

*Psalms 42:1-2*

*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*

No wonder God used David to write so many Psalms. David was an individual after the heart of God. He messed up on some things, and God paddled him really good. But he got straight. And let me say this to you, you may have messed up in some things, but if you get straight with the Lord, God will use your life. And that means for every one of us in here because there is not one of us here who is perfect. His name is Jesus, the only perfect one.

Passion. How is your passion? How is that heart attitude when it comes to that book? My soul, he said in Psalms 42:2, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" Wow. David said, "I cannot wait to get into the presence of God. I will not have a good week unless I am in His presence." And God looks at every one of us and says, "Do you love Me? Do you love Me enough? Does this book really touch your heart? Do you read it every day?" That does not make you spiritual. But I can tell you this, you are not going to be spiritual unless you are in the book. Amen.

My soul thirsts. Have you ever really been thirsty? I know that I have been that way at times. And boy, it just, you can drink a Coke, that does not do it. You need some water. That is how David felt there. Thirsty for God.

## IV. Defining Passion

Someone says, "Well, what is passion?" It has been described as the intense feelings of anger or vengeance. It could be an overwhelming sensual desire of a husband and wife for each other. And it described the Lord's sufferings at the Last Supper. Imagine there, He knew Judas was going to betray Him, and He washed his feet. He goes out into the garden, and when He weeps and prays, blood comes out of His body while He is praying. That is passion. That is passion.

Some places, if the air conditioning is not right, "I am not going to listen to that." The music is not exactly what they want. Is it not amazing how we can become very un-passionless? Passion. Wow. Do you have passion for God? Does God know that? It deals with all the effervency, enthusiasm, diligence for Christ. Do you have that passion? It does not matter your age. I see people very passionate for their sports team. They all yell and scream. They paint themselves up looking weird as can be, especially in Cleveland where they never win anything. Sorry, Footsie.

Someone said that passion is an intense feeling, an emotion of intensity wrapped with a sense of urgency. Wow. That word in Colossians 3:23 that says, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily," that word carries the thought of "from the soul." Whatever you do, do it because it is a soulish desire. I want to do what is right. I want to please God however He wants me to do it. Yes, I want to do what Pastor Bob wants me to do. Yes, but more than him, I want to do what Jesus wants me to do in my life.

Have you ever asked God what He wants you to do? I meet young people all the time. "What are you going to be doing?" "Well, I am going to go to college." "What are you going to do?" "Do this." And I ask, "Have you asked God what He wants you to do?" And once in a while, one of them will say, "Yeah, and this is what I feel God wants me to do. And I am going to go for it." Young people, it does not matter how old you are, you need to begin praying, "God, what do You want me to do for kingdom ministry?" It may be college. It may be military. But whatever it is, that is what God wants you to do passionately.

Seek His parents with your children, whatever their age. Someone, I just saw a new baby in here. Mom and Dad, pray that that child's desire will be to do the passion that God has for his or her heart. Grandparents, be in prayer for those grandkids that they will be passionate for Jesus. You know, you can win everything in the world, but if you are not passionate for the Lord, what is it going to do at the judgment seat? It is going to be a pretty sorry thing.

Mom and Dad, those kids, sometimes they want to walk away. It may not be horribly wrong, but it is not doing an influence for the kingdom of God. Pray that God will break their heart. "God, whatever You have to do to bring them to Yourself, so they will want to hear Your plan." Young people, do you hear the voice of God as you study the Bible?

I looked at when I was 14, 15, 16, 17, I was lost, going to hell. I said before, my brothers, three of them, in and out of jail. One was murdered in his own bar, up for a rape charge, one heroin problem situation. And people knew our family. I am just thankful to God that He in His mercy gave me salvation. And I had a great job, worked for the Federal Reserve. They own all the money anyway. They do not give you any, but they own it. But I did not have peace. And when I came to faith, God just stirred my soul about something there and pleasing Him.

I went to Bible college, and I was amazed that there were a lot of young men and ladies who were there to stay out of the draft so they did not go to Vietnam or anything. I understand their attitude, but I thought, "Are not you here to learn about the Lord?" And they thought I must have been a preacher's kid or something. That was the furthest thing from my life where I was. And it was not me, but God had impressed in my soul. We need a passion, that heartfelt thing that says, "Lord, I want more than anything else to please You." Passion wrapped with a sense of urgency.

People are passionate about their work. They should be. Many are passionate about their possessions and their hobbies. Should be, nothing wrong with that. But are we passionate about our Father? Passion about what He wants in our life.

## V. God's Zeal and Passion

God uses the word zeal sometimes.

*Numbers 25:11*

*Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

Phinehas. He is one of the heroes of the Old Testament. The Jews had gone into vile sexual sins. Phinehas comes in with a spear and runs a couple of them through. And God stopped the judgment that He was putting upon them. And the Bible says, talks about Phinehas who turned away My wrath from the children of Israel, for he was zealous for My sake. It is okay to be zealous for the Lord. It is okay to be zealous for the football team in Kansas City or wherever. It is okay to a degree. But real zeal needs to be for Him, your Father. Do you shout for Him like you shout for a team? And I am not saying create conviction, we just say, "Listen, let us remember where our priorities are." What a privilege that we serve the King of kings and Lord of lords. And one day, and it can be soon, we are going to be with Him.

Zeal. He said, "Phinehas was zealous for My sake among them." I think of Jehu in 2 Kings chapter 10, verse 16.

*2 Kings 10:16*

*And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.*

He said, "Come with me and you will see my zeal for the Lord." I have to ask myself, "Does anybody see my zeal for the Lord?" 2 Kings 10:16. I think God's passion is zealous. Do you know that? The Bible tells me about Him that often the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

I think of one of the passionate guys of the Old Testament. He is my hero. I was talking to Caleb in here this morning. The first message I ever preached was on Caleb. Caleb was with the Jews when they came out of Egypt. It took Him just about 40 days to get them out of Egypt, but it took them 40 years to get Egypt out of them. And here they go, and they check out the land. 12 of them went out, and two of them came back and said, "We can conquer those dudes." One of them was Joshua, and one of them was Caleb.

You look in the Bible, and it is amazing in the book of Numbers and Joshua how that when it came time, when the Jews 40 years later finally got into the land, the oldest man there, from what I can read in the Bible, the oldest man in Israel that day was Caleb. He is older than Joshua. He and Joshua were the only two of the original ones who were at a certain age that did not die. He goes and he goes to Joshua and, "Listen, Joshua, I want Hebron." What is so great about Hebron? Well, Hebron is the one that is where all those guys were that the other people said nobody could stop. That is where the giants were. And the oldest man of Israel said, "I want to go to that place, and I want to show that God can do what God said He can do," and He did. And if you read, I believe in the context of Scripture, the only Jew, the only soldier that totally conquered the enemy in his territory that was given him was Caleb. Is not that amazing? He had the worst

enemies to fight, the biggest people to take down, and yet he was so zealous, passionate, "God can do anything if I just let Him."

I believe that God wants young people in this church to have that attitude. God wants adults in this church to have that attitude, and many of you already do, thank God for it. You would not have what you have now if you have not had passionate people saying, "We are going to do what is right." Caleb was that way, and God blessed him in that.

Our Lord, Isaiah 59:17, speaks of Him prophetically.

*Isaiah 59:17*

*For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.*

That is the prophecy of Jesus, zeal. The disciples realized about our Lord in Psalms 69. They quoted this verse:

*Psalms 69:9*

*For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

Is not that amazing? The zeal of Thine house. Jesus was passionate. Am I? Are you? He was passionate to do the Father's will. Remember how He said one time, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

*John 4:34*

*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

Most people when they should have talked about their meat, they are talking about the food, the popcorn, the ice cream, the Coke, and everything else. Because the disciples had come back, Jesus was talking to the woman at the well, and He said, "Let me tell you where My meat is. My passion and My heart is to do My Father's will."

The Bible says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

*Matthew 6:33*

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Sometimes young people ask me, "What do I need to do for the future?" And I will give Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first," not second, not third, not tenth, the first thing in life ought to be the kingdom of God.

I remember before Judy and I were ever married, and she sends her thoughts with you. She had to be there for special things at the church today in Findlay, Ohio, where we live now. But we are in Bellaire, Ohio. They have sort of hills there a little bit. And I said, "Listen, what happens?"

And we are dating, and she is homecoming queen. I knew who to look for. And I said, "God may call us to New York City." I said, "And you live out here in these hills and all this beautiful countryside there, got a great family." I said, "What if we go there and the only kind of a garden you can have is a window box in some place, in a tenement place?" I mean it seriously. Because I did not want to marry someone who is not going to be zealous, passionate, first of all, for what God wants. It is nice to have a nice home, but if that becomes before Jesus, it is a bad home. And I wanted to know for sure what she did.

I talked to Jean Sabaka, whom you all may well know, and it is with Mel. And talking about before I got married, "What about this?" And Mel said, "Ask Jean any question you want." And I asked her the same question. Mel said, "Let us go do this." "Well, absolutely." Not a question. And you see, that is passion. That says, "Before anything else, it is what does Jesus want out of my life?"

And when you establish what Jesus wants in your life, first of all, to be saved, if you do not know the Lord as your Savior, you are lost, going to hell right now. And God is not going to send you there. You send yourself there. He is doing everything to keep you out of that place. Amen. Took your place on the cross, died for you.

I went to church, and 14 years old, I walked forward in the Baptist Church, and the preacher said, "You are indeed a Christian." I walked out going straight to hell. He never opened the Bible, never told me how to get saved. I went forward in the Menagerie Church, and they are nice people, and they patted me on the back. And they said, "Did he hear you?" I did not want to embarrass anybody or be embarrassed myself. I said, "Sure." Walked out going to hell.

Finally, an old man, Brother Elliot, he invited me to go to church, at a Baptist Church, Bible preaching, truth flinging, Christ loving, devil hating, Baptist Church. And I went there, and that pastor had the audacity to tell me I was a sinner. I already knew it. Then he told me the wages of sin was death. I did not know that, but I did not like it. Then he told me the gift of God, gift. I did not have to work for it. It is eternal life through Jesus Christ, and that is the day I got saved. And I am thankful to God for that. And I went home, told my mom I got saved. I think she thought, "What did you do, fall in the pond?" And God changed my life by His mercy, not by me, I can tell you that. And what a privilege.

And so, if you know Him, He says, "Now I have got a plan for you." "What do You want, Lord? What do You want?" And I had people say, "You are going to go to Bible college, you are going to do this or that, the other." And I said, "I am cool, I am all right." You know why I did that? Because I had not prayed and said, "God, what do You want yet?" Finally, at a youth camp on a Tuesday night, I still remember it, Peach Creek Youth Camp. "Lord, I want to do whatever You, and I mean it, I want to do whatever You want me to do." Man, You saved me, that is my privilege. Amen? It is not, "Well, God asked me to do it." Listen, He died for me. I had a privilege to serve You. We need to see it in that respect. We lose sight of that.

Can you imagine getting your face ripped apart? Your bones are staring out at you from the whipping that they gave you before the cross? And then we do not want to serve Him. What a privilege. And so I pray, "Lord, whatever You want." I was walking from the dorm to the chapel

place and sensed the call of God in my life. What a privilege. What a privilege. What a privilege. And we ought to be passionate, whatever God wants you to do. If you are leading a prayer group here, be passionate about it. Man, if you are doing visitation, the things that you do downtown Kansas City, be passionate about it. Why? You are serving the King, and the King remembers what you did. He will take care of you there.

*Proverbs 13:4*

*The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*

Every day, you take time in the book. Lester Roloff, a preacher, a lot of some of you may know. He said, "Have you ever been to the Holy Land?" He said, "Every day, every day, every day." This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book. I have never met a person who really served the Lord who did not read, take time in the Bible. Do not do it gloriously, say, "Look at me." But listen, I have got to read that. That is my bread every day. That is my microscope. That is my telescope. That is my everything. I really mean that. You need to be a person who takes time in this book every day.

Young people, I challenge you, because all around you are young people just want to live for themselves. Be a young man and a young lady in this book. And as I said, the last time I was here, if you are looking for either, if you are a girl looking for a boyfriend, or a boy looking for a girlfriend, you run as fast as you can toward the Lord. And if some guy keeps up with you, whatever, you introduce yourself to that person. Otherwise, you do not need them. I really mean that. They will not help you there.

*Ecclesiastes 9:10*

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

Do not be a Christian who just, "Well, I will read it, but I am going to be listening to the music at the same time, playing with a game box here now." No, no. I have been around churches where the kids come in there and they have got their earphones on, they are doing everything else. Take those things off. Listen to the preacher, preach the Word of God. Moms and dads, do not let your, and listen, do not, when it is time for the Word to get, put everything else aside. Put it aside. It will not hurt them. They will live, surprisingly. Yeah.

*Galatians 4:18*

*But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.*

Wow. The Bible tells us, and Paul spoke of passion in Colossians 1:29.

*Colossians 1:29*

*Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

Do you strive? Do not do something just to get by. If you are going to shoot 600 yards, you have got to start learning to shoot 50 yards, then 100 yards. It does not come all at once. If you are going to be a teacher of geometry, I never figured out what it was, even though I went through the whole year. I passed barely, but you have got to start over here, then over here, then over here. And you are going to be used of the Lord.

1. You need to get in the Bible studies that they have in this church that you can learn something for His glory.
2. As a teenager, let God begin to teach you the things of God. You will be amazed. God can take you far further than He has ever taken your pastor, me, or anybody else. Why? Because He is looking for young men and ladies who put Jesus first. Do you?

And as a dad and mom, you know what? You need to be passionate, create opportunities for your kids to be under the things of the Word of God on a daily basis. "Well, that will cost." It cost Jesus His life.

*Colossians 3:23*

*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

It is amazing. Titus says, Jesus gave Himself for us.

*Titus 2:14*

*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Passions all over the Word of God. Are you passionate? Do not do it just because Pastor Bob wants you to do it. Do it because the Lord and Pastor Bob wants you to do it. You do it for Him.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:6.

*2 Timothy 1:6*

*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

Stir it up. Realize God has called you to do something as a believer. All of us have ministry for His glory. You may not know what it is, seek something to do. I was telling Bob and Barb last night, Brother Mel Sabaka asked me to lead singing one time. I said, "Mel, I cannot sing." "Oh, everybody can sing." I said, "This body cannot." They were starting a 14s class, pack building. I walked in the class there and I said, "I will try it." Mel walked in there a few minutes. I said, "What is wrong with the organ?" I said, "We do not have an organ in here." He said, "My goodness, that is you, is not it?" That was my first and last day of leading singing anywhere in America. I am serious, but you know what? I meant I wanted to do good. Not for me, but for Him. That is what you mean.

And so then sometime after that when they needed someone to start a young marriage class, I said, "He is already..." He was my mentor. He said, "He is already here, willing to do whatever

he can do." And I do not say it for me, but I wanted to do what is right. And I know this, if you make yourself available, young lady, young man, or mom or dad, it does not matter what your age is. Caleb was the oldest guy in town. If you are passionate for Him, stay faithful in what you know you can do. And if He wants you to do something else, He will let you know, but I will tell you this, He will use you if you let Him. Passion, passion, passion.

## VI. Cultivating Passion

God, I want to be passionate. You know, we are not careful though. We lack passion sometimes because the Lord has become too familiar to us. One writer said, "Satan's strategy is deceptive. He invented the yawn and put the hum and hum drum. He will not steal your salvation. He will just make you forget what it was like to be lost." Oh man. Do not lose sight of what it was like to be lost. Waking up, "I am going to hell if I do not get saved." Waking up and realizing, "God, without Jesus, I am in trouble."

He says if worship will become commonplace and study will be optional, the devil will infiltrate your heart with boredom and cover the cross with dust. He will not take your kids. He will just make you too busy to notice them. He will make you forget the faces around the table. And kids are soon going to be home and have their own tables of their own. It is all because the poison of ordinary has deadened your senses to the magic of the moment.

I come here, I told Barbara, I said, "This is so unusual to see young people and little ones in every age, in every race, learning about Jesus." Most churches would not dare sing what Danny leads you in because they are better than that. They do not say that, but that is what I think they are trying to do. I cannot understand most of those songs they do sing, and I cannot really agree with a lot of the words, but oh, I love songs like "What a Fountain Filled with Blood Drawn from Immanuel's Veins." That resonates with my heart, and we do not ever let that lose our heart. And the singing and the music and the various things that go on here, do not let it become familiar, too familiar to you.

I hope you pray for your pastor before every service. "Well, he is Bob." No, no, no. He needs your prayers. He needs you to be passionate to pray for them. Your son is going to be passionate for them. Whoever leads in whatever ministry you are in to be passionate, "Well, I do not have time for that." Then your time is messed up. Passion. Passion. Passion.

What is the problem we get into? Me first society. Wow. Me first. "What would please me?" No, no, no. "What would please Him?" Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. What happens? People age, they become apathetic. "Well, I was not able to do this, and so I cannot do anything." Oh, yes, you can. Do not stop thinking that you can be used of God. God has a ministry for everybody. And that is where I mentioned about Caleb. "Give me this mountain." Joshua chapter 14. Wow.

Can you imagine for 40 years, "Well, he died today. He died yesterday. She died. Well, she died. He died. She died. He died. She died. He died. She died. He is died." For 40 years, that is what he had to say. "Where is God's promise?" "Caleb, I will take care of you." Yeah. The oldest man in Israel never lost his vision of what God had for his life. You know what happened? God said,

"Now is the time, K." He said, "Give me the hardest place there because if You took care of me for 40 years, You can take care of me there." And God did. God did. He fought the giants, and he won. You see, do not let anything cause you to be apathetic.

Let me say this also. If you are not careful, too often we want approval. You know, passion attracts or repels people. If your desire, especially as a young people, let me say it is to be popular, your passion can be a problem for you. It can repel people there. It pours water on passion sometimes. Passion. Passion. The world does not understand the passion for God. You can be passionate about politics or anything else, but not God. They call you a fanatic if you are passionate for God. "You are just a football fan." That is okay. "You are for baseball." That is okay. But you can say you love the Lord and you are excited about Him. "Well, you are a fanatic." That is satanic. That is satanic there.

Remember how Jesus said of the church at Ephesus, "You are lukewarm." You do not want to do that. Change. Change scares us from being passionate. Even if you are not careful there, your life is going to change if you are passionate for the Lord Jesus Christ. And a passionate church is uncomfortable to someone who just wants to come and sit and leave. That is normal. And do not be haughty about what God has done for you here, but realize by the mercy of God, this is a passionate church. And it should stay that way. And you pray that God keep us passionate for what You want done in our lives. God bless that. It makes some people uncomfortable. Impassioned people, they are Christians, are uncomfortable around people who are zealous.

I remember a man in Canton, I will not mention his name because you are annoying. I used to say, "How are you doing, brother so and so?" He was a very wealthy individual. He said, "Why did you call me a brother?" I said, "Well, you are saved, are not you?" He just turned around and stormed off. Is not that amazing? He had already lost his passion. What a privilege to be brothers and sisters in Christ there. Do not ask me for any money if you are my brother or sister in the Lord. I do not have any, okay?

*Ephesians 3:20*

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*

God wants to do something in your life in Ephesians 3:20. Let Him use you. Pray that prayer, "God, I do not know what Your plan is, but I am going to do what I know I can do. I can read my Bible every day. I can pray for people every day. I can be involved in a ministry as best I can. And then Lord, if You have something else, show me." You know what? He will. That is passion. Nobody wants you to be where God wants you to be more than God Himself. That is a neat thing. Now you may want to be over here, but God has you here. Be where He has you. And if He wants you to be changed, He will create opportunities in those areas. Passion, passion, passion.

## VII. Why Passion Should Be Our Priority

Why should it be our priority? Just keep this in thought: God deserves passionate people. God wants some people as Titus 2:14 says, who are zealous of good works. He likes passion because He showed it.

*Romans 12:11*

*Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

The Bible tells us about people should not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He wants passion. The Bible tells us in that fervent, in other words, is the word zeal or a boiling situation there. And some people say, "Well, you know, Christianity is an inward thing, but do not let it be seen outward." No, it is to be fervent, boiling over.

I tell people often, I enjoy golf. It does not enjoy me, but I do enjoy it. And when I go and people ask me what I do, I tell them I am into internal reconstruction. Or I tell them I work for a father-son retirement group. Tremendous spirit. We never have to worry about medical. And He, this Man has been so gracious. He has provided a home for me. It is really called a mansion, man. It is amazing how you can get hooked people. And then they want to know more about what this is. So use your opportunities to tell them about Jesus. And then I give them a tract and say, "Here is a contract. You can sign it yourself and become part of the family there." Why not? Why not? That is your Father.

Wherever you are, some of you work in just horrendous places. Mel one time really got on me, Sabaka. I was working at a place and there, these guys were as much as hell raisers. Cursing and everything else there. And my thought is, "God, why do I have to be here?" He is a little mini. And Sabaka looked, I used to remember he looked at me. "Maybe God thought He could trust you." Boy, you talk about cutting my heart. You know what? It changed my whole life. I really mean that. Instead of going to a place that I, that was a hell hole. I was going to a place that was going to be some opportunity. And they may not change, but they are going to know what truth is all about. Of the grace of God. And I realized at that moment, God was not upset with me. God thought He could trust me. He could trust me in a place where that was not a great place to be. And I went back to work after that. Seriously, "God, what are we going to do tonight? What is going to take place now?" And I do not know what your job is, but if God has you there, listen, He is big enough to move you. But if He has not, realize He trusts you in that place. Be His tool in that place. Pastor Bob cannot get to some of those other places, but you are there. And God sometimes is a terrible place, but be God's man, be God's woman, be God's young person. Oh, what a privilege. That is passion. That is passion. How is your passion? How is your passion?

I think of this, you know, church, it is not just quiet tranquility. I was with Mel and Jean. We were in Boston one time, and there is a big church there right beside the John Hancock Center, a beautiful place. And we went inside, very beautiful inside. And I asked the lady, said, "Hey, you mind if this lady sings a song in here?" Jean just looked at me. She has got a beautiful voice, and you have heard it before. And so, "Oh no, we cannot do that." I said, "Why not?" "Well, this is the place of tranquility." I said, "It is church, is not it?" She said, "Yeah." She said, "Do not you see the peacock down there?" It is a carving of a peacock. I said, "I see it." She said, "Well, that peacock is representative of peace and tranquility." I thought, "Dear God, where am I?" That is

so far some people get when someone can come in and sing the praise of God. They do not want that because you have got the peacock down there. Listen, let a passion of God be your priority.

How do you do that? Well, you have got to ask yourself, "What is driving my heart?" Many of you know John 15:5.

*John 15:5*

*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

A passionate person says, "Lord, I need to hear from You every day from Your Bible." Learn something in the Bible. They say about 50% of people who come to a church within about 10 minutes of leaving the church, they have no memory of what they were taught. I am teaching on passion, so do not forget it. Okay. Within about seven or eight hours, 80% of them cannot tell you anything that was about. Anybody here remember what I preached on the last time I was here? Yeah. Amen. I got a buck for you. I will run my fives over there with Josh. Maybe he will give it to you. Okay. But be a servant. Passion.

And it is amazing when we are passionate, and passion will focus your energies instead of spreading out. Anybody here, a lot of folks think I was a, there is a Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851. I was not there. I was in London at Hyde Park. What are you laughing about? Anyway, they said it was a, there is a, the marble was steam. There is a steam plow, steam locomotives, steam looms, steam organs, and steam cannon. The first prize winner was a steam invention with 7,000 parts. 7,000. When it was turned on, pulleys, whistles, bells, gears, all made a lot of noise, but the contraption did not do a thing. It is just all those things went on. 7,000 moving parts, making a lot of commotion, but no practical use. Sometimes that is like people.

Passion will change people. It changes. It will change you. It can affect others also. It is amazing. You get passionate people. "Why do you feel that way?" "Well, let me tell you about my best friend." Lost people will see it also. "Why are you so happy?" "Well, I met a fellow." You do not have to throw the Bible at him, but do not let God use you. How many of you go to places and they just looks like they are next to death, they frown. You know, that is what Chick-fil-A does so well is because what do they say every day? "My pleasure." Yeah. Is not that great? And you appreciate going out. I like to go there just because someone is going to be nice to me. I go through some of them. "Yeah, you can catch it. You can eat it." "Thanks a lot, sis." "I am sure you are impressed with your job, are not you?" Passionate people. We ought to be the most passionate, not weird, not, you know, there is a right time to talk in the wrong time, but passionate people for God's glory. Passion makes the impossible possible. Wow. God looks to you and me.

How do I possess it? Well, let me give you a couple of thoughts. As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for Thee, learn to pant after God. Every day in the book. There is no shortcut. "Well, I will get all I can get and get it from Bob." No, no, no, no, no. He gives a lot of good. It has got to be in the Word. Look, I do not understand. I love things I do not understand. I do not know how a brown cow eats green grass, gives white milk and yellow butter, but I will

still drink milk and eat butter. I will go through, listen, I will be honest, I go real fast through the book of Leviticus. In parts of Numbers, all those guys, I go fast to those guys. And some of those wheels within wheels and they will, I go real fast, but I am going to go through it because no, it will help me. I do not want to get something. I do not want to get something. And God says, "Learn from My Word." Be passionate when you come here. And it was, you say, "Well, man, I get so tired of you." That is because you stay awake so late on Saturday night. Once you go to bed at a decent time, so you can come to the house of God and hear the Word of God and learn something. What happened? I just woke you up.

Thirst, make Him a priority in your life.

*1 Peter 2:2*

*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

God, I need to learn Your Word. Help me to understand Your Bible. And if you do not know, imagine you have got one of the most biblical, knowledgeable people in America. He did not pay me for that. But if he offers an opportunity for you to come and learn something, let me ask, you are stupid if you do not take it up. I am serious. Now he is not perfect. Danny can do it. Many of you can do the same thing for other people, but make yourself available for these things. "Well, I do not know." Well, that is the problem. You do not want to know.

*Psalms 42:2*

*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*

Wow. Too often people ignore God until it is almost too late. Amen. Make Him that priority every day, every day. Pray without ceasing every day. I will tell you about that another time.

*Colossians 4:2*

*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*

Let me give you a little quick thought here. Pray, hold your hands up like this right here. Here are five things pray for every day.1.) Pray for those closest to you.2.) Pray for those who are giving the Word of God out.3.) Pray for those in authority over you. I may not like some of the things the president does. I thank God he believes that babies ought to be let to live. Pray for that man. He needs your prayers.4.) Pray for those who are weak and hurting.5.) Pray for yourself.

See, there are five things to do. Those nearest to you, those giving the Word of God out, those in authority over you, those who are weak, and then for yourself. It means what that will do for you. So when you pray, pray for those nearest, pray for your kid, whatever. But that is prayer situation there. And then Jesus said, "Pray for your Father who is in secret."

And then this is hard: Count your blessings. Count your blessings. So prayer is important. Pay attention to God. It is important. Count your blessings. You know what happens?

*Psalms 103:2*

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

How many of you have more than one pair of shoes? You ladies. Let me just take a little tester. Do you young lady, I do not know you. Do you have more than one pair of shoes? More than five? Really? More than 10? You have spoiled her terribly. Oh, that worries me, JB. More than 15? She is going to go home and count. Maybe, yeah. All right. That is okay. Sorry. My wife. Why do women love purses? You got one? You do not need more than one. My wife could live out of her purse. But again, we have been blessed having one. Really? Why do not you go to Kenya where my son is sometime? Some of his places there. Man, yeah, that is struggling. Do you want some of the happiest people I have ever met? Live in Kenya? Because they say they do not have a whole lot, but they learn there is a Savior who loves them. And they can sing. Unbelievable. They can honor God. So thank Him for your blessings. Amen.

Make study your priority. That starts your passion. Pay attention to what God wants to say there. 17 times in Deuteronomy, God told Moses to remember, remember, remember. It is okay to tell people to remember. To remember those things there. Count the blessings that you get right now. Do not lose sight of what God is doing in your life. And in the future, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has gotten us again into lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. And He has given to us innumerable blessings. It is coming one day, maybe sooner than we think.

And then make sure I keep weeds away from my life. There are always distractions. Be careful. And that does not mean walk around singing holy, holy, holy. Enjoy things. It is okay. But remember what is number one, Him. What is number two, got to be in that book. Got to be thankful. Got to be prayerful. God bless that there. And as we do that, it is amazing how God will move things out of the way that will hinder His world.

And then let me say this lastly here, associate with the passionate people.

*Proverbs 27:17*

*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

I was at the Bible study back there. What a neat thing to be some guys who love the Word. Listen, get in the Bible study here on Sunday morning here. You may feel awkward at the beginning, but after a while you will not because they will love you. And you will learn some things from them. I try to learn from wherever I am, who can I learn from? Because iron sharpens iron. And you can sharpen someone's life by being around those individuals there. Let God do that.

## VIII. Burning the Ships: All In for God

I close. Your passion sometimes comes at a price. Many years ago, February 19th, 1519, Hernando Cortes set sail for Mexico. He had 11 ships, 110 sailors, 555 soldiers, and 13 horses. And they had tried to populate Mexico to control it. Could not do anything with the thing. There had been two other groups that went there. And so the ratio of people, because about 5 million people lived in Mexico, there are 7,541 to one to his number he had, these people. So it is going

to be a pretty hard thing to do. Everything else had failed. And when he got there, he ended up conquering the South American continent. He was passionate what he did.

Well, how did he do it? Well, he gave an order when he got there, "Burn the ships." That is how we get back home. No, we are not going to have a plan B. Plan A is what we are going to do. They burned all their ships. They had to conquer the place, not going anywhere else. You know, God wants us sometimes to burn the ships. What is it in your life that may hinder your heart from doing what God wants you to do? Tell the Federal Reserve, "Hey, I have enjoyed working here, but God called me to preach. I have got to go." That is it. God called us to England. Our home was not sold. That is where God wants us. It will sell if God wants me there. He does that. It does not matter what it is. Things like that are insignificant to God. He takes care of those things. If you believe in for that, money is the least of God's worries. It may be the most of ours sometimes. But if God is in charge, hey, listen, if you are passionate for Him, do not be foolish, but God, He will take care of that thing. And He does that. He does that. So I do not know what bridges or what boats God may want you to burn, but if you are passionate for Him, I believe that God is going to bless you if you put Him first. And remember that Bertoldo told Michelangelo, "Talent is cheap, but dedication is costly."

Let me close with just this illustration for a moment here. Anybody ever hear of Stanley Tam? He may be with the Lord now, but just three or four years ago, he was about 95 years old. Anybody hear of 95? Someone says, "I feel it." No. But half a century ago, he made a decision to go all in with the Lord. Stanley Tam. Instead of there is a, in Lima, Ohio, there is a big plastics company and on the side of it is a scripture on the name of Stanley Tam's business, his big, his place. Anyway, he transferred 51% of his shares of his company to God. They say it took three lawyers to pull it off, but the first two thought he was crazy. He started this company in the United States Plastic Corporation with \$37 in capital. When he gave his business back to God, the revenues were less than \$200,000, but he believed God would bless his business. He wanted to honor God from the get-go. At that point, most of us would say, "Hey, we are doing pretty good." He felt convicted for keeping 49% for himself. After reading the parable about the merchants who sold everything to obtain the pearl of great price, he decided to divest himself of his 49% shares. He said, "You know, man can only eat one meal at a time, wear only one suit of clothes at a time and wear one pair of shoes at a time, young lady, and drive one car at a time." And he said, "Is not that enough?" So on January the 15th, several years in 1955, every share of stock was transferred to a senior partner, the Lord. Stanley became a salaried employee of the company he had started. That is the day he went all in for God. From that day to the present, he has given away over \$120 million. Is not that amazing? He went all in. He decided, "I want to do what God would want me to do." He was passionate for God.

I do not know what it would take for you to be passionate for the Lord, but I love that story about Stanley Tam, how that is how he did it. He said, "God, You are first. You are first. I want to be passionate for You." Whatever your age is, God wants you to be passionate. Not just in emotion, but a heartfelt decision that Jesus, You are first.

When we had our kids, we said, "God, You use them." I did not think You would take them to Kenya. I did not think You would give one a seizure disorder that he has used to glorify God. I

did not think all those things, but God has used in unique ways our kids in very special ways to teach other people. I know this. If you get passion for Him, He will do things that you did not expect Him to do. You may not want Him to do, but He will do it, and He will use you in a greater way than you could ever imagine.

Paul was passionate, got thrown into prison, remember? The jailer gets saved. The Philippian church became the queen testimony of the New Testament. What is God going to do with you? The question is, what are you going to let God do with you? If you are unsaved, Pastor Bob will tell you how to trust Christ as Savior. If you are a believer, why do not you just say Him right now? "Lord, I want to be passionate for You Your way and Your Word in prayer, being around those who can help me to grow, looking for opportunities to be used to You."

Let us bow our heads in prayer. You have been very gracious, but I am not sure what Bob will do here, but let me just say, if you do not know Jesus as Savior, there is only one way to know Him. Pray, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Jesus died for me, rose again, paid my debt, God accepted it." That is why His resurrection is so important, and you can know Him if you wish to do so. And so I pray that this morning you would trust Him as your Lord and Savior. If you are saved, would you pray this morning, "God? I want to be passionate for You. I want You to be first. I cannot do it in my strength." The Spirit of God has to enable you to do that, and He will as you are in the Word of God. He will guide you, He will direct you, He will help you in that. I pray that you make that decision, Pastor Bob.