

Praying for Passion for Jesus

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There have been seasons in my walk with the Lord when it seemed that my passion for Jesus and the things of God appeared to be "cooling off". Have you ever felt that way? Is there anything we can do to avoid, totally or partially, those cooling off seasons? Is there anything we can do to position ourselves so that the fire of passion for Jesus flares up again? Let me share with you some of the secrets I have discovered in my life…

PRAYING FOR THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION (EPHESIANS 1:17-19)

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Loving God or having passion for Jesus doesn't come natural to us, does it? The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, stated it like this,

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

…no one seeks for God. (Romans 3:11)

If we are going to have passion for Jesus, we need supernatural assistance. It takes God to love God. We must experience the empowering ministry of God the Holy Spirit on the inside of us. And if we want to experience His ministry and benefit from His activity, then we have to partner with Him in the process. There is a participation required of us.

The participation that is required is that we must submit and follow the Holy Spirit's leadership in our lives, not only in the big areas, but in the small day-to-day matters as well. If we dismiss or ignore the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the small areas of our lives, we will eventually find ourselves powerless in our quest to love Jesus.

Beloved, just because we are "saved" from hell is no guarantee that we will have spiritual success in our lives while still living here on earth. Just because we "saw" and responded to the truth yesterday, doesn't mean that we "see" the truth today. Seeing the truth today equates to doing the truth today. The Bible calls this seeing and doing being a doer of the word, and not just a forgetful hearer.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. (James 1:23)

Our spiritual eyes cannot be opened; we can not have spiritual sight apart from the Holy Spirit's involvement. We cannot go forward without the Holy Spirit's help. If left to ourselves we will find that we are losing ground, not taking ground. It is vital that we live in an intimate connection and communion with Him, in loving fellowship with Him.

Paul understood this truth, so he prayed for the Ephesian believers asking God to open their spiritual eyes. This prayer has been such a blessing to me over the years. I have used this prayer as a model when I pray for other believers. In fact, for years I used this prayer when I prayed for me too! Because I realize that I need wisdom and revelation as much as anybody else.

One of the main reasons that we have what are called the Apostolic prayers (the prayers that the apostles prayed), is not so that we will know the fact that they prayed, but so that we can emulate the way that they prayed. The heart of God is encapsulated in the prayers of Jesus, and the prayers of the Apostles who were trained by Jesus.

Whenever we pray this Apostolic prayer, asking God the Father to give a spirit of wisdom and revelation, He answers that request by allowing the Person of God the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, to release the revelation of the knowledge of Jesus into our human spirits. A spirit of wisdom and a spirit of revelation is not a self-existent reality. It is the ministry and activity of the Person of the Holy Spirit. That activity, the Holy Spirit revealing God the Son to us — or God revealing God to the human spirit — is the highest spiritual dynamic that a human being can experience in this life — or in the age to come..

The reason that this activity of the Holy Spirit is so dynamic is that the release of Divine information is never neutral. We are changed, transformed by the activity of the Holy Spirit in us (2 Cor. 3:18). As a result of our receiving His ministry, His activity in our human spirit, it tenderizes us. It leaves us different. It moves us forward in our spiritual walk. It marks us. It

imparts spiritual power to us.

If we avail ourselves consistently and for large amounts of time to the activity of the Holy Spirit, on a daily basis we will be changed – our passion for Jesus will increase and not diminish. While we are not guaranteed that we will see instantaneous or massive changes every time we pray, we are promised that we can trust the fact that change is occurring. If we could accurately measure the change, which we can't, we would see that every time we encounter God there has been a subtle difference, subtle but nonetheless significant.

PRAYING FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S PRESENCE (EPHESIANS 3:16-19)

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

As a result of our being believer's in Jesus, and thus recipients of the new birth, the Holy Spirit lives in us. Because He is lives in us, we can count on His always being with us. Get it? His presence with us is never in question. But there is a difference between His being with us and His being with us! Let me explain.

While it is true that God the Holy Spirit is always with us, we don't always sense of feel His presence. But just because we don't feel His presence doesn't mean He isn't with us. Are you tracking with me? In a related way; just because His presence is always with us, doesn't mean that we are always benefiting from His presence.

Let me illustrate further. Have you ever experienced a time when you could sense the sweet Presence of the Lord, maybe in a worship service, or when you are alone praying or spending time with Him in the Word? I'm sure you have. On the other hand, I am also sure that there have been those times when you were in a worship service and you didn't feel anything at all. Or you were reading your Bible and couldn't sense the Lord's Presence at all.

The reformation emphasized a great truth – the just shall live by faith (Heb 10:38). This is foundational to those who would come to God. But while it is a foundational truth, it is not the only truth. We must walk by faith, but it is also important that we “connect” with God on several other levels. We want to know that God is with us, but we also want to sense that He is working in us as well. We want the Presence of God to actually be manifest upon our hearts in a vital way. We want to be able to sense it, to discern His Presence within us and to be recipients of His Divine activity upon us.

Our inner man is our soul – our mind, will and emotions. The Holy Spirit's desire is to release His power (His activity) upon our mind, and our will and our emotions. The result of this activity is the strengthening of our inner man. The Bible calls this strengthening of the inner man Jesus dwelling in our hearts (Eph. 3:17) – which results in our being able to discern the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit empowering our spirits.

SETTING THE HEART

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! (Psalm 57:7)

…we make it our aim to please him. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

One of the primary keys to growing in holy passion for Jesus is the setting of our hearts. When we set our heart, we determine that we are going to say no to sin and yes to God. Throughout our day - every day, we have to set our heart; we have to commit our heart to obey God and renounce everything that is not pleasing to Him.

The setting of our heart is not a once in a lifetime deal. It is something we must constantly do. The heart must be set repeatedly. The heart cannot be set casually, once a day or even once a week. The heart must be set several times throughout the day, every day.

PRAYING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE EVIL ONE

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (the evil one – NKJ). (Matthew 6:13)

As we looked at earlier, it doesn't come natural to love God. We must have supernatural intervention. One of the reasons that we need supernatural help is that we have supernatural opposition. We have a real enemy; and he has a real strategy to try and take us down and to take us out. It is the evil one that desires and works to hinder our growth in passion for Jesus. That strategy is called temptation.

The concept of temptation in the Bible is more than just a subtle pull to the sinful values in our culture. The temptation in this verse refers to those rare times when the very storm of darkness hits our soul, supernatural opposition. The devil will attack us specifically in those moments when our lust is aroused, whether it is anger, or pride or lust in other ways. And we will fall to that strategy unless we obey Jesus and ask God to help us overcome (James 4:2).

When we ask God to not lead us into temptation, we are asking for the Lord to deliver us from the attack of the enemy when the circumstances in our lives are optimum for us to be attacked with the temptation to sin. His leadership (and our deliverance) will be displayed in our lives as a result of this prayer.

To summarize: we can have a passion for Jesus. It will not just drop into our laps like ripe apples off of a tree. We must ask, seek and knock (Matt 7:7-8). We must cry out for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus (Eph 1:17-19); we must cry out for His Manifest Presence (Eph 3:16-19); we must set our hearts towards God (2 Cor. 5:9); and we must ask the Lord to keep us from temptation and the evil one (Matt 6:16). If we do these things, Jesus will increasingly become real to us – our love will grow and grow until we love Him with all of our heart, mind and soul (Matt 22:37-38).