



What you think affects what you believe ... what you believe controls your whole life !!!

Satan does not fill us with hatred of God ... but with forgetfulness of God – Bonhoeffer

People do precisely what they LOVE, and until they have a greater love for the things of God than the things of this world, they will not ... stop. Bryan Chapell

Respond to 1 or 2 of the quotes above. Agree? Disagree? Why?

What is the PASSION of your life?...

Philippians 1:10 *For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. (NLT)*

Paul tells the Philippian church that His passion is for them to “understand what really matters”. What really matters in life. If you had to pick just 5 things ... what really matters to YOU in YOUR life?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Passion: *intense, driving, or overpowering feeling or emotion -- strong, enthusiastic devotion to a cause, ideal, or goal and tireless diligence in its furtherance / fiery intensity*

How do you know what people are passionate about ... what does it affect?

- It affects what they always talk about
 - It affects how they eat
 - It affects what they wear
 - It affects how they use their time
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- _____
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A PASSION IS OBVIOUS TO OTHERS

If I were to talk to those closest to you and ask them what YOU are most passionate about ... what would they tell me?

PROPOSITION 1: EVERYONE has a controlling passion that drives their decisions and sacrifices

PROPOSITION 2: There can be only ONE controlling passion

PROPOSITION 3: A passion is what CONSUMES you

- It WILL affect most of your decisions
- It WILL be OBVIOUS to others
- It WILL be at the core of your thoughts ...
- Other things WILL be put aside and sacrificed to obtain it ...

If you had to put ONE answer down, what would you say is your HIGHEST and CONTROLLING passion in life?

1. God expects us to be passionate for Him above all else

Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

These two parallel verses give one central command. God expects us to be passionate for Him and Him alone and to be passionate in a way that is ALL consuming to our thoughts, desires, and passions. What do you think is in the way of you being consumed by God? What desires or "loves" do you hold on tightly too that compete with God for your passion?

Even from the beginning

- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 6:5** "And you shall *love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*
- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 10:12** "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to *fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,*
- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 11:1** "You shall therefore *love the LORD your God,* and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.
 - ¹³ "And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, *to love the LORD your God* and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul,
 - ²² "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you, to do it, *to love the LORD your God,* to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him;
- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 13:3** you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if *you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*
- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 19:9** if you carefully observe all this commandment, which I command you today, *to love the LORD your God, and to walk in His ways always--* then you shall add three more cities for yourself, besides these three.
- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 30:6** "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, *to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,* in order that you may live. ¹⁶ in that I command you today *to love the LORD your God,* to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. ²⁰ *by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is*

your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

What are some insights you see in the accumulated passages of Deuteronomy?

2. Passion For God is to Reject Passion for Self

Let's be honest. We ARE passionate for ourselves ... for our comfort ... for our pleasure ... for our desires. It is just natural to "love self." The Bible even says that we not only to LOVE ourselves, but it is used as SUCH a high standard that it is compared with the level of love Christ has for the church.

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

List some ways that you naturally watch out for "self" ... that you naturally make "self" happy.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The Bible is clear that you can only serve ONE master. Either God is God of your life or YOU are god of your life ... there is no sharing and no percentages.

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

If we are really honest, many of us quote this, but we really are thinking "I CAN serve two masters, but its really tricky and I better serve God a bit more than self or I'm going to be feeling guilty." Lets be honest with Scripture, we CAN NOT serve self and then claim that we also serve God. ONE person is ruling ... the other is "hated." So ... who is ruling your life? What are the evidences you see?

The Bible makes it just as clear that ANYONE who will follow Christ MUST say “NO” to self. We must die to self. This is perhaps adding some clarification to the above verse. If Christ is ruling ... self is dead.

ESV Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

NLT Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

Dying to self. Taking up your cross. This is not just some reference to “not sinning” but it is an overarching command about WHO is GOD in your life. This means your heart is surrendered and your will is submissive and you are “dead” with no will and no drive of your own. What ways do you need to be saying NO to self?

ESV Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

God’s grace ... our salvation ... trains us to say NO to wrong. No to selfishness. This nicely coordinates with the verses above about serving ONE master and about “dying to self.” Why do we find it so hard to “say NO” to our worldly desires? What “felt needs” or even good desires turned sinful, make your relationship with others difficult? What is going to make a difference in that changing?

The reality is ... submitting to God will COST. But that’s never been a secret. Christ made it clear that following was a total death to self and that counting the cost was important.

Lk. 14:26-33 "If anyone comes to me and does not ***hate*** his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and ***even his own life***, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not ***bear his own cross*** and ***come after me*** cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and ***count the cost***, whether he has enough to complete it? ... ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not ***renounce all that he has*** cannot be my disciple.

What will it cost you to make God the ONE passion of your life?

3. Being Good or Religious is not the same as Passion for God

^{ESV} **Matthew 7:22** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

This verse should be VERY startling to many in the church. (Read Matthew 23). Why do you think that MANY (that's the word in the verse) will be shocked when they stand before God and He tells them that they don't even know Him?

What is the likelihood that this could happen to you based on the pattern you see in your life? Do you see a pattern of "doing religious things" but not pursuing God? God addresses this over and over in the Old Testament:

^{ESV} **Matthew 15:8** "This people honors me with their lips, ***but their heart is far from me***;

^{ESV} **Isaiah 29:13** And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, ***while their hearts are far from me***, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

^{ESV} **Ezekiel 33:31** And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say ***but they will not do it***; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain.

In what ways are you guilty of doing this in your life on a regular basis? Does God's Word have control over how you live each day?

4. HOW do I develop passion for God?

We are halfhearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who goes on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased – CS Lewis

C S Lewis is NOT scripture, but I think this quote is immensely insightful. Do you agree with it? What are the things you seek to bring you pleasure that take the place of God bringing you the BEST pleasure?

It is an Act of God

- **Deuteronomy 30:6** "Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, ***to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul***, in order that you may live. ¹⁶ in that I command you today ***to love the LORD your God***, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. ²⁰ ***by loving the LORD your God***, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; ***for this is your life*** and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."
- **Ezekiel 36:25** "Then **I will sprinkle** clean water on you, and you will be clean; **I will cleanse** you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you**; and **I will remove** the heart of stone from your flesh and **give you a heart** of flesh. ²⁷ "And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk** in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. ²⁸ "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.
- **Philippians 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ ***for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*** (Phil. 2:11 ESV)

It's always with great caution that we state "it is an act of God". Not because it isn't true, but because far too many people STOP at that and assume it's all up to God to do this in me, and when it doesn't happen, we fell off the hook. The good news is ... GOD WILL change your heart and GOD WILL put desires in you that are not natural. However, this also means that we are fully responsible now for how we follow through. In what ways have you seen your desire to know and love God grow in recent years?

**If your desire to know, love and obey God is not growing ...
you most likely DO NOT KNOW GOD!**

It is Based out of Knowing Gods Character and Actions

Read the passages below and note how that knowing, loving, fearing, respecting (being passionate for) God is directly connected to truth.

Deut. 6:1-2 - "Now this is the **commandment**-- the **statutes** and the **rules**-- that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may *do them* in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, **that you may fear the LORD your God**, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long."

^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 6:20** "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *do* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which the LORD our God commanded you?' ²¹ then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt; and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. ²² 'Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; ²³ and He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.' ²⁴ **"So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today.**

Deut. 31:12-13 - Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that **they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God**, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, **may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God**, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

There are so many passages that clarify that we LEARN to love and fear and be passionate for God as we are seeing Him more clearly in His word. This brings up many questions.

How much accumulated time would you say you spend on the average week in truth (sermons, reading, podcasts, biblical music, biblical conversations, thinking on Scripture, study of the Word, etc.)?

Based on how much you are in God's Word throughout the week what is the likelihood you are growing in your passion for God through seeing and savoring Him in His word?

Based on your answers above, what are direct and specific changes you SHOULD be making to your week to better pursue God and knowing and loving Him more intensely?

**If you do not grow in your understanding of God and His Character ...
you will NOT GROW IN YOUR LOVE FOR GOD!**

It is a Decision of the Will, a Determination, and a Battle every Day

- ^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 10:12** "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to **fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,**
- ^{NAS} **Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**²⁵ "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.
- ^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 9:27** No, **I beat my body and make it my slave** so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Phil 3:7-14

- I once thought** these things were valuable,
 - **but now I consider them worthless** because of what Christ has done.
- ⁸ Yes, **everything else is worthless when compared** with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
- For his sake **I have discarded** everything else, counting it all as garbage,

- so that I could gain Christ ⁹ and become one with him.

I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

- ¹⁰ I want to know Christ
 - and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead.
- I want to suffer with him,
 - sharing in his death,
 - ¹¹ so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!
- ¹² I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection.
- **But I press on** to possess that perfection
 - for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.
- ¹³ No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it,
- **but I focus on this one thing:**
 - Forgetting the past
 - and looking forward to what lies ahead,
 - ¹⁴ **I press on**
 - to reach the end of the race
 - and receive the heavenly prize
 - for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. (NLT)

These verses are packed with challenge. Predominantly I want you to see the utter DOMINATING passion Paul expresses about pursuing God and shunning all else. What parts of these verses challenge you particularly?

What are the changes you need to make in your thinking and in your passions and priorities?

**If you are not evidencing a growing pursuit of God ...
you DO NOT LOVE GOD!**

Passion for God is ALWAYS evidenced by heart motivated, LIFE controlling, DAILY obedience

^{NAS} **Deuteronomy 10:12** "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to ***fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,***

Romans 12:1,2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2 Cor. 5:14 - For the ***love of Christ compels us***, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live **no longer for themselves**, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Romans 6:13 - Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, **give yourselves completely to God** since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.

2 Cor 5:9 - Therefore **we make it our aim**, whether present or absent, to **be well pleasing to Him**. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

What are specific areas of obedience that you are not consistently fighting for? What are areas you have gotten lazy and allowed to be controlled more by the desires of your flesh?

What are the changes you need to make in your thinking and in your obedience? How will you do that?

**If your life, attitudes, actions and decisions are not steered primarily by Christlike obedience ...
you do NOT LOVE GOD!**

The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One.

*Many ordinary treasures may be denied him,
or if he is allowed to have them,
the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that
they will never be necessary to his happiness.*

*Or if he must see them go, one after one,
he will scarcely feel a sense of loss,
for having the Source of all things
he has in One all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight.
Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing,
for he now has it all in One,
and he has it purely, legitimately and forever.*

*O, God, I have tasted Thy goodness,
and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more.
I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace.
I am ashamed of my lack of desire.
O God, the Triune God,
I want to want Thee;
I long to be filled with longing;
I thirst to be made more thirsty still.
In Jesus' name. Amen.*

AW Tozer

IF GOD IS NOT MY CONTROLLING PASSION

- **EITHER I DON'T KNOW HIM**
- **OR I DON'T REALLY HAVE A BIBLICAL VIEW OF HIM**

“A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity. ... the same may be said of each day. When it is once spent it is gone forever. All the marks which we put on it, it will exhibit forever ... How shall we then wish to see each day marked ...? It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked.” - Adoniram Judson (1 Cor. 23:30)