

## PRAYING FOR PASSION

By Steve Chupp

January 10, 2010

### The Big Idea

Passion is a popular term in our culture. While it has different meanings, passion properly expresses the level of devotion God expects of us as followers of Christ. In fact, anything less than a passionate pursuit of God is a frustrating existence. Prayer can create passion. Through prayer we encounter our passionate God and give ourselves in devotion to him.

### What is passion?

- Romance
- Emotion, especially strong emotion
- Total devotion
  - God assigned our church – and every church – the task of making *fully devoted* followers – disciples – of Jesus.
  - = Serving God with passion
  - You don't have to be an emotional person to have spiritual passion.
  - It just means you are fully devoted to Jesus.

**Mark 12:30** *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.* NIV

- Notice the four “all’s”.
  - Passion is when we love God and are devoted to him with *all* that is within us.
  - We utilize all we are and all we have to love him and live for him.

Today I want to ask you to do three things passionately.

- They all relate to prayer in some way.

### 1. **Pray** passionately.

- My assignment this month is to inspire you to pray and offer you practical tips to help you pray.
- Prayer is **pursuing** our loving God who is passionately **pursuing** us.
  - **Luke 15:4-7** *Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it...?* NIV
- Prayer is passionately asking for God's **Kingdom** and **will**.
  - **Matthew 6:9-10** *This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* NIV
- Establish **daily** and **weekly** rhythms of prayer.
  - Pray always, pray daily, pray more once a week.
    - **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** *Be cheerful [joyful] no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.* Msg
  - Jesus established these rhythms.
    - **Luke 5:16** *As often as possible Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer.* Msg

## 2. **Follow Jesus** passionately.

- **Matthew 16:24** *Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* NIV
- The Bible describes Christians as those who have received the **gift of salvation** and are **followers** and **disciples** of Jesus.
- A disciple is one who **learns**.
  - Disciple = “learner”, especially from another; relational
  - **Mark 12:30** *Love the Lord your God with all your...mind.* NIV
  - We love God and learn more about him and his Word.
  - Love God and love to learn.
- School of Equipping – excellent learning opportunities
  - Alpha – one of the best early discipleship courses available, starts Wednesday
  - Church History – Phil Hartzler, Zion’s own church history scholar, Jan 20
  - Esther – Beth Moore, one of America’s premier Bible teachers, Jan 20
  - Community Bible Study – in-depth personal study of the book of John, Mondays
  - Prayer Strategies – one day seminar by author and speaker Ruth Shinness, this Saturday
- A follower is one who **obeys**.
  - **John 12:26** *All those who want to be my disciples must come and follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And if they follow me, the Father will honor them.* NLT
  - To follow is to go where your leader is going.
  - Obedience is essential to being a follower.
- If you are not growing in obedience and growing in knowing God and his Word, are you really a disciple??
  - You may have the gift of salvation, but are you a follower?
- What is the **evidence** in your life of being a follower of Jesus?
  - Learning and obeying are evidence you can develop.

## 3. **Worship** passionately.

- **Mark 12:30** *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.* NIV
- Seeing God more clearly inspires **awe** and **surrender**.
  - Worship in the Old and New Testament implied prostrating, laying oneself down before God.
  - **Ezekiel 44:4** *I looked, and — oh! — the bright Glory of GOD filling the Temple of GOD! I fell on my face in worship.* Msg
- Worship is not a **song** but a **life** dedicated to God.
  - When we sing in worship, it reflects that dedication.
  - And encourages it.
- Or something is amiss.
  - Have you been born again?
  - Have you hardened your heart?
  - Has sin, offenses, hurts, or the hardships of life hardened your heart?
  - Have you withdrawn your spirit due to betrayal and disappointment?
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  - **John 3:3** *Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." NIV*
  - **John 4:23** *The time is coming — it has, in fact, come — when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. **Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth.** That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. Msg*
- Pray – desperately – for an awakened spirit.
  - Awakened worshipers are surrendered to God.
  - Awakened worshipers pray and follow more passionately.
  - It's much easier to pray to and obey one we love and are in awe of.

Maybe praying for passion really involves praying to surrender ourselves to God and asking him to awaken our spirits.

**Ezekiel 36:26** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. NIV*

#### **Invitation to surrender and pray for an awakened spirit**

- **CD** – Song: “Awaken” with words on **slideshow**

#### **Awaken, by Sharon Damazio 2008 Maranatha Music/City Bible Music**

Jesus I come to you  
Humbled by your grace  
Jesus I look to you  
Long to see your face

Living water pour over me  
Breath of heaven breathe on me now

Awaken my heart to know you more  
Awaken my spirit to hear your voice  
Awaken my soul to follow wholly after you  
Awaken my soul I'll follow wholly after you

All I am I surrender  
All I am I surrender  
All I am I surrender all to you

**Praying for Purity, Passion, and Power**  
**This Week's Discussion Guide – January 10-16, 2010**

The beginning of the year is a great time to step up our prayer life and make some spiritual investments for future dividends. Sundays we will connect prayer to purity, passion, and power. This week's topic is passion, defined as complete devotion. Mark 12:30 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*

As a follow up to Sunday's teaching, use the following questions and Bible verses for personal study and reflection. You may also want to discuss them with your family, friends, small group, or mentor. And don't forget to pray! "Let every heart prepare him room."

**1. Pray passionately.**

- How have you pursued God in prayer?
- What daily and weekly rhythms of prayer can you establish? Below are some general time periods. Write down your specific times and places to pray.
  - All the time prayer \_\_\_\_\_
  - Daily prayer time \_\_\_\_\_
  - Weekly extended prayer time \_\_\_\_\_
- List a few of your prayers involving God's Kingdom and will.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Prayer and passion verses:
  - Matthew 6:9-10
  - Luke 5:16
  - Luke 15:4-7
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

**2. Follow Jesus passionately.**

- A disciple is a learner. How are you learning?
- What about taking a School of Equipping class? Reading a book? A DVD series?
- A follower is one who obeys. What do you find hard to obey?
- Following Jesus verses:
  - Matthew 4:18-20
  - Matthew 16:24-28
  - John 12:26

**3. Worship passionately.**

- Describe a time when you were in awe of God and surrendered to him.
- Does your spirit need to be awakened to God?
- Ask God to give you a soft and responsive heart.
- Worship verses:
  - Ezekiel 36:24-27
  - Ezekiel 44:4
  - John 3:3
  - John 4:23 Msg