

What is your Passion?

We are living in a day and time when we can be tempted to have a passion for everything but God. We can be more concerned about the things of this world: fine cars, luxury homes, wealth, social status, sports, recreational activities, job positions, careers, educations and on and on.

None of these things within themselves are necessarily wrong or immoral. They are wrong when our passion is for earthly pleasure, status and gain at the expense of our passion for the things of God.

It might be appropriate to define what passion is: according to Webster's Dictionary, passion usually implies a strong emotion that has an overpowering effect on us. We can show passion by being enthusiastic and exhibiting strong positive feelings towards an object or cause.

The Word tells us in Matthew 6:19-21 —“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

When Jesus spoke to the crowd that had gathered in the account recorded in Luke 12:15-21. He said, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” And He told them the parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’ And I'll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God.”

In Galatians 5:24, The Word tells us: “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.”

If our passion is for the things of this world, then we have not crucified our sinful nature. We are more interested in pleasing self than pleasing God. If our passion is for the things of God rather than the things of this world, we can agree with Paul's letter to Titus in Titus 2:11,12 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”

I believe Paul states very clearly how our passions should be directed in Philippians 3:7-11 — “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.” These words of Paul are a strong mandate as to where our passions should be directed.

Jesus the Son of God has set for us the greatest example of passion ever recorded in history. Out of obedience to the Father and His love for us, He willingly went to the cross and was crucified in order to provide a way for man to be delivered from the bondage of his sin. He took upon Himself our sin that we might have the opportunity to spend eternity

with Him through confessing and repenting of our rebelliousness and accepting Him as our Lord and Savior.

Mark 8:31-33 -- He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when Jesus turned and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter. "Get behind Me, Satan!" He said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Luke 22:42 -- "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but yours be done."

Romans 3:25 -- God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

I want to challenge all of us regarding misguided or misdirected passions as we move into the year 2000. Jesus the Son of God had a passion to please the Father. Likewise, let us purpose to make the Lord our #1 passion and not allow the world to squeeze us into its mold of self focus and storing up earthly possessions at the expense of having a passion for God with a burning desire to please Him at any cost.