

# The Pursuit of Spiritual Passion!

Tim Dubberly, January 16, 2005

Text: Philippians 3:7-14

## Introduction:

Desire is the most powerful motivation in the lives of any person. We pursue what we desire. Some pursue a career, a dream, a person, a hobby, etc., and the truth about desire is that it consumes a person and their time. Paul once had a passion to destroy Christ and the church. However, since he met Christ, we notice that he pursue Christ with a spiritual passion!

Paul is writing to the church at Philippi concerning his spiritual desire and ambition for life. He gives a glimpse into the pursuit of his heart. For his desire is revealed in verse ten- “That I may know him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.”

Desire is a powerful catalyst; if focused, it will help you reach your goal, unfocused, it will consume a person and rule them.

■ Years ago a young black child was growing up in Cleveland, in a home which he later described as “materially poor but spiritually rich.”

One day a famous athlete, Charlie Paddock, came to his school to speak to the students. At the time Paddock was considered “the fastest human being alive.” He told the children, “Listen! What do you want to be? You name it and then believe that God will help you be it.” That little boy decided that he too wanted to be the fastest human being on earth.

The boy went to his track coach and told him of his new dream. His coach told him, “It’s great to have a dream, but to attain your dream you must build a ladder to it. Here is the ladder to our dreams. The first rung is determination! And the second rung is dedication. The third rung is discipline! And the fourth rung is attitude!

The result of all that motivation is that he went on to win four gold medals in the 1936 Olympic and World records for the 200 meter. His broad jump record lasted for twenty-four years. His name? Jesse Owens.

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His focused his desire and asked the Lord to help him reach his goal. This is the focused desire that Paul reveals in this text. Here are some of the “changes” that Paul shared with the church.

- I. His passion produced a new love in his soul (7,8).
  - A. This love developed new priorities:
    - He no longer wanted the things that made him happy, which were a “loss for Christ”.
    - He now wanted the things that made Christ happy.
    - He clarified his values.
  - B. This love pinpointed his new passion.
    - He wanted to know everything about Christ.
    - He wanted to serve Him and walk with Him.
    - No amount of suffering or resistance made any difference.
  
- II. His passion produced a new law in his heart (9-11).
  - A. He fixed his focus on the righteousness of God.
    - His will was now to live by God’s will.
    - A law is what we live by and Paul’s new law was a spiritual one.
  - B. His heart was permanently fixed on the law of love.
    - He wanted to know Him in the power of resurrection and fellowship of suffering.
    - He wanted to be with Him through the “resurrection of the dead.”
  
- III. His passion produced a new longing in his spirit (12).

- A. This longing had one gear and that was forward.
  - He was going to “press on” to enter heaven, for he was not as close to Christ as he desired.
  - He realized he was not “perfected”; he now needed Christ even more.
  
- B. His longing was to “lay hold” on the things of God.
  - He was going to hold on to the promises of God concerning heaven.
  - He wanted to hold Christ as Christ had “laid hold of him.”

IV. His passion also produced a new look for the future (13,14).

- A. He knew that to look to the future one had to forget the past.
  - We must forget those things that are behind us.
  - We cannot live on yesterday’s blessing, nor can we allow ourselves to die because of yesterday’s sin.
  - Forget it by giving it to God because He will.
  
- B. His look for the future caused him to reach for the things of God.
  - His mind was on the things ahead.
  - Heaven awaited, a new name, home, and body.
  - Everlasting life and an eternity with Christ was awaiting.
  
- C. His eyes were locked on the prize of God.
  - He wanted to fulfill the call of God upon his life.
  - Heaven was calling and he was listening.

Conclusion:

Paul shared his heart with the church at Philippi. And God wanted all who read His book to have the same mind and heart as Paul.

What is your passion this morning? Is the love of Jesus, His presence, His peace and His touch at the top of your list? Is heaven calling you and are you listening? Will you consider the walk with God worth the resistance you will face in your journey with Him?

Some today want the glory but not the battle.

Ray Stedman of the Peninsula Bible church in Palo Alto, California, once asked a nine-year-old boy what he wanted to be when he grew up, and he answered, "A returned Missionary." The boy looked ahead not to the years of graduate study, not to the years in the steaming jungles or parched deserts- but to the final state of recognition and acclaim.

It's hard to skip the preliminaries and still reach a final goal. The musician's finger exercised, the Olympic athlete's daily push-ups, and the Christian's daily stint in the prayer closet can't be bypassed.

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My Challenge:

- Examine yourself today and determine what your main passion in life is.
- Ask God to help you develop a new love and longing in your soul for Him and His work.
- Ask Him to stir your heart today to share that zeal of God with the world.