

Keys to Restoring Spiritual Passion

by Shane Idleman

The true test of passion is being a lover of God's presence, and we can avoid passion killers by not letting expectations, influence, appearance, or being worried about what others think get in the way of our passion for God.

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Scripture: Psalm 42:1

Topics: "Spiritual Passion", "Worship and Praise"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of restoring spiritual passion, urging believers to genuinely seek God's presence and worship Him openly. He reflects on the significance of Passion Week, highlighting Jesus' triumphal entry and the need for a heart on fire for God, which is evident through praise and worship. Idleman warns against passion killers such as unmet expectations, negative influences, and the fear of appearing different, encouraging the congregation to cultivate a deep desire for God and engage in spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting. He concludes by calling for a revival of passion, reminding believers that true fulfillment comes from seeking the living God wholeheartedly.

Transcript

As we were singing that song, I'm a lover of your presence, I was wondering how many people really are a lover of His presence. You know that's the true test? If you want more of God, you want more worship, it really is a reflection of the heart. Because the heart on fire for God must praise Him.

It's a gauge. It's a gauge that gauges our temperature. The topic I wanted to just share with you, I don't know how long I'll speak.

I wasn't planning on speaking too long, but God just began to pour into me more and more this week. And of course, this is Passion Week. If you don't know what that is, it's in the history of Christianity, it's that last week where Jesus' passion was made evident.

Going to the cross, going through the Garden of Gethsemane, and then this place He used to have wonderful fellowship with God was now this place of betrayal and taking us through that. And that's why they call it the Passion Week. And yesterday, I didn't speak on it, even though I wanted to.

I wanted to go back and forth in Genesis and also the triumphal entry in Matthew. And I was kind of going back and forth, but we can see in the Gospels that yesterday is the triumphal entry. They call that a time where Jesus really expressed who He was.

Many times it was private, but now He's expressing, yes, I am the Messiah. I am God's Son. And all four Gospels give this account.

All four Gospels give this account. Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before the crucifixion. And the king coming on the foal of a donkey was a fulfillment of Zechariah 9.9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See your king coming to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. And to many of us, that doesn't make sense.

It didn't make sense to a lot of them at that point because why would your king come on a donkey? A foal of a donkey, even a smaller type of donkey. But it's that lowly position, taking on the form of a servant. And we read in the New Testament that let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, in the form of God did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but He made Himself of no reputation.

He humbled Himself and took on the form of filthy flesh. He took on the form of man. And that lowly position.

The mystery of the cross writes this. It's a book. One of the earliest forms of Christian art.

Did you know this? It's not a painting or a sculpture. It's a patch of graffiti on plaster discovered on the Palatine Hill in Rome dated to around 200 AD. The drawing depicts a man with a donkey's head hanging on a cross.

And viewed from behind, the crucified man turns to the left, looking down at a youth with raised arm. In the inscription underneath, the cross claims this in Greek. Alexander or Alexandros worships his God.

And it's a mocking. The cross always seems foolishness to those who are perishing. There's always a mocking behind Christianity.

There's always a mocking behind those who truly want to follow God. But when we see the cross, we don't see Christ's defeat. We see the defeat of sin.

There's a big difference there. And so, no longer does he tell his disciples to be quiet about himself, but to shout his praises and worship Him openly. Why is that such a challenge for us today? If you take a survey, most Christians aren't acknowledging Him openly and praising Him openly.

It's kind of that closet Christianity. I can tell many times, I've talked about this before, but a lot of times, you don't have to be expressional or emotional in worship. I got it.

But there's got to be some type of, my heart's crying, Abba, Father, and Holy, Holy are You God. And something's leaping within me. And there's a reaction sometimes.

It can be emotion, because how do you not worship God? And then growing up in my 20s, laughing at church, mocking church, and I see that. I speak at a lot of different events and men's conferences in here.

And a lot of guys, it's like they come in with handcuffs on.

They'd rather be seen leaving a bar than leaving a church. There's no passion for God. There's no desire, because they think it's weak.

And actually, they don't realize that they're dying inside. They're weak spiritually. The strongest man you'll ever meet is a person who is broken and humble and strong spiritually.

And we need more of that. But He tells His disciples, do not be quiet anymore. Shout My praises.

Worship Me openly. And then the spreading of the cloaks. You would see pictures where they would throw down their cloaks.

It was an act of homage for a royalty. Jesus was openly declaring to the people that He was their King and the Messiah that they had been waiting for. And if they knew their Bible, they could see, oh, this is what Zechariah was talking about.

Here comes the King on a colt, on a foal of a donkey, and we should be praising Him instead of mocking Him is what happens as we continue to read. And so what I want to do is springboard off of Passion Week. That we're in right now.

What do I mean by passion? I think this is one of the most important things you can take away from here tonight. A passion for the living God. It is vitally important.

It is the gauge, it is the thermostat of your heartbeat towards God. It determines your walk with God. It determines the fight you have within you.

It determines how you will succeed. It determines if you will finish strong. It determines if you will fight this culture war.

It determines if you will maybe die for your faith or stand up for your faith or stop the evil onslaught that is coming against us. There's a zeal, there's a desire. If there's passion, there has to be passion.

In case you're wondering what that means, I will define it for you. It's a powerful or compelling emotion. There's an object of desire or deep interest.

And that's why you look at some people like, why are they so emotional? Because there's something inside of them that is leaping for joy within them. It's that Abba Father, it's that crying out, it's that passion. I've been fueled by the primer of the Holy Spirit all week.

And there's something that leaps when it's inside of me. And I remember that lost and then I was found. And then when you begin to sing that I was lost and then now I'm found.

I was blind and now I see who saved a wretch like me. And oh, thank God for Calvary. Thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ.

And there's a passion within you. Oh, I'm a lover of his presence. I'm a lover of his presence.

I don't know about you, but I'm not ashamed to say I'm a lover of God's presence because you're either a lover of his presence or you're a lover of the world's presence. You cannot serve two masters. You either bow to one and hate the other or you'll mock the one and be loyal to the other.

You cannot serve two masters. And they had this problem many thousands of years ago. With Elisha and on Mount Carmel.

And he told the people, how long will you waver between two opinions? How long will you falter between two opinions? If God be God, follow him. But if Bell be God, follow him. Why do we serve two masters? It's actually very sad because we serve, we wanna serve God.

We look around, clearly there's a God. I was raised in a church. My parents were Christians.

I mean, I read the Bible and I do want that shame. And I don't doubt that. I've been there, trust me.

My 20s, oh my Lord, in teenage years. And there's this, oh, I desire. But then there's this flesh.

The desires of the flesh. And we don't wanna crucify the flesh. We wanna coddle it.

And we wanna serve this master, because it feels good. I like caving into these temptations, because it feels good. But then when the feeling's over, I'm miserable.

I'm depressed. I thought that this, he painted this picture of excitement. And now I'm fallen in this area.

And now I wanna get back to this. And as I'm getting back to this, now my friends are making fun of me. And the guys at work, I don't want them to think I'm like some weird Christian.

And we're serving two masters. How can you serve two masters? You'll either love the one and hate the other, or be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and this world.

He who loves the world does not have the love of the Father in him. It's looking at our hearts. So let's talk about passion killers.

This often kills our passion for God, even with those people with good intentions. And we see this here in the story of the triumphal entry is expectations. Expectations, when expectations do not come out as expected.

Anyone been there? I've noticed that what really is happening is God is exposing our heart. I'm serving God because of this. And when what I want doesn't come to fulfillment, my passion is gone.

How many people come to church because their girlfriend comes to church? How many of us go to church to make our spouse happy? This altar is tear-stained. Over the years, of people have come up here and cried about it, but they did not go home and live it out. They're crying because their marriage is ruined.

Crying because of the financial hit. Crying, oh, if I get back in church, God's gonna restore this. God's gonna do this.

What about if He doesn't? Can you say like Job, though he slay me yet will I trust him? Because when you get to that spot, watch out, because you can be mildly used of God. Because no man can stop you. No enemy can thwart your plans.

Who can stop God Almighty when He's directing you? And expectations. What did they expect? They didn't expect Jesus on a donkey. You can tell throughout the New Testament, is this the time that you're gonna conquer Rome? You're gonna come in as a six foot five, tall, the Rock, or you ever watch the strongest men competitions? Those guys, a lot of steroids going on.

But anyway, but that's our King. That's who He's gonna defeat, Rome. And so how can you go from Hosanna on Sunday to crucify Him on Friday? Hosanna, here He comes in the name of the Lord, and then He's not defeating Rome.

This is not what we were planning on. Have you ever been there? This is not what we're planning. God, this is not what I was planning on.

And then we turn. We lose our passion. We lose our zeal.

And I believe, I thank God for those times because those times can actually draw you closer to God. You can say, again, like Job, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Like David, though the bones you have broken may rejoice.

Like Elisha, Lord, I only am left, and I will follow you no matter what. And He said, don't worry, Elijah. I've got 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal, nor have they kissed His image.

Don't worry, Elijah, you plus me is the majority. And kings that felt the distance that God had drawn from the people, they would be drawn back to God even when their expectations were not met. So I would encourage you tonight on this point, don't expect anything but God alone.

God, if you never grow your ministry, you never write that book, you never restore that marriage, you never get up on the stage, you never do this. God, I'm gonna live in this neighborhood all my life. I'm gonna live in the Antelope Valley all my life.

Anybody dealing with that struggle lately? I mean, California. Expectations. And we can lose our passion.

And I believe deeply in my heart, I don't share this too often, but, and I don't know what it looks like because there's a lot of different definitions of it, but I truly believe that God is bringing, going to bring and is bringing now some type of spiritual awakening. Listen, you guys, what's going on on a Monday night? How do you get a full church on a Monday night? It's incredible what God is doing. What this church is doing, the people it is reaching, from just about every state we hear from, people wanting to travel here, wanting to come here, and they find out you're in California? How's that happening? Well, there's a remnant everywhere.

There's a remnant everywhere. Remnant church is seeking God. But there's no expectation.

Lord, what do you want us to do? We are here to be used of you, and that person cannot get discouraged very, very easily. Because also, we come to church, I bet if I come to church, God's gonna open that financial door. Oh, by next month, if I come every Sunday, you might get fired.

Oh, I've seen that a lot. Expectations, we lose our passion. What also happened here, influence, the power of influence.

Doesn't influence have power? I mean, it depends on what your kids are watching, and even us. You know, they wanna be a singer, like 50 Cents and Lady Gaga, and The Weeknd. Am I getting contemporary still? Okay.

Or a country singer, or an athlete, and the power of influence. And the influence here is they were swayed by popular opinion. I mean, I can imagine some of the people in the crowd, when they're saying crucify, crucify, and they're sitting there going, I don't think that's a good idea.

I read Zachariah, I saw his miracles. I don't think that's a good idea. I was there when Lazarus was raised from the dead.

But what happened, they were influenced. And don't misunderstand, I know it's difficult in this culture. It is very difficult to be that voice.

And our voices, though, actually, our silence speaks volumes. And here's what happens, you have a passion for God, a passion for the truth, a passion for getting His word out there, and revival, and our nation turning around, or our state turning around, not without fights and challenges and things, but there's a desire to see God honored again. I don't know about you, but I'm getting concerned with His word is being mocked, it's being ridiculed.

Jesus is mocked, and there's just a holy zeal inside of our hearts. And we start to be a little bit less quiet. I mean, we start to be more quiet.

Those on social media, you don't wanna post too much, right? You got your friends, you know the friends. They wanna argue, they wanna debate, they wanna chastise, and then we lower our voice there, we lower our voice in Hollywood, the media, we lower our voice in politics, in California, Sacramento, and we just, we lose our influence. And here's why that can kill your passion, because you were not designed to hold it in.

You were designed to spread it, to speak it. We hear a lot about the power of the Holy Spirit, but did you know the one key indicator that someone is filled with the Holy Spirit is boldness, not weirdness. I don't care how high you jump, I wanna know how straight you walk when you come down.

How bold are you to stand up for your faith? And in Acts, and they were filled with the Spirit and boldness, and they went out and boldly proclaimed, and they boldly stood for the truth. And I've seen it in my own life, I just get so deflated. I'm just gonna be quiet, I don't wanna upset people.

And they begin to influence us, and it began to sway, not ours necessarily, but a lot of the opinion of Christianity begins to be swayed, because you just wanna give up. Say, forget it, all right, call a boy or girl, I'm done arguing. You know, and you feel that way sometimes.

I'm just gonna come preach, and lead my family, lead the church, and die a good death at a good age, and hopefully, and just, you know, I'm done with this stuff, it's so exhausting. And then am I quenching and grieving the Spirit? Oh yeah, absolutely. I can tell when God is working in my heart, and if you read the articles that I put out, He just downloads this into me, and I've got this boldness, and then I get it out there.

And then I get discouraged sometimes, because the negative Nellies, and the judgmental Jerrys. And we become swayed by popular opinion, and that will quench our passion for God. So think about it, is there any areas tonight where your expectations have not been met? Maybe you've been influenced.

Do you know how many Christians I know that say nothing about their faith at work? I'll never forget, I think I've mentioned a few times, I was in construction. I was actually, believe it or not, working for Quartz Hill Water District, running heavy equipment. I was their heavy equipment operator, about 20, I don't know what that was, 20 years ago.

And I'm working with this one guy for a while, and I'm working with this one guy for a while, and they've both been working there like four or five months, and me and this guy are talking about our faith, I'm trying

to get him to church, and it's just incredible. And when I'm with this guy at a different job site, I'm talking about my faith, and he's on fire for God. I guess he went to a Billy Graham crusade in the 80s, and it's just great.

And so one day, we're all working together, repairing a broken water main, and I start talking about God, and they're talking about him, and they look at each other and go, you're a Christian? I mean, I said, you guys have been working together for five months, what are you talking about? Five months? They didn't know. Well, they knew, but they didn't talk about it. It's embarrassing.

Tough guys don't talk about that kind of stuff. Oh yeah, tough guys just look at porn and drink alcohol and can't keep their marriage together. That's what tough guys do.

We need to redefine our definition of a tough guy, fellas. A tough guy can handle the weight of adversity, lead his family through this crisis, be loyal to one woman, get his life in order, financially steward his investments, get rid of those people who are pulling him down, tell him to hit the road, Jack, don't ever come back. I don't have time for this.

Listen, we don't have time for games in these dire times. Someone's either building you up, or they're pulling you down. And then, of course, that led me into the next point, passion killers, is they're worried about their appearance.

And I won't talk a lot about that, because they didn't want to look different. They didn't want to look different. And we all struggle with that.

Maybe some of you don't. But when I get on airplanes and sit next to somebody, I hope the conversation doesn't go to what I do. Just wanna get to where I'm going.

What do you do? Oh. I mean, you knew, like, pastors were respected 30, 40 years ago. Today, it's mocked, and, oh, you believe in that, oh.

And just the appearance to others, and they didn't want to look different than the crowd. And that will zap your passion, because actually, you're supposed to look different. We sang that song, You Are Holy, from the prophet Isaiah.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up. The train of his robe filled the entire temple. And the angels, the seraphim, were holding their eyes and flying and covering their feet.

And they were crying, holy, holy, holy is our God. And he said, I can't even see you. I can't even look at a holy God.

My lips are unclean, and I dwell among a people who are also unclean. We are so sinful, God. He says, don't worry.

I touched your lips with the coals and wiped away that iniquity, that holiness. You're called to be holy. So I realized a while ago, I'm gonna look different.

I'm gonna look different, come out from among them and be separate. You're distinct. You look like you're different.

And many times, especially young pastors, they have to just look exactly like who they're ministering to. And it's the same music, same TV shows, same everything. It's okay to be a little bit different and say, here's why I'm different.

Here's why Christ has made a difference. Now, you don't have to dress like the 1970s, but please get something different than skinny jeans. Can we? Okay.

I'm trying to be serious here. But you know what that craze is, is wanting to look hip, wanting to look like the culture, I remember a youth pastor at a church over the hill, 20 years ago or so, right when I met my, or maybe less than that, I met my wife. And I asked, he's like, watching all these movies that are, and posting it.

I don't know back then what he'd do. He encouraged, for movie night or something, I asked him, what are you doing? I mean, you're preaching, you're a youth pastor, and isn't this influencing you? And he said, bro, I gotta watch what they're watching. I said, no, you don't.

I have to watch what they're watching so I can relate to them. No, you don't. I think you enjoy it, number one.

I think that's an excuse. And you don't have to watch what they're watching to relate to them. You relate to them by being different and talking about holiness and how it's made a difference in your life.

And because of this holy standard, I'm not weird, I'm filled with God's Spirit. There's a difference there. And see, when we make choices like that, oh, you don't watch certain movies, or you don't do this, you don't do this, it's not because I'm trying to be prude and weird.

I want the fullness of God, and I want the presence of God in my life. Listen, we didn't start this church to play church. I want to meet the living God.

If I can't feel the presence and power of God, I don't wanna have anything to do with religion. We can join a social club. I can spend my time doing something else, but I want the power of God to fall upon our lives where we are radically changed and we are set free.

And you gotta look different. You have to look different. There's a holiness about you.

There's a holy standard. You ever see people and they have a glow about them? That's why the Bible says, then worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Oh, there's something, the sweet smelling aroma of holiness to Christ.

When he sees his children broken and humble and saying, I want the sin out of my life. I don't wanna look at this junk. I wanna be used by you, Holy Spirit.

And I'm gonna fight for it. I'm gonna contend for it. God fills that person with his spirit.

Passion killers. And the final one, delayed and depleted. When I'm delayed and depleted.

In other words, when God is not moving on my time clock. I struggle so often with what to share, what not to share. Because, you know, being transparent's good, but being too transparent is not good.

Because then people have things to get you later. Oh, trust me, I've had things come back to get me later. Right? Pastor, you don't drink coffee.

I saw you at Starbucks. And then every store I go to, what are you buying? What's your groceries? Oh, what is that? What's that? Delayed and depleted. We started this church 12 years ago, September.

There's not many of us left here. Hopefully I can honor those individuals that are on our anniversary in September. But what you're experiencing tonight, this worship, I mean, can you feel the presence of God? It's, you can't make it up.

You can't make it up. You can't mark it. God begins to fall in a humble, broken church and a congregation.

But how many years did we pray for this? Pray for this. Lord, what's taking so long? What's taking so long? One worship leader, maybe. Nobody's excited, or a few people were.

Just like, where's this revival atmosphere, God, that you've put on my heart? And I would lose my passion. You know how many times I thought about quitting? Seriously, quitting. Because this is not what we talked about.

I've explained before, our opening night, we had 200 people, and by six months, I preached it down to 52. This is not what I thought. And I learned, and it was a process because I wasn't ready.

I wasn't ready to lead this type of movement. And God was breaking me. And the reason I talk a lot about those Pharisees, modern day Pharisees, is because something I noticed the first couple years is I was preaching.

I mean, there's not much difference. You can go back and listen. But there was an element of love and brokenness and humility that was missing.

And so as a result, you draw what you preach. And so I've never seen more heart to heart of people in all of my life. We just love the truth.

We just love the truth. Why are you so mean? And they're mad at their next church, and but we love this church, you have the truth. And guess who they're mad at in six months? Because you don't correct that problem at your last church, it's gonna follow you.

Sometimes I talk to people, well, we've tried five churches. I'm like, do you ever look in the mirror? It might not be the church. Might be some personal issues.

So I was depleted. I know it took a toll on our marriage. Morgan talked about in her testimony.

She wanted to give up as well. Just seem like you're, you ever just like you're going through the motions, nothing's really, nothing's clicking, nothing's hitting. And so my passion began to fade.

And that's really when I was introduced to, and I started to fast. And that ignited a passion in me again, because I began to starve the flesh and focus. Just Lord, if I just stay here, if this is where you have me, then we will see that through.

And then God started to renew that passion. And what happens when you're delayed is that, I like all these words that start with D-E, delayed, depleted, de-energized, depressed, discouraged, disheartened. It's

like, it's pushing you down.

And if something is being delayed, you can lose your passion. And you get angry at God. Anybody been praying for something that's taking longer than you thought? God, what are you doing here? And we begin to lose our passion.

We begin to lose our zeal. But you have to remember every author of the Bible just about went through seasons like that. That's why David would write, strengthen yourself in the Lord.

And that's what I want to help you with tonight. Psalm 42, we'll put up on the screen. This is such an important passage.

I would say this is up there at the top for encouragement for me. Think of the psalmist. He's not feeling this way.

But what's he going to say? As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you. Oh God, my soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before my God? Wait a minute, what's wrong with this guy? My tears have been my food day and night? He's depressed.

He's going through a very difficult season. They continually say to me, where is your God? Where is your God in this moment of darkness? Where is your God during this discouragement? Does the enemy ever taunt you with those thoughts? Where is your God now? I look at the legislation getting ready to be passed in California to abort children after they're born. And I say, Lord, where is our God? Where is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Where is the God who says that you are shedding of the innocent blood? Where is the God who says seven things does the Lord hate? I hate a lying tongue, mouth that spreads lies and one who sows discord among the brethren.

And I hate the hands that shed innocent blood. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. Where is that God? And you get discouraged.

Lord, how can they do this in your place? How can they do this? A nation that was initially built on God's word. And when I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude and I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim's feast.

So this could be the author is in hiding or the enemy's after him. Well, I remember going to the temple. I remember the fellowship.

And so if those are passion killers we talked about, I'm just gonna not go too long, but I'm gonna tell you how to rebuild that passion. Anybody wanna experience that? Well, let me tell you if you need this message. Again, back to that question earlier.

Are you a lover of His presence or are you bothered by His presence? You like the Word, but you don't like worship. You like arguing, but you don't like this altar. It's a hard, prideful heart.

And that has to be crushed in order for you to develop that passion. So the first point, it begins with a desire. It begins with a desire.

But Shane, I don't have that desire. It's okay, it's okay, because it has to begin with a desire. Getting that passion back, you have to at least desire it.

I don't desire it, Lord, something's going on and I want that, but what's wrong with me? Lord, help me, pray that. Lord, help me, give me a desire because I don't have a desire. Lord, help me desire you.

You think that's not a prayer God's gonna answer? He'll check the sincerity of your heart first. But there's a, it begins with a desire as the deer pants for the water brooks. Have you ever seen, I used to go elk hunting in Colorado when I was much younger.

I became a Christian, I mean, I surrendered my life back to the Lord and on fire for God. Now I didn't like to shoot animals, so I'm not saying it's wrong or right. But I'm just saying my heart changed in that, but we would watch, you could watch the doe or the buck and you could see, and when they're looking for, like that's, they have to find that water.

There's, they're getting ready to, there's dehydration and they're walking around looking as that, there's only one source of life and if I don't find that source of life, I will die. I have to find this, nothing else is on my agenda. I don't want berries from the tree.

I don't want to lay down, I, he pants, they make a noise that, it's like a breathing, you can look, especially the bucks, if you see them in the cold, that, the air goes out of their nostrils when it's cold and they're panting and they're looking for that brook and he says, as that deer pants for the water brook, what? My soul, God, pants for you. I don't feel it necessarily, but Lord, I'm gonna put my soul into your hands and I'm gonna look for you until I find you. And oh, now I think of a verse, he who seeks me will find me and when you seek me with all of your heart, you will find me and the more I seek him, the more I love him and the more I love him, the more I seek him, it's an ever ending cycle of seeking and finding and holding on to and then going hard after God.

The deer has a deer pants. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. This deer was looking until he finds it.

Is that you? Look until you find it. How many people, I came Monday night, I didn't rely on it, I didn't find anything. You might not get your breakthrough till Sunday night when we have worship on the speakers that night or Saturday night or Thursday.

It's a seeking and it's a yearning for God. I'm gonna find it. Can you imagine you said, God, I'm gonna encounter you and seek you until I find you and encounter you.

No matter what the cost, it's interesting here, my soul thirsts for God and in case you're confused, the living God. There is no other God but the Lord Jesus Christ. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord.

Muhammad is not God. Allah is not God. Joseph Smith is not God.

Brigham Young is not God. The papacy is not God. The Pope is not God.

The founder of Jehovah Witness is not God. There is no other God but Christ Jesus. There is only one true and living God and you can say that with the authority of God's word.

So be careful where your heart's looking. It has to be looking for the one true and living God. That God that Jesus said, I am the way.

I am the truth and I am the only source of spiritual life. If you wanna get to the Father, you have to go through me. The one, there is no other path.

Two plus two will never equal five. Isn't it interesting how people have no problem with mathematical truth? Or gravity, go jump off the balcony, see what happens. No, don't do that, but when it comes to absolute moral truth, that's where many have a problem.

And do you know why they do? I want to do what I want, when I want, to who I want, how I want, without anyone telling me what to do. I want to embrace this gender. I want to embrace this religion.

I want to embrace this lifestyle. Who are you to tell me what to do? I don't want there to be a God. I am God.

They have a problem with moral absolute truth. And then to build the passion, also like we find here, followed by expectation. There's an expectation.

When shall I come and appear before God? When shall I come and appear before God? There's an expectation. Lord, when are you going to fill me with your spirit again? When am I, I can't wait to get to church. I can't wait to get up tomorrow morning and put on worship.

I can't wait to get into my word instead of the media. I'm built, there's an expectation. When you build that expectation, don't you love the fulfillment of that? You start to think, your spouse plants the seed in your mind, hey, I think Chick-fil-A's open later.

Expectation, ah, yeah, maybe two sandwiches this time. And a chocolate shake. And there's an expectation.

Why aren't you hungry for God? Where's the expectation for God to fill you? Expect adversity. Expect adversity when you're trying to develop passion for God, get ready for adversity. Get ready, because the enemy does not like that.

He'd think he likes some Christian doing witnessing and doing things for him and bringing down Satan's kingdom and praying for people, praying for healing, praying they'd be set free. You think the enemy likes that? No, here comes adversity. Here comes adversity.

My tears have been my food day and night. I'm going through adversity. And when they continually say to me, where is your God? Fortunately, he didn't cave.

He said, I will strengthen myself in the Lord. I will remember. That's why we take communion.

We remember the power of the cross. And then remember and return, remember and return. When I remember these things, what is he remembering? He's remembering how good that God is.

Can you get your mind focused on how good God, remove the bitterness and the anger and the arrogance and the complaining, remove that, and just remember how good it is, how God is. If it wasn't for the grace of God, there go I. If it wasn't for God to get me up and restore these things and keep me somewhat healthy and keep this together, if it wasn't for God, I would not be here today. And you remember and you strengthen yourself in the Lord.

And you get that passion back for God. And I just added this one this morning, spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines restore passion.

Spiritual disciplines restore passion. And interesting, ironically, look what it spells. I saw that after I put it all together.

Spiritual disciplines restore passion. Praying, praying realigns my heart with God. Listen, I'm not talking about the quick little prayer on the way to work.

That's great, do it, please. Or a quick little prayer over your meal. Or Lord help, we need those little prayers.

Thank God for little prayers. But there needs to come a time where you align your heart with God and you say, God, you're on the calendar. My doctor gets an hour, you can get an hour.

My chiropractor gets an hour, you can get an hour. Cinemark, Cinemark gets two hours and it's a bunch of junk. God, you can get some time of my life.

Fox News, CNN gets my time. God, you can get my time. And you realign yourself and it realigns.

My heart is off and now it's hooked up again to God because I'm praying and then I'm obeying. When I obey God's word, it reignites my direction. Oh, when I begin to obey God's word, now I have direction.

Now I have purpose, why? Because now I'm on the right path. Woe is the double-minded man who's unstable in all his ways, but the man who's obeying God, he's on the right path and he's going forward. Worship, what does worship do? I don't know about you, but that's about the best five songs I've heard in a long time together.

Worship, worship restores my relationship. It could have been because I've been spiritually hungry all day. I've been building up an expectation.

And so when you sing, I'm a lover of your presence, I've already been there all day. So all I have to do is excite myself to the Lord. Holy, holy, holy is your name.

Worship restores my relationship to God. If you are broken, if you are fractured tonight, come and worship, drink at the fountain of living water and you will never thirst again. All right, we gotta get controversial.

The E is controversial. It's not popular, but it's powerful. Engaging God via fasting revives your soul, revives your soul.

When you tell King Stomach, shut your mouth. I don't want these fleshly appetites. I want more of you, God.

What you're doing is you're exchanging one appetite for a greater appetite. It's throughout all of scripture. A couple of quotes I came across this week I wanna share with you from John Piper.

The absence of fasting in our life is a measure to our contentment with the absence of Christ in our life. That needs to be read again. The absence of fasting in our life is a measure to our contentment with the absence of Christ in our life.

In other words, if Christ isn't really a passion for you, there's not gonna be a desire to bring the flesh into submission. They run parallel. The desire for spiritual disciplines, the desire to starve the flesh is because you want the presence of Christ in your life.

Now, people haven't been taught this. Some people don't know it. So I don't know, I wouldn't quite word it that way, but I thought I might as well offend since it's not my name on there.

And one that's gonna really burst your bubble is Gordon Cove. So I want you to see these. They really stand out.

You have not sought the Lord with your whole heart until you have tried a protracted season of prayer and fasting. And I can tell you that might have hurt 10 years ago, but I can testify to that today. Absolutely.

I have never sought God to the degree I sought God when you starve your flesh. Like I just, ah, that brownie or that pizza, oh God, but you're, God, you're greater. God, I need you, I need you more.

I need you, God, I need you more. Our nation needs you, our children need you. I'm starving the flesh.

And out of that, that starving the flesh becomes a powerful anointing of God and begin to seek God with all your heart because if King's stomach has a little bit of my heart, God doesn't have all of it. Seek God with all your heart, with all your strength. Do you know what Jesus fasted? Why in the world, why in the world would Jesus fast? That just makes no sense.

That just makes no sense. Unless, unless it was a key to his ministry. The Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness, 40 days of fasting, tempted by the devil, and he came out in the fullness of the Spirit.

Then he begins his ministry. Coincidence? I don't think so. Ezra fasted for protection.

Nehemiah fasted to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Daniel fasted. David fasted.

Paul, in many fastings and trials and tribulations. Peter fasted. It's throughout church history, early church fathers, read Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus.

Fasting, because it's not a work. It's the best way that I know how to completely starve the flesh. Silence that voice.

Because you know when you give into something, ah, I just gave into that Panda Express. I know I wasn't supposed to. Ah, might as well go get the Dr. Pepper in the Snickers bar later.

Well, might as well have some ice cream tonight. And then do you know that most people fall back into addictions because of this? Most hardcore addictions start with the little choices. A little weed won't hurt.

A couple drinks won't hurt. And now you're spiritually dull. You're being led by the wrong spirit.

And now you'll have more of that drink, more of that drug. Engaging God via fasting will revive your soul. And then finally, reading the Word.

Reading the Word renews your passion. If you want spiritual power, that's how you get it. Read the Word.

It renews your passion. Obey the Word. Engage God through fasting.

Is any of that new? Boy, Shane, where did you find that? Is that the latest research? Is that in the medical journal and the new biblical dictionary? Is that in the brand new Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible? That is incredible. Choose the old paths. Get on the right road.

And then the final part of that psalm, it's really a prayer to God. All the authors, as I said, of the Bible struggled. As a deer pants after water, so my soul pants after thee.

My soul wants the true and living God. My soul wants that true and living God. But my tears, my depression, my anxiety, my fears have been my food all day and night.

I want that, but I'm not getting it right now. People are mocking me saying, where is your God? But I will remember the joy I had in the house of God. That joy that brought me to fruition of your spirit.

That joy and that peace, and I will remember that. And then he says, oh my soul, why are you cast down? Why are you disquieted within me? He's reminding his soul, why? Because of all of this greatness. Soul, why are you cast down? Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in your God, hope in your God, hope in your God.

Yet I will praise him in the middle of the storm. I will praise him in the midst of adversity. I will go after his passion and his power.

Oh my God, my soul is cast down within me. But again, I'm retraining my focus back on you. Therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan all the way to the top of Mount Hermon.

I will remember you to the farthest parts of the earth. Deep calls unto deep, and the noise of your waterfalls. All the ways and the billows have gone over me.

Blow after blow is what this is. Have you ever been there? Blow after blow, trial after trial, trial after trial, setback after setback, disappointment after disappointment, failure after failure. Can anyone preach that? Anyone relate? Why is it often it's not just one storm? Just one, okay, one thing.

I know it's a battering ram. And he says, even in that, even in that, the Lord will command his loving kindness. The Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime and in the night.

His song shall be with me. In a nutshell, notwithstanding all of these tragedies, notwithstanding the disappointments, the discouragements, God will comfort me. God, and see, don't you have to remind yourself that? You have to take those thoughts, here's where the battle is, folks.

Have you forgot? Here's where the battle is. He says, weeping may endure in the night, but joy cometh in the morning. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

Though the bones you have broken, let them rejoice in you, Lord. Then I may know him. Paul said that I may know him in the power of his resurrection and in the fellowship of his suffering.

And out of the rashes I will arise. See, God takes the brokenness and begins to build and set that broken person up. And God now is the potter.

And that brokenness got me to a point of desperation. And that travailing and that trials and that fighting got you in a position to where now you have passion, now you have zeal, because the living God has held your hand. Though the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and though he falls, he will not be

utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with his right hand.

So my prayer tonight, restore spiritual passion by asking God to revive you again. Remember we talked about the D, D-E? Discouraged, disappointment, disappointed, disillusioned. Well, what happens if you add an R-E? Revival, what is revival? To live again, to receive again a life which is almost expired, to rekindle into a flame the vital spark that was nearly extinguished.

Listen, this is something amazing about God. He doesn't let you pass a test for the next couple years. He doesn't have you go through punishment.

He doesn't send you in purgatory for a little while. He just says, return to me with your broken heart and let me begin to rebuild you. Let me begin to restore you.

I will revive the broken. I will revive those who want to come to me. All I need is a broken heart.

I will bring back what was driven away. I will bind up the broken. I will strengthen the sick, he said to the prophet.

But the fat, the proud, I will judge them, thus saith the Lord. It's a reviving, R-E, refueling, restoring, renewing, reclaiming, reacquiring, refocusing, reabsorbing, reactivating your walk with the Lord. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be a dead Christian.

I don't want to be a lukewarm Christian. I don't want to lose the zeal of God in my life. I don't want to be a poor example to my kids and a poor example to others and just go through life kind of meandering, kind of going back and forth between two masters.

I want to have that passion and zeal for Christ, a passion and zeal that sometimes people die for. They're martyred, they love the Lord, sometimes to death. To sum it up, the more I seek you, the more I find you.

And the more I find you, the more I seek you. The more I seek God, the more I find him. And I think many of us, we just barely touch the hem of his garment instead of embracing him.

Imagine that call that Jesus gave that went out. It wasn't a quiet call. Come to me, all you're weak and heavy laden.

Come to me. There was a yearning. He would tell, and there was no microphone, there was nothing.

He would come and drink of the water freely. Come and drink, I have water of which you will never thirst again. Come and drink of this fountain of living water freely.

And the woman said, but I already have water. Oh, woman, you do not have water of this water. You will never thirst again.

I am the fountain of living water. I am the alpha, the omega, the beginning and the end. I am the strong tower.

I am the lion of the tribe of Judah. As a matter of fact, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever comes to me and drinks deeply out of that well, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.

So it begs the question, folks, where are those rivers of living water? Is it in your heart? Do your kids see it? Do others see it? Do you feel it? Because either the Bible's wrong or you're wrong. Living water, vibrant

water, excited about Jesus. So pray that prayer tonight.

Restore spiritual passion by asking God to revive you again. So what I wrote down Wednesday or so and want to pray about is, I know it's kind of hard with this many people, but the altar's gonna be available. And I think it's good to come forward and say, Lord, I need that passion.

I need that. But I also think we need to intercede. Intercede for our children.

Some of you, your grandchildren, your spouse, who's not here. Those you love, maybe, that aren't here. We're gonna intercede for them and get that passion.

Remember when there's a passion for the lost? There's a passion for the lost. Where's that? It's gone. And so the altar's gonna be available if you want to just say, Lord, I need that passion again.

I'm gonna come forward. I'm gonna intercede on behalf of other people. I know I'm gonna be interceding for people.

There's people I know need to be here. I know people don't even know the Lord. Family members, friends.

Maybe some of your own kids. You know where all your kids are at spiritually. But doesn't it beg the question, if we don't know where our kids are at spiritually, why are we not contending? Why are we not pulling down heaven? Why are we so lazy that we can't put God first and prioritize our lives? This is just a time where we're not gonna be in a hurry.

We're just gonna seek the heart of God.

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