

## What's Your Passion?

Mark 12:41-44

“Ya wanna play ball?” is all it takes to throw him into an almost uncontrollable frenzy. No, I’m not talking about my grandsons who would run a close second, but Dickens, our two-year-old Cavalier. After being gone for two weeks we returned home to a quiet spring afternoon and a waiting Dickens. After carrying in the suitcases of books, dirty clothes, and a few keepsakes from another culture, there he sat with his yellow tennis ball. “Ya wanna play ball?” and out the door we went. We would throw the ball, and he would shoot like a streak of lightning after his target. Time after time he would rocket in pursuit of the ball, until...that is, until he instantly, uncontrollably, took off with his nose barely scraping the surface of the ground, his movements spontaneous and distinct much like a remote controlled car in the hands of a child. Like a flash of light he took off totally oblivious to our calls, screams, and threats, and of course the ball. He had caught the scent of the hunted. It was nothing we taught him; it was his nature. Once the scent was caught, nothing could distract him until the scent was either lost or he caught his prey (which thankfully he didn’t because it was a skunk). I suppose one could say hunting is his inherent passion. It’s how God created him. His passion is instinctive.

What controls us? What is our passion? What is the scent that so captures our attention that in a very real sense it becomes an obsession, an obsession so strong that we cannot be distracted by the screams and toys which surround us?

God created each one of us to have a passion for Him. He has given each of us the capacity to have the obsession for Him that overpowers every distraction and diversion that would keep us from “catching” Him and the satisfaction only He can provide, the passion for which we were fashioned. Yet we consistently ignore the image and character of the One in whom we are created, and we give ourselves to the distractions and toys to the extent that we forget who we are, become numb to the character of God, and in essence allow ourselves to be reprogrammed to what or who God never intended us to be. The consequences are all around us.

The beauty of our faith in Christ is the hope He provides when we have lost the scent of what Paul called the “fragrant aroma.” Through faith we are transformed into His image; through His Word we find direction in his wisdom; through His church we are “groomed” to be like Him. In His Spirit we are empowered with the passion of Christ that becomes our obsession. It is a passion that instinctively drives us through and beyond the distractions, screams, and toys that continually trap us into a temporal world that knows little, if anything, of Him. It is a passion for Him that spills into our marriages, pours into our families, saturates our professions, and literally infects those around us. It’s a passion that takes us to the reality of God and cannot help but be revealed in our character.

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## LIFE RESPONSE

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on Hebrews 12:1-3, *“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

- (a) Write this passage on a card, in your blackberry, as your screensaver, etc. What did you sense as you penned each word?
- (b) How does this passage relate to our observation of the widow and this time in the lives of Jesus and His disciples? How does this passage apply to your personal life right now?

2. Spend a few moments this week, as we approach Easter, and compare the parallels of Mark 12:28-34; 12:41-44, and 14:32-42.

Now, after noting the parallels, review passages such as:

Rom. 12:1-2

2 Cor. 4:16-18

Col. 3:1-3<sub>ff</sub>

Gal. 2:20

Phil. 2:1-8

Eph. 5:1-3

Rom. 6:1-6

Phil. 3:10<sub>ff</sub>

2 Cor. 2:14-16

3. What are the distractions you face that keep you from following the passion, or obsession, or irresistible scent of the One who created you in His image?

Do you see them as sin? Should you? What impact would it have on your life, your family, if those distractions were not there? What can you do about them?

4. What steps can we take as a church, Cell Group, Mini Church, to cultivate greater sensitivity to and passion for Him?

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Mark 12:41-44

*"One coin out of a little is better than a treasure out of much; for it is not considered how much is given, but how much remains behind." - Saint Ambrose*

A \_\_\_\_\_ MOMENT

Mark 12:41-44

Key Word:

A \_\_\_\_\_ MIND

Mark 12:28-40

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Key Word:

A \_\_\_\_\_ METTLE

Mark 14:32-36

Key Word: