

From Where I Sit . . .

"MORE ON RENEWING MY PASSION FOR GOD"

In our study this past Lord's Day, we spoke of the difference between a command to love and the cultivation of deep and abiding love for God. It's one thing for someone to tell me that I ought to love God, or in fact that I must love God. It's another matter to help me learn how to grow in my ability to love God. After preaching the sermon on "Renewing My Passion For God," several people suggested things that had enhanced their love.

One comment reminded me of the dating days when I feasted on every line of Kathy's letters when we spent several months apart in summer work. Reading and meditating on the thoughts she had written made me feel closer to her. This particular member of the church suggested that the deeper she got into her study about God and about His dealings with man, the more she was drawn to a love for Him. If our reader has not developed the habit of going to the Bible to read God's "love" letters to man, one misses the unraveling of a great mystery of all times-- "How could God love me so when I am so unlovely?" In Romans 5:6-8, the apostle Paul suggests, *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* As we suggested in our lesson, David the Psalmist King of Israel had discovered a great love for the law of the Lord. Reread Psalms 119 and note the numerous verses in which he accents the great passion he felt for every word from God. You want to have more passion for God? Try getting to know Him better.

Another comment I received had to do with coming to know the love of God by experiencing the joy of giving to others. Now this has to be taken in a proper context because there are many people that give great sums of money and participate in great benevolent relief efforts who do not even believe in God. The difference lies in whether or not we are doing what we do as an expression of our faith in God. Jesus said in Matthew 10:42, *"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."* When we see the joy in someone else's face whom we have helped and discover the joy that is similar to what Jesus felt when He gave His very all, a warm glow comes alive within us. You want to learn to love? Try giving yourself away.

And don't forget the power of song, James 5:13: *"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."* Some years ago I felt that the song had gone out of my heart. I used to sing hymns as I drove down America's highways, and I loved to sing them in the shower. Sometimes our experiences can dull the sound of the song of joy in our heart. Again, the Psalmist had learned this precious benefit of pouring out his heart to God, not only in prayer as we are invited from Scripture to do, but also in song. His Psalms were his songs to God. They touched the very inner fiber of his being. Don't lose the song in your heart. Come to think of it, it was that way when I was falling in love as well. I sang all the time. Music from our hearts is a special gift by God to allow the soul to express itself far deeper than we often know how with mere conversation. I was so happy when the song came back into my heart.

May we learn to love God more dearly. (Psa 51:10,12) "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*"

(Psa 63:1,3) "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. . . . Because thy lovingkindness is better than life..."

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