

FBC POWELL, 11-13-11 PM NOTES
"RESTORING OUR PASSION FOR GOD AND HIS GLORY"
JAMES 4:4-10
Closing Service, World Missions Celebration 2011

Psalms 42:1-2a (NKJV) "1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

Psalms 63:1 (ESV) "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

Psalms 119:10 (NKJV) "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!"

Psalms 119:145 (NKJV) "I cry out with *my* whole heart; hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes."

"Have you ever wondered what it feels like to have a love for the lost? This is a term we use as a part of our Christian jargon. Many believers search their hearts in condemnation, looking for the arrival of some feeling of benevolence that will propel them into bold evangelism. It will never happen. It is impossible to love 'the lost.' You can't feel deeply for an abstraction or a concept. You would find it impossible to love deeply an unfamiliar individual portrayed in a photograph, let alone a nation or a race or something as vague as 'all lost people.' Don't wait for a feeling of love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God."
—John Dawson

"O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, 'Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.' Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long."
—A. W. Tozer

I. Reject the Rival of God (v. 4)

"The world is human nature sacrificing the spiritual to the material, the future to the present, the unseen and the eternal to that which touches the senses and perishes with time. The world is a mighty flood of thoughts, feelings, principles of action, conventional prejudices, dislikes, attachments, which have been gathering around human life for ages, impregnating it, impelling it, molding it, degrading it."
—Richard Wolff

"A man committing adultery says to his children: 'Your mother is not worth much, and your father is a cheat and a liar. Honor is not as important as pleasure and my satisfaction is more important than you.'"
—Adrian Rogers

John 17:15-16 (NKJV) "15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

II. Respond to the Spirit of God (v. 5)

“The Holy Spirit which He has made to dwell in us jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart.”

—Paraphrase of James 4:5

III. Receive the Grace of God (vv. 6, 10)

IV. Return to Intimacy With God (vv. 7-9)

A. Submission (v. 7a)

B. Opposition (v. 7b)

C. Proposition (v. 8a)

D. Admonition (v. 8b)

Psalms 24:3-4 (NKJV) “³ Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.”

E. Disposition (v. 9)

Proverbs 14:9 (NKJV) “Fools mock at sin, but among the upright *there is* favor.”

FBC POWELL, 11-11-11 PM
“RESTORING OUR PASSION FOR GOD AND HIS GLORY”
JAMES 4:4-10
Friday Night Service, World Missions Celebration 2011

Have you ever noticed how certain words or phrases gain popularity with a generation of people and get overused and even lose their original meaning? I’m talking about words and phrases like “absolutely”, “without a doubt”, “you know it”, or even Biblical words like “righteous”, or “awesome”. Another word that gets really overused is “passion” or “passionate”. People speak of having a passion for a brand of coffee, a hobby, or a ball team. The over use of the word almost cheapens the title of the message that speaks about a “Passion” for God and His glory. When I use that word “passion”, I am speaking of a compelling, consuming controlling desire for God and for Him to receive the glory He is due. Many of the Psalms deal with a passion for God even though the word “passion” is not used. **Psalms 42:1-2a (NKJV)** “¹ As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” **Psalms 63:1 (ESV)** “O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” **Psalms 119:10 (NKJV)** “With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!” **Psalms 119:145 (NKJV)** “I cry out with *my* whole heart; hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes.”

Because we live in bodies of flesh in an evil world system that is set against us, and because we have a real enemy who opposes us and fights us and seeks to destroy us, we **MUST** be passionate about what we do or we will begin to walk after the flesh, be conformed to the world, and be derailed by the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) – Satan. What is it exactly that we are to be passionate about? We all have a limited number of things that we have the capacity to be passionate about. Someone will say, “We must have a deep passion and love for the lost.” That’s good, but that love and passion for the lost seldom lasts. I don’t think it will take you through the tough times and suffering. John Dawson said this about a love for the lost. I will admit that there are a few exceptions to what he says, but I’m not one of them. “Have you ever wondered what it feels like to have a love for the lost? This is a term we use as a part of our Christian jargon. Many believers search their hearts in condemnation, looking for the arrival of some feeling of benevolence that will propel them into bold evangelism. It will never happen. It is impossible to love ‘the lost’. You can’t feel deeply for an abstraction or a concept. You would find it impossible to love deeply an unfamiliar individual portrayed in a photograph, let alone a nation or a race or something as vague as ‘all lost people’. Don’t wait for a feeling of love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God” [John Dawson, “Taking Our Cities for God”, Page 208-209].

I submit to you that the only motive that will propel you through a life of self-denial, constantly saying “no” to the world’s values and goals, and a life of constant warfare with the enemy of our souls, is a love for God and a passion for His glory. That is true if you are a missionary to an unreached people group, a church planter in the USA, a leader of a local ministry, a Pastor, or a church member who recognizes that your call to make disciples is just as strong as those who are in vocational ministry and are paid a salary. Let me repeat. The only motive that will take you through the pressures and battles of living as Christ’s ambassador in a hostile world system is a passion for God and His Glory! Here is the point of this message: what do you do if that passion has waned or dimmed or is so dim that it’s hard to detect if it still there? Last Sunday morning we saw some principles from 2 Timothy 1:6-8 for “stirring up the passion”, but I want to build on that and go a little deeper from James 4. Before we get into James four, I want to ask you to read a prayer I printed out from A. W. Tozer that uses the words “desire”, “longing”, and “thirsty” in the same way we are using the word “passion”. Would you ask God to make this the desire of your heart? “O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me

thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, 'Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.' Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long."

Now, let's see what God says about how we can restore the passion for Him and His glory.

I. Reject the Rival of God (V4)

This is some really strong language. Whatever the "world" is, when we are friends with it, we become an enemy of God. The world is pictured here as a rival of God that we must choose to reject friendship with. There is an old song, "Loving Two Ain't Easy to do". When one of those two is the Lord and the other is the world, then loving two is **impossible** to do. Let's make sure first that we understand what the Scriptures mean here by the world. Back in James 1:27, James tells us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. In 1 John 2:15 we're told not to love the world. In Romans 12:2 we're told to stop being conformed to the world, and in 1 John 2:17 we're told that the world is passing away. When the term "world" is used in the negative sense like this, it isn't referring to a physical place or people. The world is human society that leaves God out. The world is basically a value system that is the opposite of God's values. In John 12:31, Satan is called the ruler of this world. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Satan is called the god of this world. In other words Satan sets the values and makes the rules and governs the inner-workings of the world. The world is described well by Richard Wolff (quoted in "Turning Toward Integrity" by David Jeremiah, Page 129). "The world is human nature sacrificing the spiritual to the material, the future to the present, the unseen and the eternal to that which touches the senses and perishes with time. The world is a mighty flood of thoughts, feelings, principles of action, conventional prejudices, dislikes, attachments, which have been gathering around human life for ages, impregnating it, impelling it, molding it, degrading it" (Richard Wolff). The world just leaves God out and magnifies human wisdom and human strength over God's wisdom and power. A "worldly" person is not necessarily an immoral, atheistic, God hating person. The worldly person is someone who just leaves God out of daily life and decisions and who buys into the world's values of self fulfillment, self indulgence, self satisfaction, self esteem, and self serving. The word "friendship" in James 4:4 means to have common interests with. In other words, you have become a friend of the world when you have common interests with the world – you have adopted and become conformed to the world's values and its "leave God out" approach. Notice what being a friend to the world is compared to – adultery. For the bride of Christ (saved people) to adopt the world's values and approach to life is to commit spiritual adultery against the Bridegroom (Jesus). The prophets in the Old Testament used similar imagery for Israel with God as their husband. In the physical realm, nothing is worse and does more damage than adultery. Adrian Rogers said this about physical adultery, "A man committing adultery says to his children: 'Your Mother is not worth much, and your Father is a cheat and a liar. Honor is not as important as pleasure and my satisfaction is more important than you.'" [Quoted in "Exploring the Epistle of James" by John Phillips, Page 133] As bad as that is, spiritual adultery is in some ways worse. One of the main reasons many have lost their spiritual passion is that they are guilty of spiritual adultery with the world. We have another lover and our Lord tolerates no rivals! Notice what friendship with the world does. It makes us line up with God's enemies. When you line up with God's enemies, nothing will work out. When you take 2 steps forward, He will make you take 3 steps back. Your passion will be drained and joy and peace will elude you.

We cannot escape the world as long as we have physical life (that's one of the appealing things about heaven – we leave this world value system behind). We are to be like salt water fish. They live in salt water, but they don't taste salty. They are in the salt, but the salt is not in them. **John 17:15-16 (NKJV)** "15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." To restore our spiritual passion, we must reject the rival of God – the world and its value system.

II. Respond to the Spirit of God (V5)

There is some disagreement as to whether this verse refers to the human spirit or the Holy Spirit, but it seems to fit the context better to see it referring to the Holy Spirit. I like this paraphrase, “The Holy Spirit which He has made to dwell in us jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart.” If a person is truly saved, then the Holy Spirit dwells in that person’s spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, the Spirit. God is a jealous God and tolerates no rivals. The Holy Spirit in us communicates the Father’s longing for a love relationship with us. That’s why adopting the world’s values is so evil. It is unfaithfulness to our Lord; it is choosing another over Him. The Lord yearns for you to have spiritual passion and get rid of every rival.

III. Receive the Grace of God (V6, 10)

James is quoting Proverbs 3:3, 4. The Greek word for “proud” literally means to appear over. The ultimate expression of pride is to leave God out and thus appear over God. Pride is when we believe we are sufficient. How does God respond to the prideful? He opposes them. That Greek word means to stand in full battle array against someone. Wow! Do you see why pride is such a horrible sin? It causes almighty God to line up in battle array against you. When your life is filled with self-sufficiency, is it any wonder you have no spiritual passion? What’s the solution? We humble ourselves. What does that mean? Humility is the opposite of pride. Humility is when we admit our need for Him. Humility is seeing ourselves as we are and the Lord as He is and living in constant dependence on Him. The concept of abiding in Christ as the branch abides in the vine in John 15 is an excellent picture of humility. I go through life with the attitude of, “Lord, I can’t, but I trust in you and abide in You for all I need and I can do all things only through Christ who strengthens me.” When you live that way the passion returns! When we humble ourselves, how does the Lord respond? He gives us grace and lifts us up. **Grace is God doing for us what we could never do for ourselves.** When we humble ourselves He lifts us up and uses us in ways we never dreamed possible and floods us with His enabling grace. Watch how this passage fits together. When we reject the rival of God (the world) and respond to the yearning of the Holy Spirit to have no rivals for our love for the Lord and then humble ourselves and receive the grace of God, we are ready to return to intimacy with God.

IV. Return to Intimacy with God (V7-9)

There are five steps in this return to spiritual passion and intimacy with God.

A. Submission (V7a)

Proud people will never submit so they never experience spiritual passion. The word “submit” is a military word that means to line up under those in authority over you. To submit to God means that I recognize that He is in authority over me and I no longer rebel but get under that authority in obedience and surrender. Rebels don’t have spiritual passion for God and His glory! Again, that word “submit” means to have a proper alignment. Have you ever had a car that the front tires didn’t wear evenly? Maybe the inside was always wearing out. You replace the tires, have them balanced and aired up properly, but has that solved your problem? No, it’s just a matter of time until they are worn out again. What’s the problem? The alignment is off. Until you get the front end aligned, you will continue to have tire problems. Even so, if you have not submitted to God, aligned rightly with Him, nothing else you do will work. We are to line up under God’s authority but also under all of God’s delegated authority (home, church, government, and workplace). If you lack spiritual passion, I want to encourage you to examine your alignment. Are you lined up under God’s authority, living in obedience to His word? Are you lined up under His delegated authority (Husband, parents, government, spiritual leaders, and employer)?

B. Opposition (V7b)

If you try to resist the devil without first submitting to God you will miserably fail. It will be you in your own strength and without God’s power you’re no match for him. Once we submit to God, we resist. That word means to stand against; to draw a line in the sand and say, “You will not take any more ground.” We have authority only as long as we are under God’s authority and under His delegated authority. I am convinced that we make spiritual warfare too complicated. It’s not in incantations and formulas; we

submit to God, and stand in opposition to the devil in God's authority and power and he flees. That's pretty simple. The reason that the devil gives people such fits is usually because they have never submitted to God and resisted the devil.

C. Proposition (V8a)

When we submit and stand against the enemy, and then draw near to God, He says He will draw near to us. Why do we draw near first? Because we are the ones who moved away! How do we draw near in real practical terms? The word translated "draw near" is the word used to describe in the Old Testament when the priests approached God with their sacrifices. You draw near to Him in repentance and then worship. As you do, He reciprocates and draws near to you. Spiritual passion for God and His glory and intimacy with God cannot be achieved apart from repentance and worship. Worship does not happen until we repent and submit to God and resist the devil.

D. Admonition (V8b)

This is an enlargement of what it means to repent. You can't draw near to Him until you repent. You can't truly worship until you've obeyed this admonishment. James is no doubt referring to ***Psalms 24:3-4 (NKJV)*** "3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully." The cleansing of the hands pictures sinful acts and deeds. The purifying of the heart symbolizes inner sins such as motives, thoughts and attitudes. To purify means to take away what dilutes or adulterates. A double-minded person is one who vacillates and is therefore not pure in heart. A return of spiritual passion is dependent on submitting to God (lining up under His authority), resisting the devil, and drawing near to God in worship after we have cleansed our hands and purified our hearts.

E. Disposition (V9)

This is not speaking about a lifestyle without laughter and joy and happiness. It is talking about our attitude toward our dirty hands and unpurified hearts. We lament and mourn and weep over sin. Sin can never be taken lightly if we want to have spiritual passion. ***Proverbs 14:9 (NKJV)*** "Fools mock at sin, but among the upright *there is* favor." Instead of treating sin with mocking or laughter or flippancy, we lament and mourn. Repentance is more than heartfelt sorrow, but it does include that.

CONCLUSION

Having your spiritual passion for God and His glory restored is not a matter of a simple prayer you quote or making minor adjustments to your life. Restoring spiritual passion is a revolutionary change of affections, actions, and attitude. Stop being conformed to and committing adultery with the world system. Yield to the Holy Spirit's drawing, humble yourself, appropriate God's enabling grace, submit to God and the authority structures He has set up, stand against the devil and refuse to give an inch, and draw near to God by repenting of outward acts of sin and inward attitudes and motives. When you do, God will draw near to you and the passion for knowing Him, loving Him and glorifying Him at home and among the nations will return. (3117)