

“A Plea For Godly Passion!”
Galatians 4:17-20

Introduction:

1. Please Head Back With Me To:
 - Galatians 4:
 - And As We Turn There Together:
 - I Want To Ask You A Question:
 - How Many Of You Watched Some Of The Olympics Down In Rio The Last Couple Of Weeks?
 - One Of The Things That Draws Us To Watch:
 - The Olympics - Is The Passion Of The Athletes:
 - And Their Drive To Win That Gold Medal!
 - And It Is That Drive & Passion That Motivates Them To Train For Years:
 - For Just That One Opportunity To “Go For The Gold!”
 - Sometimes We Wish We Had:
 - That Same Kind Of Drive & Passion & Even Discipline:
 - In Our Own Lives, Don’t We?
 - Well - In Truth - We All Do Have Things That We Are Very Passionate About!
 - Every Person Does!
 - Now That The Olympics Are Coming To A Close:
 - Another Past-Time Will Take Its Place:
 - For Millions In Our Country:
 - What Is It? Football!
 - Millions Of People Are Passionate About Football!
 - Passionate To The Point Of:
 - Spending Billions Of Dollars:
 - On Tickets & Merchandise:
 - Just Like The Super-Bowl Championship T-Shirt I Got Earlier This Year! “Go Broncos!”
 - We Are All Good At Having Passion & Zeal:
 - For Things – That Really Don’t Last Very Long At All!
 - Gold Medals:
 - Can Get Lost Or Even Sold Over Time!
 - Olympic & World Records:
 - Can Be Broken In Just A Fraction Of A Second!
 - And Even World Championships:
 - Will Be Forgotten When A New Champion Takes Their Place!
2. But - Where Is Our Passion – As Christians & As A Church:
 - For The Things That Truly Matter:
 - And For The Things That Will Truly Last?
 - In The Verses We Come To This Morning:
 - The Apostle Paul Addresses This Same Need:
 - Both To The Galatian Christians Back Then:
 - And To Us Today!
 - It Is A Plea For:
 - Not Just Any Kind Of Passion:
 - But A Godly Passion!
 - And We Find This Plea In:
 - 4:18 - “But It Is Good To Be Zealously Affected Always In A Good Thing!”
 - To Be “Zealously Affected” Here Means:
 - To Have A Zeal & A Passion For Something:
 - That Is Deeply Rooted In Your Heart!
 - It Means That When You Pursue After Something, You Put Your Heart & Your Soul Into It!
 - This Kind Of Passion:
 - For God & For The Truth Of The Gospel:

- Is What They Needed & What Would Have Helped Them Overcome The Errors That Were Drawing Them Away From The Truth!
- And It Is This Kind Of Passion:
 - That We Need In Our Own Lives As Christians:
 - A Godly Passion!

* In 4:17 - We Discover:

1. *The Need For A Godly Passion!*

- The Great Need For A Renewed Zeal & Passion:
 - For God & His Truth!
 - 4:17 - “They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them!”
 - Here - Paul Is Describing The Ones:
 - Who Had Infiltrated Their Churches, And Were Sowing The Seeds Of Error In Their Hearts!
 - And It Shows Us How We All Need To Have The Right Kind Of Passion:
 - A Godly Kind Of Passion!
 - It Is Needed Because Of:
 - The Pursuit By Ungodly Passion!
 - He Writes About Those False Teachers & Leaders:
 - “They Zealously Affect You!”
 - That Is - They Are Passionately & Zealously Pursuing After You!
 - And They Are Doing So With All Of Their Heart!
 - It Reminds Us Of What Jesus Himself Warned About:
 - In Matthew 23:15 - “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves!”
 - This Verse Can Be Applied To Those Who Had Infiltrated The Galatian Churches:
 - And Were Trying To Lead Those Young Christians Back Into Their Own Store-Brand Kind Of Judaism!
 - Those Pharisees Even Traveled All The Way:
 - To Galatia - And To The Cities Of:
 - Antoich / Iconium / Lystra / Derbe / And It Seems - Everywhere Else Paul Went!
 - And Their Number One Goal & Passion:
 - Was To “Make On Proselyte!”
 - Just One Follower!
 - And It Seems - From Paul’s Own Letter:
 - That They Had More Than Succeeded!
 - For Many Who Were Led To The Freedom That Was Found In Jesus Christ:
 - Were Willingly Putting Themselves Back Into The Bondage Of The Law!
 - But We Also See From This Verse:
 - The Purpose Of (Their) Ungodly Passion:
 - 4:17 - “They Zealously Affect You, But Not Well!”
 - Or - Not For Anything That Is Truly Good!
 - Their Motive Was Not Good!
 - These False Leaders & Teachers Did Not Have The Good Of The Galatians In Mind!
 - No - Instead - They Were In It For Themselves! And For Their Own Selfish Reasons!
 - And Thus - The Result Was Not Good!
 - The Galatians Who Followed Them:
 - Lost Their “Blessedness” – The Joy & Peace They Received Through The Gospel!
 - We Need To Remember - That Just Because Someone:
 - Is Passionate About Something:
 - Does Not Make It Good!
 - And – It Can Even Take Away The Good:
 - And That Which Is Best:
 - From You! Which We See Further:
 - The Problem With Ungodly Passion:
 - 4:17 - “Yea, They Would Exclude You!”

- The False Teachers In Galatia:
 - Were Trying To Turn The Christians & Churches Against Paul:
 - To Make Him Out To Be Their Enemy - As Seen In 4:16!
 - **IE**: Kind Of Like Those Groups / Cliques That Often Form In Jr. High & High School! To Be Part Of One Group Often Means You Have To Turn Your Back On Another Group!
 - And This Is What Was Going On In Their Churches!
- What We Learn From This Is That:
 - A Passion For Sin & Error:
 - Will “Exclude You” From All Of The Blessings That Come With The Truth!
 - All The Blessings Of Christ!
- Not Only Will It Rob You Of:
 - A Life Of Faith & Spiritual Freedom!
 - It Will Also Rob You Of:
 - A Life Of Fellowship With Those Who Truly Care For You & Want Only To Tell You The Truth!
 - Like Paul!
- So - Don’t Be Fooled:
 - By Those Who Seem To Have A Passion:
 - For **You** – But Do Not Have A Passion:
 - For The **Truth** & For Your **Best!**
 - Because It Is Very Easy To Fall Prey To:
- The Power Of Ungodly Passion:
 - This Is The End Game Of Sin & Error:
 - 4:17 - “That Ye Might Affect Them!”
 - Or That You Might Have A Passion & A Zeal For Them:
 - And Even Become Like Them!
 - To Be On The Side Of Sin & Error:
 - Instead Of On The Side Of God & The Truth!
 - This Is Why Paul Gave This Warning In Colossians 2:8 - “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ!”
- These Are All Reasons Why We Need:
 - A Renewed Zeal & Passion:
 - For The Lord & His Truth!
 - Because There Are Many Who, Like The Pharisees, Will “Compass Sea And Land To Make One Proselyte!”
 - But What Happens To That Proselyte – That Follower:
 - With A Self-Centered Zeal & Passion?
 - “When He Is Made – He Is – Twofold More The Child Of Hell Than [Themselves]!”
 - It Is A Dangerous Thing:
 - To Have The Wrong Kind Of Passion & Zeal!
 - We Need To Be **Cautious About** What We Are **Zealous About!**

* “But” – As Paul Continues In 4:18:

- “It Is Good To Be Zealously Affected Always In A Good Thing!”
 - Passion & Zeal **Can** Be A Good Thing:
 - If It Pursues That Which Is Good:
 - And That Which Is The Best!
- So - What Is Your Passion?
 - Is It Something That Is Truly Good?
 - Is It Something That Will Truly Last?
 - Is It In The Best Things?
- If So - Then It Is Worth:
 - Not Only Your Pursuit:
 - But Also Your Persistence!
 - To Be Zealous & Passionate “Always!”
 - Does This Describe Your Passion:
 - For The Lord? It Describes His Passion For You!

- For His Word?
- For His Will?
- For His Work?
- “It Is Good To Be Zealously Affected Always In A Good Thing!”
- And In The Next Couple Of Verses:
 - We See From Paul’s Own Example:

2. ***The Nature Of Godly Passion!***

- The Great Nature Of A Renewed Zeal & Passion:
 - For God & His Truth!
 - 4:19-20 - “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, / I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you!”
 - In Spite Of Everything The False Teachers Said About Paul – He Still Had A Good & Godly Passion For Those Galatian Christians!
 - And Through His Example:
 - We Can Learn What Our Godly Passion:
 - Should Be Like!
 - When We Are Zealous About The Best Things, There Will Be:
- A Godly Affection!
 - Even As Paul Had When He Wrote:
 - “My Little Children!”
 - Although Their Feelings For Paul Had Changed:
 - His Feelings For Them Never Did!
 - Still As Warm & Loving & Tender As Ever!
 - He Had A Special Interest In Them:
 - And A Special Passion For Them:
 - For, In A Very Real Sense, He Was A Spiritual Father To Them!
 - He Shared The Gospel With Them For The Very First Time!
 - And When He Heard That The Galatians:
 - Were Being Led Away From:
 - What Was True & What Was Right:
 - He *Ached* Over Them As A Godly Father & Mother Would Do Over Their Wayward Child!
 - Is This The Kind Of Heart & Affection You Have:
 - For The Lord? Is This The Kind Of Love:
 - You Have For His Truth & For His People?
 - This Is What A Godly Passion Will Look Like!
 - There Will Also Be:
- A Godly Labor!
 - Even As Paul Had When He Wrote:
 - “Of Whom I Travail In Birth Again!”
 - This Describes How Paul Served Them!
 - When He First Met Them & Preached Unto Them:
 - He Poured Out His Heart & His Soul:
 - In Order For Them To Be Free From Their Spiritual Bondage!
 - But His Passion For Them Did Not Stop When He Left! It Continued!
 - He Still “Travailed In Birth – Again!”
 - Like A Mother Giving Birth!
 - And All Of The Struggles & Sorrows He Went Through Were Worth It!
 - His Persecution!
 - His Pain!
 - Yet - How Many Times Are We Ready:
 - To Simply Give Up - When It Comes To Serving & Laboring For The Lord?
 - May The Lord Give Us A Greater & Godlier Passion For His Service!
 - Even When We Have To Go Through The Same Struggles & Sorrows:
 - Again & Again & Again!
 - This Is What A Godly Passion Will Look Like!
 - There Will Also Be:

- A Godly Focus!

- Why Did Paul Put So Much Effort Into The Galatians?
 - 4:19 - "Until Christ Be Formed In You!"
 - This Was His Goal & His Focus!
 - And He Would Never Stop His Labor "Until" This Was Finally & Fully Realized In Them!
 - "Until Christ Be Formed In You!"
 - See This Also In Colossians 1:28-29 - "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: / Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily!"
 - This Was His Number One Passion & Goal For Them!
- Is This Your Number One Passion?
 - For Your Own Heart & Life?
 - That - "Christ Be Formed In You!"
 - For Your Own Family?
 - That - "Christ Be Formed In Them!"
 - For Your Own Church?
 - That - "Christ Be Formed In Us!"
- Where Is Our Focus? Where Is Our Passion?
 - A Godly Passion Will Focus Our Attention:
 - On The Spiritual Best For Ourselves & For Others! Which Is:
 - "Christ In Them, And Abiding In Them! His Light In Their Minds, His Love In Their Hearts, His Law In Their Conscience, His Spirit Their Impulse And Power, His Presence Filling Their Entire Nature, And His Image Reproducing Itself In Their Lives!" (John Eadie)
- May Our Passionate Prayer Be This:
 - Lord - "Stamp Thine Own Image Deep On My Heart!"
 - This Is What A Godly Passion Will Look Like! But There Will Also Be:

- A Godly Desire!

- See This When Paul Writes In 4:20 - "I Desire To Be Present With You Now, And To Change My Voice!"
 - Paul's Desire Was To Be **With** Those Galatian Christians:
 - Even Though They Were Struggling & Even Straying From The Truth!
 - And Although God's Own Providence Prevented Him From This Desire:
 - He Still Wanted To See Them & To Speak With Them:
 - And To Fellowship With Them:
 - And Ultimately To Bring Them Back!
 - **IE:** And There Is A Different Dynamic Between Writing A Letter & Being Present! Isn't There?
 - This Too Is What A Godly Passion Will Look Like!
 - A Desire To Be With God's People:
 - For One Another's Good!
 - And Even When There Is A Challenge Or A Difficulty:
 - The Goal For Us Getting Together Is To:
 - "Change Our Voices!"
 - So - Even When We May Need To Confront Sin & Error Within Our Church:
 - Our Desire Is To "Change Our Voices" & To "Change Our Tone" – So That We Can Renew The Sweetness Of Our Fellowship Once Again!
 - But We Also See:

- A Godly Concern!

- 4:20 - "For I Stand In Doubt Of You!"
 - This Means That Paul Was "Perplexed" About Them!
 - To Be "Perplexed" Means That You Are Troubled By Something Or Even Puzzled!
- This Seems To Mean That Paul:
 - Wasn't Sure What To Do / What To Say To Them:
 - Even How & When To Say It!
 - "He Was At A Loss!" (Eadie)
 - **IE:** Ever Felt This Way? Know What Needs To Be Said & Done / But Not Really Sure How To Go About It! Shows A Passionate Concern To "Speak The Truth" – But Also A Passionate Thoughtfulness To "Speak In Love!"

- Paul Experienced This As Well!
 - He Was Greatly Concerned For Them!
 - And He Continued To “Travail” Over Them!
 - In His Thoughts!
 - In His Prayers!
 - In His Heart Of Hearts!
- But His Concern Was For Them & Their Best!
 - Their Spiritual Welfare!

Conclusion:

1. Is This The Kind Of Passion You Have?
 - “It Is Good To Be Zealously Affected Always In A Good Thing!”
 - And It Is Even Better To Have A Zeal & A Passion:
 - For The Best Things!
 - The Things Of God!
 - And This Passion Will Look A Lot Like Paul’s:
 - In His Relationship With Those Galatian Christians!
 - But Remember - This Is Not His Number One Goal:
 - That We Look Like Him!
2. No - His Number One Goal & Passion Was That:
 - We Look Like Christ!
 - That “Christ Be Formed” In Us!
 - And That Needs To Be Our Passion As Well!
 - That “Christ Be Formed” In:
 - Your Own Life!
 - Your Family’s Life!
 - Your Church’s Life!
 - So – What Is Your Number One Passion For?
 - And What Is That Passion Like – Today?
 - “It Is Good To Be Zealously Affected Always In A Good Thing!”
 - And - As Jesus Said In Matthew 19:17 - “There Is None Good But One, And That Is, God!”
 - So, May Our Number One Passion:
 - Be God! Is He Your’s?

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