

Maintaining our spiritual passion

(A key to being effective in sharing our faith with others)



The Apostle Paul wrote, “that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” (Philemon 1:6)

- Our love for Jesus must always be our greatest priority in life



- We must never allow the busyness of life and even ministry to cause us to lose our passion for God and the things of God
- The church of Ephesus was full of good works but they had left their first love for Jesus. We see this in the book of Revelation

In the book of Revelation, we read the words of Jesus,

**“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,
“These things says He who hold the seven stars
in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the
seven golden lamp stands: I know your works,
your labour, your patience, and that you cannot
bear those who are evil. And you have tested
those who say they are apostle and are not, and
have found them liars;” (Revelation 2:1-2)**



“and you have persevered and have patience,
and have labored for My name’s sake and have
not become weary. Nevertheless I have this
against you, that you have left your first love.
Remember therefore from where you have
fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I
will come to you quickly and remove your lamp
stand from its place-unless you repent.”
(Revelation 2:3-5)



- The simple fact is that a congregation may continue to exist without being a light in the darkness
- That is why both as an individual and a congregation we need to make our love for Christ the greatest priority



In 2 Chronicles we read,

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)



- It is our wholehearted pursuit of Christ that is such a great key to seeing revival in our nation**

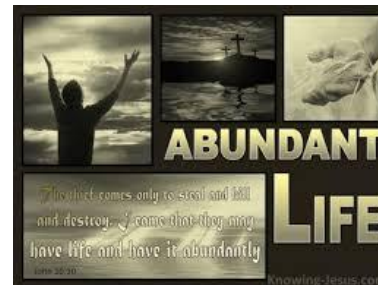
King David wrote,

“I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.” (Psalm 9:1-2)

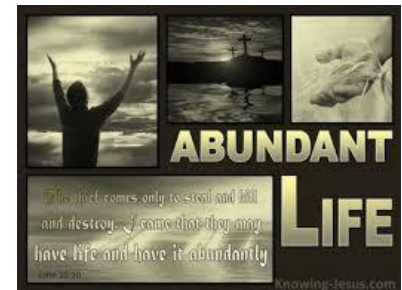


As Christians we have so much that we can enjoy and experience in Christ

- **We have eternal life**
- We have a God who can give us wisdom to make good choices in life. We need to simply just ask for His wisdom and guidance
- **God has a plan for our life that is full of purpose and meaning**



- God promises to meet our every need in life when we put Him first in our life
- **We can enjoy His ongoing presence in our life. In His presence is fullness of joy, and**
- Because all that we truly need in life is found in Christ. Jesus came that we may have life and life more abundantly



King David wrote,

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, **who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:2-5)**



- So as believers we have the ability to minister encouragement and hope to those around us as we ourselves embrace the fullness of life that God has planned for our life



- However, often the enemy is able to discourage and distract Christians so that they do not fully embrace this fullness of life. The enemy loves to see Christians living discouraged and defeated lives to prevent them from winning others to Christ – EVERY BELIEVER IS IN A VERY REAL SPIRITUAL CONTEST

- The real battle is for the mind. We must win the battle for the mind and not embrace the fiery darts of the enemy



- If we constantly meditate on negative and wrong things, we will see our heart attitudes being changed. The enemy will constantly target our mind with negative and wrong thoughts
- If we can always quickly replace wrong thoughts with Christ centred thoughts, we will maintain a **healthy heart**

We must refuse to allow:

- Fear
- Wrong attitudes
- Offences,
- Envy and jealousy, and
- Unbelief

To develop in our heart because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

- For this reason, we must be disciplined in what we allow into our ear and eye gates



- The words that we speak will frame our future and determine our effectiveness in sharing our faith
- The world is looking for genuine hope and that hope can only be found in Jesus Christ
- It is so crucial therefore that we continually win the battle for the mind. THIS IS A GREAT KEY TO ALWAYS MAINTAINING OUR PASSION FOR THE THINGS OF GOD



PHILIPPIANS 4:8
FOCUS ON
what is true
(John - Truth - John 14:6)
what is noble
(John - King of Kings, Lord of Lords - Rev. 17:14)
what is right
(John - Our Righteousness - 1 Cor. 1:30)
what is pure
(John - Our holiness & purity - 1 Cor. 1:30)
what is lovely
(John - Praise/Worship of God - 1 John 4:19)
what is admirable
(John - Only One worth admiring - Mark 16:7)

**MAINTAINING A HEALTHY HEART IS A GREAT KEY
TO CONSISTENTLY SPEAKING WORDS OF LIFE
AND ENCOURAGEMENT - BECAUSE OUT OF THE
ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKS**

In the book of Proverbs we read, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)



“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, but his heart is not with you.” (Proverbs 23:7)

So, what will determine whether or not we maintain a right and faith filled heart and our passion for Jesus, so that we always speak words of life? That the sharing of our faith may always be effective as we speak about all the good things that we have in Christ



1) What are we are focusing on?

Do we keep focusing on our possibilities in God, or always on our problems and challenges and the faults of others?

The Apostle Paul wrote,

**“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”
(Ephesians 3:20)**



- **GOD HAS SO MUCH IN STORE FOR EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE**

The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.” **(Philippians 4:8)**



- Continually focusing on the word of God in the times that we are now living in is such a great key to living a faith filled and overcoming Christian life



- The bible is full of promises for all believers

**The Apostle Paul wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”
(Romans 10:17)**

- So, what we continually focus on is crucial as it will greatly impact our heart attitudes, either for the good or for the bad and what we invariably speak out of our mouths, particularly when under pressure



2) What are we living for? – For the Kingdom Cause, or for ourself?



Jesus Himself said, “...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

- There is great purpose and meaning in life when we live for the Kingdom cause

- However, in a world full of distractions there are so many things that can pull the hearts of believers away from having a wholehearted devotion to Christ



Jesus Himself said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:19-21)**

- Wholeheartedly living for the Kingdom Cause is really a faith adventure that is not however exempt from trials and challenges
- There is no greater purpose than to know Christ intimately and to follow God's plan for our life



The Apostle Paul, who suffered much persecution during his time on earth wrote,

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” (Philippians 3:7-8)



King David, the only man referred to in the bible as being a man after God's own heart wrote,

“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11)



So secondly, what are we living for? – The Kingdom Cause, or for ourself? This will greatly determine our passion for God and effectiveness in witnessing to others

3) Are we able to quickly forgive those who hurt us? – We will all be hurt by others at times

Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in, “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (Matthew 24:10-11)



- Allowing offences into our heart will negatively affect both our relationships with others AND our relationship with God
- We cannot have our heart shut to others and open to God at the same time
- Being good forgivers is such a great key to maintaining intimacy in our walk with the Lord

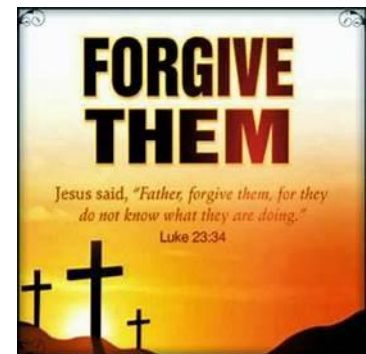


In the book of Hebrews we read,
“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” **(Hebrews 12:14-15)**



This is why Jesus said,

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25-26)



4) Are we continually trusting God in every area of our life?



- God will always make a way even where there seems no way
- God has our future secured. Nothing can happen to us apart from God's will for our life
- For with God nothing will be impossible
- **We need to simply learn to let Him LEAD**

In the book of Isaiah we read,

**“You will keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on You, because he
trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever,
For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting
strength.” (Isaiah 26:3-4)**



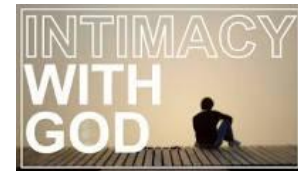
In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)



The Psalmist wrote, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.” (Psalm 37:23-24)

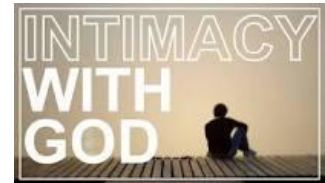
- We must simply not allow the cares of this world to steal our passion for Christ, especially given the nearness of the rapture of all true believers. WE CAN TRUST GOD AT ALL TIMES



Jesus said, “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.” **(Luke 21:34-35)**

“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36)

In the book of James we read, “You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5:8)



- **Jesus Himself also made it clear that we should not worry about the everyday things of life. We must simply keep our focus on the Lord and trust God at all times**

Jesus Himself said,

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
(Matthew 6:31-33)



5) Can we let go of our past failures and **MOVE** on to fully embrace the **FUTURE** that God has planned for our life? Do we also have a repentant heart?



- We must refuse to live with regrets
- Dwelling on the past will prevent us from entering into the great future that God has planned for our life; The life and life **MORE** abundantly that Jesus spoke of

- We have all made mistakes in life
- We cannot change the past



- Dwelling on our past failures and betrayals by others will just sabotage our future and rob us of joy and intimacy in our relationship with the Lord.



- Having a repentant heart and keeping short accounts with God is such a great key to maintaining intimacy in our walk with the Lord

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,” (Hebrews 3:12-14)



Jesus Himself said,

“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

(Matthew 24:12-13)



- **The simple fact is that we are living in the perilous times that the Apostle Paul wrote about when there are now so many influences that can cause people to stumble in their walk with the Lord and to lose their passion for the things of God**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5)



- It is so important that we are quick to deal with any known sin in our life so that we can maintain intimacy in our walk with the Lord and a soft conscience towards God
- Having a repentant heart is also a great key to living a victorious and overcoming Christian life in the perverse and lawless times that we are now living in
- Having a repentant heart also keeps us free from guilt and condemnation as we choose to turn from our sins and then let the past go



The Apostle John wrote,

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)



- **The Apostle Paul was initially persecuting Christians before his conversion to Christ**
- **He knew the importance of letting his past failures go if he was to fulfil his God given assignment here on earth**

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, *forgetting* those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 3:12-14)**



The Apostle Paul also wrote,



“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

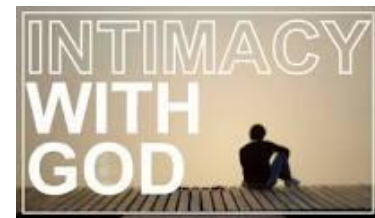
- **As Christians we are not meant to live our lives with guilt and condemnation. If we do, it will steal our joy and rob us of intimacy with God**

- The Apostle Paul chose to let his past mistakes go so that he could fully embrace the future that God had planned for his life.
- His greatest desire was to know God intimately
- For this reason, he was able to write whilst in the confines of a prison cell, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)
- We must simply not allow our past mistakes to define our future and to stop us from having intimate fellowship with the Lord, **AND**



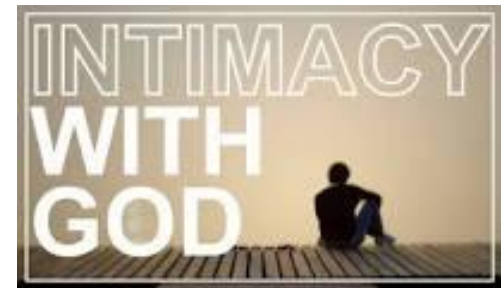
6) Is knowing Jesus Christ intimately our greatest priority in life? – If it is, it will greatly influence the way that we live our life and how we share our faith with others

- Spending time in God's presence changes the way that we think and act and is a great key to us fully comprehending the wonderful hope that we have in Christ



- It affects our priorities in life where it is natural to talk about the wonderful things of God

- Having intimacy in our walk with the Lord helps us to gain God's compassion for the lost which is such a great key to winning souls to Christ



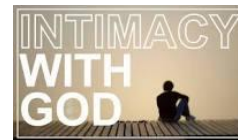
- Spending time alone with the Lord with an open bible helps us to build our lives on a firm foundation and to prosper in our Christian walk as we also learn more about His nature and love for us

The LORD said to Joshua just before he was about to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land,

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” **(Joshua 1:8)**



King David wrote, “O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.” (Psalm 63:1-3)



- **So, in conclusion, most importantly, is our love for the LORD and our relationship with Him our greatest priority in life?**

- I will finish with two Scriptures



The Psalmist wrote,

“Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law,” (Psalm 94:12)

In the book of Daniel we read, “...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” (Daniel 11:32)