

## Are Your Passions, God's Passions?

Over this past Memorial Day weekend, 82 Year old Vic Kleman rode the Jack Rabbit rollercoaster at Kennywood Amusement Park, 95 times in one day, to reach a milestone of 5,000 times he's ever ridden it. Vic sat for over 8 hours on the Jack Rabbit over that day, to set the mark.

"I feel great!" said Kleman, a retired manager of a wholesale grocery firm. "I made sure to move my legs throughout the day to keep from getting stiff after sitting so long."

A spokesman for the Kennywood amusement park said that after Kleman's marathon session, he walked off under his power, although using his cane.

*Vic Kleman has a passion for riding roller coasters.*

I recently found myself thinking about what wakes people up in the mornings. What are their passions? What gets them going?

For some of us, it's our jobs. We are passionate about our work. It gives us great satisfaction and fulfillment and we feel we are making a difference.

For others, our work is not our passion at all; work is just about providing financially for our families, but our real passions reside outside of our employment. Though maybe if we are honest, we spend a lot of time thinking about our passions while we are "on the clock".

For Vic, it's roller coasters.

Frankly, I find Vic's passion (and passionate people, in general), very refreshing. We know exactly where they stand on certain things, don't we. It's a nice change the wishy-washy world we live in. It's an eye roll and a "whatever" society. A yes isn't a yes, it's a maybe, we fear commitment and we don't want to take a stand for anything that might be controversial. People are so busy with their own day-to-day routine, which they don't really care about anything else, other than themselves.

So when people care about something, it's noteworthy. It's exciting.

In fact, I'm not sure how people with no passions even make it through the day? If there's nothing to wake up for each day, no purpose, no reason behind what they are doing, what gives them the energy to continue on through the daily ebbs and flows of life?

Helen Keller once said "*Science may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all -- the apathy of human beings.*"

I know what you are thinking. Passionate people are also hard to take sometimes, aren't they????

They're divisive; it's their way, or the highway. Either you are onboard with their passion, or you are not. You can't loosely join in with them, they want it all.

I'm not a person that has a ton of passions. I don't get too over the top about anything, really.

I've always had friends that are obsessed with things like cars or mountain biking, and while I'm interested in those things, they've never become a passion of mine. But, Here's something that you may find interesting...or not.

I'm passionate about Camping. But not just *going camping*, though that's part of it. You see, I like going camping, but I also like campers and RVs. Over the past few years, Lori and I turned our love for tent camping into something more. We moved up to a travel trailer and now a motorhome.

I spend lots of time thinking about camping, campgrounds, where we'll travel to next, how campers work...I follow blogs and I help answer questions that people might have about how campers work, etc. Basically, I'm a guy and I like gadgets. A camper is a giant sized gadget with lots of gadgets in it. What's better than that?

We shouldn't be surprised by the fact that we naturally have passions, should we? God made us, to enjoy life. God gave us the desire for our passions. And he wants us to have passions and purpose, doesn't he?

So, what are you Passionate about? Knowing so many of you here, I know some of the things you are passionate about...exercise, animal rescue, traveling, music, friends/relationships, bird watching, professional sports, youth sports!!!!, weight loss, etc. All great things to enjoy, aren't they..

## **What is God passionate about?**

What I'd like to look at this morning is whether your passions (and my passions) are the same as God's passions?

Are the things that you wake up in the morning excited about, the same as what God calls us to be passionate about? How can we tell and how can we be sure?

Let's first take a look at what God is passionate about.

The scriptures tell us that not only is God holy, but that he is passionate about our holiness and righteousness. From the beginning of human time with Adam and Eve in the Garden, God has set a standard of holiness. From old testament to new, he calls us to be Holy because he is Holy. He's called for us to set ourselves apart for

him (the very definition of Holy), in order to be a witness to others.

Exodus 19:6 the scripture says that God wanted to make us “kingdom of priests and a holy nation...”

And then in the new testament 1 Peter 2:9 its says “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

The writer of Hebrews tells us to “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14

The nineteenth-century Scottish theologian John Brown said  
*“Holiness ... consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills.”*

But lest you think that this would make life laborious and boring...I like the way C. S. Lewis put it.

*“How little people know...who think that holiness is dull. When one meets the real thing, it is irresistible.*

God is passionate about Holiness

Secondly, God is passionate about a relationship with you. Yes, an actual individual relationship with you.

In Exodus 20, God spoke the 10 commandments to Moses (directly to him, by the way). But if you look at the first 4 of these commandments, you see that God set it up so that we could have a relationship with him. They are designed to establish a relationship priority with us.

1. You shall have no other gods before Me
  - a. Don't make anything in your life more important than me
2. You shall not make idols.
  - a. Don't let our relationship suffer because of the things of this world
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
  - a. Don't take our relationship lightly or flippantly
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
  - a. Carve out time to spend with me

And then later on in in Exodus 34:14. God says "You must worship no other gods, for the LORD, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you."

Have you ever been jealous in your life? It's a passionate feeling, isn't it? It's not a luke-warm feeling...

I love this verse. God is jealous...better yet...his name is Jealous (and some translations use the word zealous) about a relationship with his people. So clear.

God is passionate about a relationship with you.

## What is Jesus passionate about?

What about Jesus, what was Jesus passionate about?

First, Jesus was passionate about loving people. In fact, this was Jesus' sole reason for coming to Earth. If we look at Luke 19:10, we see that Jesus "has come to seek and to save that which was lost." And it's no secret how he accomplished that.

Jesus sought out those that needed to be saved. He went to the temple, he preached to thousands on the mountainside, he went to tax collectors houses, and he met outcasts at the well. He was a man of the people.

But he also had compassion on them. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Matthew 9:36. Healed every disease and sickness among the people.

Jesus was passionate about loving people.

Secondly, Jesus was Passionate about Prayer.

He would pray alone. "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5:15. Jesus knew the value of putting everything down and spending time with the Father. Jesus understood the Psalm "Be still, and know that I am God."

And he also knew the value of praying with others. The scriptures tell us that "[Jesus] took Peter, John and James with Him and went up onto a mountain to pray." Luke 9:2

For those of you that have prayed together with others, at prayer meetings, Women's Retreat, Men's Retreat you understand the power of prayer and the encouragement of the body of believers, and communicating directly with God.

And then, of course, Jesus taught us how to pray to his Father with the Lord's Prayer. "Our Father...in Heaven, Hallowed be your name".

Jesus was passionate about Prayer

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.."  
John 4:34

But Jesus' top passion was doing God's will. In John chapter 12, Jesus says 27 "... it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!"

And then, in his darkest hour, with the weight of the world on his shoulders, about to take the sin of the world on to him on the cross, Jesus asserts in the Garden **Not My will be done, but yours**. Jesus had free will; he could have done as he pleased. But he chose to be obedient and follow the Father's will.

On day six of the ill-fated mission of Apollo 13, the astronauts needed to make a critical course correction. If they failed, they might never return to Earth. To conserve power, they shut down the onboard computer that steered the craft. Yet the astronauts needed to conduct a thirty-nine-second burn of the main engines. With no computer to guide them, they needed to come up with a way to stay on course during the burn. Astronaut Jim Lovell determined that if they could keep a fixed point in space in view through their tiny window, they could steer the craft manually. That focal point turned out to be their destination--Earth. By not losing sight of that reference point, the three astronauts avoided disaster.

Jesus never lost sight of the destination or his purpose to fulfill God's will, and he pursued it all the way to death...even to death on a cross.

## **Are Your Passions, God's Passions?**

So now it's our turn, we need to take a hard look at our passions and see how they match up and align. What can we do, in light of what we know God and Jesus are passionate about?

Our first step is to **reconcile** our passions to God's.

We need to take inventory of the things that we value, where we spend our time, give our thoughts, what consumes our minds. Are they even appropriate passions? Do we need to give some things up? Are there passions consuming us that we don't even want God to know about...let alone consider them a forefront in our lives

It's not really that hard to do this. We can look back at our list and anything that seems not aligned with the God's and Jesus' passions we need to take a hard look at. Should they be cut out? Are they glorifying God? Can they glorify God? Can any of

your existing passions be leveraged for the glory of God? If not, it's time to reconcile them and move them out of the way of your relationship with God.

The next area we need to look at then is the **priority** of your passions. Maybe your passions aren't out of wack with God's passions....but they just don't have the right priority in your life. There is nothing wrong with enjoying other things. God wants us to enjoy these things, but he wants them prioritized correctly.

*I actually read a study that was done in Canada that studied 3 types of people over the course of a year.*

- *Harmoniously Passionate People*
- *Obsessively Passionate People*
- *Non-Passionate People*

*The summary of the test said that people who are "Harmoniously Passionate" for an activity, had an increase in their overall well being and happiness, in fact it showed an increase in their overall vitality over the 1 year study.*

*However, people who were "Obsessively Passionate" or "Non-Passionate", showed no benefits to their overall happiness or well being.*

Harmoniously Passionate, I love that phrase. While I could never find the exactly definition they used in the study, to me, it seemed to be someone that had a balanced approach to their passions and their life. Their passions were prioritized appropriately.

Where have we prioritized the things of God? Are they above or below what God and Jesus are passionate about?

But I have a feeling this morning that maybe one of the biggest problems that we have is that we actually just need to become more passionate about the things of God. We know what God wants from us and we want them too, but we just don't desire them enough in our lives.

Friends, we need to take conscience steps to make our passions like Gods. We need **Immerse** ourselves in the things of God to bring God into the right focus for us.

First, I would offer to you that we need to surround ourselves with folks that have the right passions for God. I don't mean shut yourselves out from the rest of the world, but you need to be spending time with like-minded individuals. Specifically we need to be in a small group relationship with other Christians that can discipline you, care for you and pray with you. God made his "Church" for a reason. We learn from one another and we can grow these desires as we commune with God's people

Secondly, You need to boost your prayer life. The only way to have a relationship with some is to communicate with them. There is no way around this. No

relationship can last without two-way communication. We have to be in a dialog with God in order to listen to what he has to say to you and align your passions with his.

And lastly, you need to be in God's word on a regular basis. The more you study and learn about God, the more you will desire what he desires. We need to know Him and his desires for us, as much as we possibly can.

AW Tozer said *"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."*

What do we know about him? What do we know of his character, his attributes, his desires for us and his overall plan for our lives? Are we listening and asking?

But I give you those thoughts knowing that there is a side effect to developing a passion for the things of God, and that is this...

There is sacrifice involved. As with anything, you have to give up something to achieve something nobler.

Our good friend Vic Klemen rode a lot of roller coasters and spent a lot of time at the amusement park. But he gave up a lot of other things to do that...like money, time with other people, maybe family, maybe important relationships...all to pursue his passion of roller coasters.

We're called to give up the things that don't align with God's passions too. We're told to put them aside and focus on Jesus. We need to take stock and ask ourselves if there is anything that we are giving up for the glory of Jesus Christ? If not, I can guarantee that we aren't fully aligned with God's desires for our lives.

## **Closing**

This is the crux of what God is asking us today. He's asking us if our passions are His passions.

Is what's in our heart and what we desire, the same thing that God desires?

In Luke Chapter 24, After Jesus rose from the dead; he appeared to 2 disciples who were on the road to Emmaus. The scripture says...

When he (Jesus) was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "**Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"** *Luke 24 30-32*

My prayer for you is that your hearts are burning within you for holiness,  
That you are passionate for a relationship with God  
That you have passion for the children of God,  
That you are passionate about your prayer life and communicating with God,  
That you desire to do God's will,

Lets Pray.