



Week of April 5, 2010

## Passion Elements

What comes to mind when you hear the word *PASSION*? Webster's dictionary defines passion as "an intense emotion compelling action." It lists four synonyms: fervor, ardor, enthusiasm, and zeal.

God gave passions to all people – Christians and non-Christians alike. These intense emotions compel us to take action. Sometimes our passions lead us to positive, constructive results. Other times our passions result in negative, destructive consequences. The difference is whether we are controlled by our sin nature, or for Christians, our spiritual nature. God intends our passions to bring about good in the world as we serve others on His behalf.

Do you remember the intense emotions you felt when you first met that special person in your life? You wanted to spend every moment together talking, laughing, sharing and dreaming. There was an enthusiasm and ardor, a fervor and zeal within you that captures the essence of the word *PASSION*.

My wife and I dated throughout college. After we graduated she began wondering whether our relationship was heading anywhere. One day she grabbed me by the lapels and said, "Look, buddy. I've invested 5 years of my life in you, and I've been saving money for our future. Now we're either going to get married – or I'm buying a car! Now what's it going to be?" And I gulped!

I knew this was a defining moment. I felt all these intense emotions swirling within me. I felt deep passion for her, but it was such a huge commitment. Finally, I was compelled to take action. I took a deep breath, got down on one knee, looked into her eyes, and said, "So what kind of car are you going to buy?" Just kidding! I asked her to be my wife, and fortunately for me, she said "yes."

Passions are intense desires that God embedded within every believer to make a difference. In Psalm 37:4 passion is described this way: "*Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.*" If the word passion bothers you, then use one of these words instead: desire, interest, concern or burden.

Let me paint PASSION more vividly in dazzling Technicolor so that it's etched in your mind.

- Passion is the spiritual DNA embedded in the core of your being.
- Passion is the fading ember that bursts into flames with a sudden gust of wind.
- Passion is your heart beating faster as blood flows swiftly through the arteries.
- Passion is the hidden melody in your heart suddenly bursting forth in song.
- Passion is a daring journey along a path of discovery into the great unknown.
- Passion is the energy that thrusts you forward toward God's purpose.
- Passion is simply where you yearn to make a difference for Christ on earth.

There are probably as many passions as there are Christians. Some are capital "P" Passions like the desire of Martin Luther King, Jr. for racial equality; others are small case "p" passions like the parent who longs to provide a firm foundation for their children's future. But all passions fall into one of three categories:

1. If your passion relates to *People*, you long to impact a specific group. For example, the Apostle Paul longed to evangelize the Gentiles. Mother Theresa worked to assist the poor.
2. If your passion involves a *Problem*, you want to resolve some social issue. For instance, Moses led the Hebrews to freedom. Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated for racial equality.
3. If your passion concerns a *Principle*, you seek to increase the impact of a certain core value. The Apostle John was known as the "Apostle of Love." Well-known Christian artist, Thomas Kincaid, is a *painter* who specializes in scenes of light (good) overcoming darkness (evil).

What about you?

- Is there a group of People you long to impact?
- Is there a Problem in society you want to resolve?
- Is there a Principle – a core value - you want to see increased in the world?

Take a look at your life story. Is there a pattern in your life that involves a group of people? Maybe it's a continuing burden you've had to resolve a problem? Or perhaps there's been a tendency for you to focus on a core value?

Whatever it is – find out. It is the fuel you need to make a difference in this world with your one and only life.