



Nov 20, 2022 – Your God-given Passion – I Peter 4:7-11

OPEN

What is your passion? Do you like to jump out of airplanes? Today we want to think about the passion which God implants into our hearts as we seek to serve Him and build up His kingdom.



This is the final of three sermons in our series **Your Place of Service**. We have been assessing if we are “God’s Servants At Work”? Are we operating with freedom and joy in our God given role?

We are borrowing the framework of Bruce Bugbee & Don Cousins’ study, called **Network** (Zondervan, 2005). This approach to spiritual gifting offers three lenses: **gifting style passion**.

We have been examining **three key passages** concerning our place of service in the Body of Christ. The third passage is our text, I Peter 4:7-11.

- **Week 1, Romans 12** – first we must sort out our **adoration and attitude**, then move to **action**
- **Week 2, I Corinthians 12** – there is a unique tension between **individuality and interdependence**

With many needs around us, Christians can conclude we must do more and more! But to be effective we need to discover the role to which God has called us. We dare not simply replace failing to act with flailing. Instead, we must be diligent, intentional, and synergistic. Responding to our God given passion will help us to do this.

Peter wrote his epistle to Christians who were *scattered* and *battered* (I Peter 1:1,6). However, they were also “kept” or “guarded” (v.5). About this military term, F. B. Meyer wrote in his book ***Tried By Fire*** (Morgan & Scott, 1900, 24) that it is not enough to tell the sailor about the “*welcome which awaits him in his home, but whether he can ride out the storm, and safely pass the jagged edges of the rocks, on which the waves are dashing angrily.*” There is reason to persevere!

DIG

Peter taught that an increase in virtue is tied to fruitfulness – see II Peter 1:8. In his devotional ***Awake My Heart***, (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1959, 290) J. Sidlow Baxter offers an evaluation of our faith...is it **restful, joyful, hopeful, loving, practical, patient, victorious, vocal, growing**? These are a checklist that can help us to discover if we are following our God given passion in service.

I Peter 4 is thus a call to active service, sandwiched between suffering. In verses 1-6 we learn that life in the Spirit sets us at odds with sinful society. In verses 12-19 Christians are called to joyfully persevere through opposition that comes to us because people are rejecting Jesus. Verses 7-11 are a call to action in our place of service. Consider a “three-point inspection” of our God-given passion.

CHECK ONE: sobriety – v. 7

In the context of opposition, Peter reminded, “*the end of all things is near*” – the consummation of God’s eternal plans. If this was true in the first Century, it is true today! What is required? We must live with “sound judgement” and a “sober spirit”.

We must be alert and “stand to” (as soldiers on the front line are commanded to do – see I Peter 5:8 This soundness of judgement is the command to right thinking, as we learned in Romans 12:3. In the context of Peter’s letter, what is the importance of right thinking? To pray!

Perhaps the most vital expression of our ministry passion is in the place of prayer. Do a quick mental check of your prayer themes. Are you praying sober-mindedly about serving God according to the passion He has placed in your heart?

Corrie Ten Boom put it this way, “*The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something, and enter God’s realm where everything is possible.*” We not fulfill our God-given passion if we do not start with serious prayer.

CHECK TWO: sincerity – vv. 8-9

To be truly passionate about something suggests focus and concentration, which speaks of sincerity. Sincerity is seen in two ways in these verses. First, it is about a love that is not fake but “fervent” (ektenh). This is not something mushy but suggests intensity, like an athlete’s stretched and strained muscles.

What is more, such “*love covers a multitude of sins*”. This phrase from Proverbs 10:12 speaks to the quality of love which “*keeps no record of wrongs*” (I Corinthians 13:5). Secondly, the care of Christians one for another is observed in hospitality and practical service which should occur without “complaining” or “grumbling”.

Is your hospitality sincere? Once a busy mother invited some people to dinner. At the table she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, “Would you like to say the blessing?” “I wouldn’t know what to say,” the girl replied. “Just say what you hear mommy say,” her mother explained. The daughter bowed her head and said, “Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?” Sincerity is not just for hospitality, but all of the giftings!

CHECK THREE: stewardship – vv. 10-11

The term Paul used for “stewards” has become the English word “economy”. What is required of a steward is to take that which has been entrusted and produce benefit to the owner. This happens when we discover and deploy our spiritual gifting. Notice in verse 10 that God’s grace gift is extended through “serving” and it is “multifaceted”. There are many expressions of His gifting in the church. Only two examples are offered in verse 11 so we can conclude that this is not exhaustive list of gifts. Rather, it is illustrative...“speaking” (prophecy) and “serving”.

Our spiritual gifting must be undertaken with the attitude of steward. Using these gifts, or any other is about utilizing what has been entrusted to us in the pattern of Christ...and for His glory. Christians are to have (lit) “*thinking of Christ*” in our serving, as we learn from the first Century hymn found in Philippians 2:5. The conclusion of verse 11 is that God is glorified through Christ, for He is worthy of the glory and the praise.

How do we know that we are properly stewarding God’s gifting, style, passion in our serving? The praise will go to God and Jesus will be in the spotlight. F. B. Meyer calls this the “*master motive which should inspire our lives*” (167). This keeps passion focused where it should be!

Here are questions to consider as you evaluate your ministry passion:

- *Whom I am most passionate about serving?*
- *What is the cause or issue really motivates me?*
- *What is something at I could do all day from the heart?*

REFLECT

Ernie Coombs, known to so many as Mr. Dressup was a long-standing example of sincere and sober passion to educate and entertain children.



What about your passion to serve God? How does it stand up to the evaluation of I Peter 4:7-11? Your ministry passion could include many things. Some suggestions from the **Network** workshop include both “who” you might serve and “what” issues capture your heart.

- *Infants, children, youth, teen moms, single parents, divorced, widowed, refugees, homeless, unemployed, elderly, prisoners*
- *Environment, child care, racism, discipleship, public policy, poverty, education, addictions, economics, technology, abortion*

Do you have one pure and holy passion? Do you have a magnificent obsession? Do you have one glorious ambition for your life? Listen to [Candi Pearson and Chris Tomlin](#) sing about such a focused life.

Two workshops are available...contact [Pastor Brent](#) if you are interested!

S.H.A.P.E. can be done one-on-one in an evening

Network six sessions, ideally done with a group