

TRUE PASSION

If there was ever anyone who personified the spirit of adventure it was John Muir (pronounced Mure). Muir lived in the late 1800's and if you have ever been to Yosemite National Park you owe John Muir a big thank you. Before Bear Grylls ever started taking celebrities on adventures with his TV show *Running Wild*, John Muir took President Teddy Roosevelt camping in the shadow of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. Of course this was way before mapped trails, GPS and modern day camping equipment. Muir was considered the patron saint of the American wilderness and his passion was as he would put it, ***“saving the American soul from total surrender to materialism.”*** He referred to the great outdoors as, ***“the invention of God.”*** Muir believed that God was constantly trying to reveal Himself to us through his creation and he studied it with a childlike wonder. In 1874 Muir wrote about one of his adventures in the Sierra Nevada mountains when he was staying at a friend's cabin. A winter storm had swept through the valley and rather than seek shelter from the storm he sought adventure. The Gale force winds from the storm were bending trees to their breaking point and so what did Muir decide to do? He found the tallest cluster of Douglas fir trees he could find and he climbed one to the very top. In his mind he wanted to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of the earth, the wind, and the storm first hand. Here is what he said about his adventure. ***“On occasions, nature always has something rare to show us. And the dangers to life and limb is hardly greater than one would experience crouching deprecatingly beneath a roof.”*** Most of us live as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death. But for Muir, he had a passion for life that motivated him to live each day to the fullest as if it were his first day and his last. That is what PASSION looks like. It is a longing to live life to the fullest without settling for the status quo. For John Muir he had a PASSION to experience the wonder and majesty of God through nature.

Welcome to **Week 4** of **“Say It With Your Chest”** where we are looking at **5 Virtues of Biblical Manhood**. As we have said each week, these are virtues that we all should have as followers of Jesus, and as men who are ordained by God as spiritual leaders of our families, we should be modeling these virtues for our wives and our children. In **Week 1** we looked at the **1st Virtue of Biblical Manhood and we said that a godly man should Have a CLEAR VISION for his LIFE**. We need to know WHO we are and WHY we are here. In life there are going to be storms, difficulties, and distractions that we will all face. If we do not have a CLEAR VISION we will STEP BACK instead of STEP UP. In **Week 2** we looked at the **2nd Virtue of Biblical Manhood as we said that a godly man should maintain MORAL COURAGE in the face of an ever changing CULTURE**. We need to decide if we are going to work for the APPLAUSE of Men or for the APPLAUSE of Jesus. We need to make sure that God's word is shaping our heart or we will be conditioned by the world and culture around us. **Last Week** we looked at the **3rd Virtue of Biblical Manhood as we said that a godly man should demonstrate a LOVE that is as TOUGH as NAILS**. Tough love is far more difficult to exercise than physical toughness and it is also far more important. It really is the one thing that sets apart the real men from the boys. A true tough guy is someone who is WILLING to be nailed to a cross for the ones he loves. And that brings us to today and our **4th Virtue of Biblical Manhood: a godly man should have a PASSION for LIFE that impacts their BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT!**

Eugene Peterson, in referring to the story of John Muir climbing the Douglas fir, said this, **“Muir is a standing rebuke against becoming a mere spectator to life, preferring creature comfort to Creator confrontation.”** It's almost as if our desire for creature comforts has in a way tamed our wild adventurous side of humanity to the point where it has throttled back our passion for life and for God. In a sense we need to get back in touch with our wild adventurous side so as to stoke our passion for what it truly means to live for God and to rest solely in Him! Jesus summed up a passion for God best when he responded to the lawyer's question when he asked Him which was the greatest commandment? **Matthew 22:32-39 (NIV) 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart and with ALL your soul and with ALL your mind.’38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**

I am afraid that our view of Jesus has been sanitized by our modern day civilized lens in which we tend to see Jesus. But we need to look again. You see, Jesus had a wild adventurous side to Him that often gets overlooked. We focus on WHAT Jesus said and we overlook the WHEN, WHERE, and HOW he said it. For example, the transfiguration recorded in Matthew 17 and Luke 9 where Jesus gives Peter, James, and John a glimpse of His glory. **Matthew 17:1-2 (NIV) After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.** Where did this take place? On a high mountain! How did they get there? They had to climb it and I am sure it wasn't an easy journey. If you have ever been mountain hiking you know this to be the case. At times it had to test them physically but what they learned about God and themselves during this process was a priceless adventure tapping into parts of their soul that have never been touched before.

How about the fact that Jesus had no home of his own. We think that a basic human right is that everyone should have a house, yet Jesus had no place to call home. **Matthew 8:20 (NIV) Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”** If they were going to follow Jesus He was letting them know that it would not be a life of ease and comfort. In fact, if they liked comfort then they probably would not make it with Jesus for long. Jesus was always on the move and sometimes He was on the run, but one thing was for sure it was going to be a wild adventure.

When was the last time you got outside of your comfort zone physically, spiritually, or relationally? One thing is for sure, you tell me the last time you were uncomfortable, and I will tell you the last time you experienced growth. I don't know about you guys but every time I place myself in an uncomfortable situation, I grow spiritually.

When you think about “PASSION” what is the first thing that comes to mind? A few weeks ago we talked about the time Jesus threw the money changers out of the temple in Matthew 21. But an overlooked portion of this story that we often do not think about was the fact that the Temple guards who were well trained soldiers there to protect the temple from what Jesus did, did nothing when Jesus came in rebuking what was taking place. Why? They were either

intimidated by His power or they submitted to His authority. Either way, His PASSION demanded respect and got their attention. Jesus may have been meek and mild but He also had an adventurous side that stretched comfort zones and revealed an intense PASSION for His Father and for His mission.

He touched lepers, visited the Samaritans, stopped raging storms while walking in the middle of them, confronted and exorcised demons, ate with sinners and tax collectors, and let's not forget last week where we saw how he healed on the Sabbath knowing it would draw attention from the Pharisees. Jesus had a wild and adventurous side that was always trying to stretch comfort zones and the status quo. If that were not enough, He died the same way He lived - with PURE PASSION. His PASSION was to do the will of the FATHER no matter the cost to his own comfort. His life was on an adventure with the FATHER and He engaged all His heart, soul, and mind.

Matthew 26:20-30 (NIV)

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?" 23 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so." 26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus, even though he knew what was coming, chose to celebrate the Passover with His friends even with the one who would betray Him in attendance. He wasn't trying to hide or use His last night as a free man to do what HE wanted, but instead HE used it to invest in His disciples, even if it meant surrendering His own comfort. That's what happens when you have a PASSION for God and you invest all of yourself..

Matthew 26:31-35 (NIV)

31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

*"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."*

32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." 33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." 34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night,

before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” 35 But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

The disciples meant well and one day they would do this for real but right now they don't have the kind of passion that impacts all of their being (body, mind and spirit). A passion that really can only come through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us and to totally being all in on what it means to follow Jesus.

Matthew 26:36-46 (NIV)

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. 41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 42 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. 45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Again, Jesus could have run and hidden. He knew what was coming. But His PASSION is to do the will of His FATHER and so HE embraces what is ahead as if it is a great adventure. He is going to see it through. He will die as He has lived and for Jesus He wants it no other way.

Matthew 26:47-54 (NIV)

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” 49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. 50 Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

Rather than have Peter defend Him, Jesus surrenders willingly! Exchanging His own wellbeing for the ones He loves. See, Jesus was driven by His PASSION to fulfill what His Father had

purposed, not to seek His own comfort. Jesus had a wild and adventurous side and He saw the cross as just another adventure with the FATHER!

When we decide to follow Jesus and walk with HIM, His PASSION will refine you and define you. God doesn't just want to crucify OUR passions, He wants to resurrect them for His purposes! PASSION is good when properly directed. **C.S. Lewis** said this, **"Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us."**

We need more men and women to approach life by giving everything they have to Jesus. Leaving it ALL out on the field. As Paul would say it in **Colossians 3:23 (NIV)** **Whatever you do, work at it with ALL your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,**

Live like your life depends on it! **Mark Batterson** says, **"Don't just make a living. Make a life. Don't just earn a paycheck. Go after the passions God has put in your heart. Halfway is no way to live; you've gotta go all in."**

So here's the real question, **What's keeping you from doing so?**

If we are going to have a PASSION for LIFE that impacts our BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT then we need to defeat the Dragon that seeks to destroy our lives. This may sound like a weird metaphor but in reality it is actually quite biblical.

Revelation 12:1-4 (NIV) A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. **2** She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. **3** Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. **4** Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.

Now we are not going to get bogged down in the details of this prophecy but I want to point out that the dragon being identified here is none other than Satan himself (the serpent of old found in Genesis 3). But notice the last part: **The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.** The woman here in this prophecy is the nation of Israel and the child to be born is in reference to Jesus who has come to ultimately save us from the dragon. Not only is it a fact that Satan tried to destroy Jesus from the time He was born but he has been trying to do the same thing in our lives as well. You and I have a target on our back, especially if you have said YES to Jesus. I want to make you aware of THREE TACTICS Satan is using to try and destroy your PASSION and from keeping you from a PASSIONATE LIFE that impacts your BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT and what you can do to overcome them.

TACTIC #1 - DOUBT If Satan can get you to doubt God then he begins to erode your faith and snuff out your passion for God. Satan begins by planting seeds of doubt as to what God has said or whether or not it is even true. Ultimately he wants you to doubt God's goodness and to doubt God's love for you. Nothing snuffs out passion quicker than doubt. This was the tactic Satan used with Adam and Eve in the garden.

Genesis 3:1-5 (NIV) **1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" **4** "You will not certainly die." the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan is calling into question God's word and God's goodness. He is trying to get Adam and Eve to doubt He has their best interest at heart.

How do we overcome Doubt?

You need to know what God has said and you have to trust God's word knowing that HE is always working toward what is GOOD! **Psalm 1:1-2 (NIV)** **1** Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, **2** but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. We know it is true, we take delight in it, and we order our life according to it.

We also need to make sure that the voice of the Holy Spirit is the loudest voice in our lives. Be able to recognize Satan's voice and make sure you giving the Holy Spirit more air time in your heart.

TACTIC #2 - APATHY Apathy lulls men to sleep spiritually! The sin of apathy is doing nothing especially when it is your responsibility. Btw, doing nothing is an action in and of itself! You are choosing to act, it's just that your choice in this instance is to do nothing. (Insert mind blown expression here!)

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. (Notice the silence at the time of her decision! No input from Adam at all at a crucial time. No, "wait a minute", "let's rethink this", "remember what God said." NOTHING!) She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Notice where Adam is? He isn't absent or off on a business trip. He is "with her"! Notice who does God address first after the incident?

Genesis 3:7-9 (NIV) **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. **8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the

day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man. "Where are you?" Some families and wives are asking the same question. Where are you dad? Where are you husband? They need you to say something! Now, sometimes they may not like what you have to say, but if it is your responsibility don't do nothing!

How do we overcome Apathy?

We might be lulled to sleep by apathy but when we are awake men like to daydream. We defeat apathy with a God-given dream that is bigger than our fear and better than our sin. As leaders of our home we can't mail it in and put our heart in neutral. We need to be proactive. Proactive men have a vision for their marriage and a strategic plan for how they are going to parent their children. They go on offense and resist the temptation to rest on defense. They pursue God and they make an effort to be proactive in seeking Him out through the scriptures on a daily basis.

TACTIC #3 - LUST Lust is a distraction to what really satisfies. Lust lies to us by telling us more sex, more money, and more applause is what we need. It is filled with empty promises that only leave us wanting more and feeling more empty.

Genesis 3:6 (NIV) When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

This was appealing because Satan made her believe that God wasn't enough and that He was holding back on her. He tempted her to explore life without God to find what life had to offer as if she was missing something. Look back at **verse 5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

How do we overcome LUST?

We need to remember that everything we need is found in CHRIST and Christ ALONE! He created us and He knows us better than we know ourselves. He is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE! He knows what we need and He alone knows what satisfies the human heart.

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV) As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. **39** She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. **40** But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" **41** "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, **42** but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." What did she choose? She chose JESUS! A love for God that would also produce a love for others.

If you really want to overcome lust the best way to do it is by seeking to meet the needs of others. Lust is selfish and it is consumed with getting what it wants. But love is sacrificial. It is consumed with giving what it has. If you really want to experience satisfaction then give yourself to others and let God use you to meet their needs.

But to do that you must give yourself to HIM!

Invitation:

Are you playing hide and seek with God? Have you let DOUBT, APATHY or LUST sideline you by robbing you of your PASSION for God and life?

Adam and Eve tried to hide from God. But I want you to notice He saw them anyway. In fact, He sees you also. He has done what was necessary to cover the nakedness of your sin so that you no longer need to hide. He wants to cover you with His righteousness if you will only confess your sin and turn to Him.

He loves you perfectly and He forgives you freely! Will you let Him renew in you a passion for life! Will you no longer let DOUBT, APATHY and LUST rob you of your passion for HIM? Will you crucify YOUR passions and allow HIM to resurrect them for His purposes?