

## Hallmarks of the Transformed Life Where has all the passion gone?

**Intro:** Take a moment to acknowledge Neal and Barbara. (Appreciate the work they have done among us, Barbara's work is quietly behind the scenes in staying in touch with people, often preparing food for shut-ins and others in time of need; Neal has been literally "out front" greeting our visitors and making them feel welcome, checking on our sick and helping to keep us all informed about how we can serve them. We wish them well in this new phase of their lives. Find new opportunities for service to the Lord. Find great enjoyment in being closer to their family in Montgomery. Look forward to their return.)

Let's turn again in our Bibles to Romans 12.

A hush hovers over the dinner table. Conversation is minimal and trivial. Two people sit eating quietly, not merely because they are comfortable but because they have grown apart. They don't have much in common any more; they don't have much to talk about. They both remember the early days in their relationship when they talked for hours; they each remember the light in each others eyes when they met. They both remember when they could not wait to be together; but not any more. Perhaps the question that lingers in the minds of both of them is, "Where has all the passion gone?"

Perhaps the question could be asked in another setting. It could be asked by God as He looks down upon His people. Maybe he too might want to ask us, "Where has all the passion gone?" It shouldn't be that way. In fact, Paul shows us in Romans 12 that it will not be that way as long as we experience the transformed life of a disciple.

The transformed disciple uses his gifts with excellence and humility for the good of the body and the glory of God.

The transformed disciple loves his brethren with a love that is unpretended, principled, family oriented, and prefers the honor of others.

*not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; (Romans 12:11)*

### THE TRANSFORMED DISCIPLE SERVES THE LORD WITH ZEAL AND DILIGENCE.

#### *Serving the lord*

*As regards the Lord--slaving or serving!*

*The Scriptures stress our relationship to God with many images. One of them that we most readily attached ourselves to is the family description. We are children of God. This description affirms God's love for us, our membership in His family, and our hope of His inheritance. But we should also remember that:*

*We are servants of God or Christ.*

*It is interesting that many of the great prophecies of Jesus in the OT refer to him as “the Servant of Jehovah”. In a similar way, we, as His disciples, are called to be servants.*

*When we read “servant” we need to think like a first century person. The word Paul uses means to be a slave.*

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

*What does it mean to have a servant mindset?*

*It means that we always remember that we are purchased by the blood of Christ.*

*It means to that we constantly acknowledge His authority over us.*

*It means that our energies are devoted to the advancement of His interests!*

*It means that the focus our efforts is His approval and not man’s!*

*To the work, to the work; we are servants of God! Let us follow the path that our Master has trod.*

### ***Fervent in spirit***

*As regards the spirit--boiling!*

*We sometimes use the figure of speech.*

(1) A “warm” welcome awaits you! A friend of mine in Moldova wrote me a note, “My hot greetings to Martha and girls”.

(2) Sometimes it has a negative connotation. That just burns me up!

(3) Sometimes it suggests enthusiasm and passion for something. That guy is on fire we say!

*When the OT prophets spoke of God’s plans for Israel (and for us as a part of the kingdom) they reminded their listeners of the passion of God for His people!*

*This time of year we’ll hear a lot of people read from Is. 9: For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)*

*God’s love for His people caused Him to have a passion or zeal for their blessing, for their freedom, and for a relationship with them; and He wants us to respond with a passion for Him!*

*Our service is to flow out of a passion for God!*

*Fervent captures the idea.*

*'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.*

*(Revelation 3:15-16)*

***Not lagging behind in diligence***

*As regards diligence--not slow!*

*If the former phrase describes our heart, the second describes our "feet". If God doesn't want effort without passion, neither does He want passion without effort. He wants us to be eager and active not procrastinating and slow moving.*

**WHAT DO WE DO WHEN OUR SPIRITUAL FIRE BURNS LOW?**

***Get back into our Bible study and prayer life.***

***Get focused on God again.***

***Keep thinking about His love and passion for us.***

***Get back to doing God's work and let the experience feed the passion!***

***Let us look to the rewards of God for our efforts.***

**Conclusion:** I've noticed that "work songs" seemed to have fallen into disuse in the congregations. As a boy I remember them being sung frequently: "I want to be a worker for the Lord", "To the work, to the work", "There is much to do there's work on every hand". We are all so busy that maybe we just don't to be reminded of the need to do more. But we need the reminder!

**Every time I read these words they challenge me:**

*'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. (Revelation 2:2-4)*

*These words will never be said of us, if we take to heart the words of Paul.*