

# Loving God: A Passionate Pursuit

## Opening Questions

### Matthew 22:37 TPT

Jesus answered him, "Love the Lord your God with every passion of your heart, with all the energy of your being, and with every thought that is within you.

1. What does it mean to be passionate for God?
2. When was a time you were the most passionate about your relationship with God?
3. What is your relationship with God like at present? Are you passionate or are you hardened?

## Bible Study

### Have we lost our love for God?

#### Revelation 2:2-4 TPT

[2] I know all that you've done for me—you have worked hard and persevered. I know that you don't tolerate evil. You have tested those who claimed to be apostles and proved they are not, for they were imposters. [3] I also know how you have bravely endured trials and persecutions because of my name, yet you have not become discouraged. [4] But I have this against you: **you have abandoned the passionate love you had for me at the beginning.**

- We can be coming to church, serving, sacrificing, patiently enduring our life challenges, but do we have passion and love for God?
- Doing all the "right" actions don't always translate into real love and heart.
- Here are some questions to ask yourself to evaluate where your love for God is at:
  - Do you still love reading the Bible?
  - Do you still love praying?
  - Do you still love being honest about your heart condition? Your feelings? Your desires? Your sins?
  - Do you still love putting God first
  - Are you prioritizing God's kingdom first? Obeying the Bible over your emotions and opinions?

### Passion Is a Matter of Heart, Not Circumstance

#### Revelation 2:5 AMP

5 So remember the heights from which you have fallen, and repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, your sinful behavior—seek God's will] and do the works you did at first [when you first knew Me]; otherwise, I will visit you and remove your lampstand (the church, its impact) from its place—unless you repent.

- Do you attribute a loss of passion for God to your *circumstances* or to *sin*?
- The scripture is clear in helping us understand that our "inner self" (our heart condition and thought life), determines the depth of our passion for God.
- What is the spiritual condition of your inner life – your heart condition? Is our heart hard or soft? Are we honest or deceitful? Are we humble or defensive? Are we responsive to God's word or apathetic?
- Do we love the world more or God?

## Are You In Pursuit of God or the World?

### 1 John 2:15-20 NLT

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17 And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

- What does it mean to love the world?
- What do the priorities and choices of your life reflect about your passion for God?
- Do you pursue comfort and pleasure more than God?
- How do you let greed and selfish ambition control your lives?
- How often do you make decisions out of envy and jealousy of others?

### Matthew 7:13-14 AMP

13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad and easy to travel is the path that leads the way to destruction and eternal loss, and there are many who enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow and difficult to travel is the path that leads the way to [everlasting] life, and there are few who find it.

- God gives us choices: one is the wide gate, but the other is the narrow gate.
- The wide gate is broad and easy. It represents the world, pleasure seeking, and living a life that avoids denying yourself.
- The narrow gate is focused on pleasing God and living for God's purpose for your life. It leads to building a life to the full (John 10:10)
- Which gate will you choose today?

### Luke 9:25 TPT

Even if you gained all the wealth and power of this world, everything it could offer you, yet lost your soul in the process, what good is that?

- The Bible says we can lose our soul in the process of gaining the world.
- What are the signs that we are losing our soul?

## How Do We Restore Our Love for God?

### Matthew 6:31-32 TLB

So don't worry at all about having enough food and clothing. Why be like the heathen? For they take pride in all these things and are deeply concerned about them. But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them,<sup>33</sup> and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to.

- God wants to take care of us and he already knows our needs.
- Are you honest with God about all your worries, anxieties, sins and desires that distract you from focusing on God alone?
- Identify what specific distractions, anxieties and priorities you place above God.
- Begin to trust God again by praying specifically through each of these and choose to give your worries over to God.

### James 5:16 TPT

[16] Confess and acknowledge how you have offended one another and then pray for one another to be instantly healed, for tremendous power is released through the passionate, heartfelt prayer of a godly believer!

- Sin steals our passion and love for God (Matthew 24:11-12).

- What sins do you need to confess to God and share with spiritual friends so you can renew your faith to change and have clarity to move forward?

**Hebrews 3:12-14 TLB**

12 Beware then of your own hearts, dear brothers, lest you find that they, too, are evil and unbelieving and are leading you away from the living God. 13 Speak to each other about these things every day while there is still time so that none of you will become hardened against God, being blinded by the glamor of sin. 14 For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as we did when we first became Christians, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

- When our hearts are unbelieving and sinful, we turn away from God.
- God wants to restore our hearts, but we have to allow others to influence us and give us spiritual perspective so that we won't be blinded by the glamor of sin.
- Who can we share our hearts with to get spiritual help from and see God more clearly?
- Who needs your help to turn back to God?