

WHERE DO YOU PLACE YOUR PASSION?

By Jim Langley

We often hear people in the workplace talking about “passion” these days, and passion comes in many packages. So let me ask you a question: "Where do you place your passion?" We are all passionate about certain areas of our lives and certain people around us. Much of our life is filled with what we could call common drudgery – merely living out an existence or “just getting by.”

That is the way much of the world portrays life, why advertising counsels us that hope for fulfillment and release should be found in the things we can purchase. Many commercials say, "Your life can be much more meaningful and exciting!" I question the truth and motive of such statements. The media are filled with misleading promises about products and lifestyles that appear to lead to self-gratification and happiness. We would be wise to not become passionate about their promises or buy into the lifestyles they cunningly endorse.

As I am, you may feel very passionate about your work. However, if you find yourself measuring your success in how much you earn financially, your focus is misplaced. God is not the least bit impressed by how much we earn or how much we accumulate. He is much more concerned about our obedience to Him and how our work might benefit others. After 10 years, I finally figured out why God called me into the life insurance profession. Some special words in James 1:27 have impacted me over these past two decades: *"Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."* The second part of that verse is what I consider most important – we cannot allow the world to pollute our thoughts and actions. We must stay focused on what is pure and pleasing to God, our heavenly Father.

Obviously, we need to remain faithful to our spouse and our children. My relationships with my wife and daughter are the most important on this earth. I place their well-being before my own. Being there for my family comes before my work commitments these days, but admittedly that was not always the case.

Spending four days flat on my back in a hospital bed in 1992 helped me put my priorities in order. Before that case of double pneumonia, I was a typical "Type A" workaholic. The tendency is still there, so these days I must continually watch for signs of slipping back into my old ways. We need to remain passionate about our family relationships. Balance demands accountability and continual self-assessment.

We all need some diversions in life, but should not let such activities become our passion. Sporting activities like golf, tennis, surfing, skiing, bicycling, motorsports and others can all become consuming. Even spending hour after hour in front of the TV or computer can become addictive, dominating our waking hours. Some people find it necessary to totally abstain from a given activity lest it become their downfall. That might not be the case with you, but we must exert caution not to fall under its control.

Jesus Christ had a passion that took Him to the cross on Calvary. I suggest we need to focus on Him and become more passionate about His love for us, which is described in John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us...."* From this day forward, it would be wise to place your passion where it belongs – on our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

© 2015, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been an agent and chartered life underwriter (CLU) with New York Life since 1983 and an active member of CBMC of Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A. since 1987.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you answer the opening question: Where do you place your passion?
2. What is the difference, in your view, between an activity or an area of your life about which you feel passionate and one that has become a dominant, even addictive factor in your everyday life?
3. Mr. Langley suggests we should “stay focused on what is pure and pleasing to God, our heavenly Father.” How should we do that? Is it even practical in today’s highly competitive, demanding, often unforgiving marketplace? Why or why not?
4. Do you think any areas of your life might require re-examination, where your priorities are not where they should be? If so, what steps might you take to start making necessary changes?

NOTE: If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:
Ecclesiastes 3:9-14; Matthew 6:24-27; John 17:13-22