

# View

“...having the eyes of your heart enlightened...” Ephesians 1:18

**Boot Camp —April 5-7**  
*Sign up on our website @folsomchurch.com*

**Group Meetings Today**  
*No class at the building tonight*

## Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

***Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate. Thank You***

## Schedule

### **The Lord's Day**

**9:30 AM – Classes**

**Auditorium: Authority**

**Room 13/14: Parenting**

**10:30 AM– Assembly**

**Speaking today: David Posey**

**2 PM Class at the Building**

**Room 13/14**

**Minor Prophets**

**5 PM (building)**

**NO CLASS TONIGHT**

**Weekly Young Adults Class**

**NO CLASS TONIGHT**

**Tuesday, 10 AM**

**Ephesians: "Rich Kids"**

**Wednesday, 7 PM**

**Auditorium: Authority**

**Room 13/14: Parenting**

**Men's Saturday Morning Meeting**

7 AM, second Saturday of the month (see Tyler Wade)

## Information

### **Children's Classes**

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

### **Restrooms**

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

### **For Small Children**

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

### **Online**

You can find copies of class material and archives of previous editions of the View and listen to sermons online at [www.folsomchurch.com](http://www.folsomchurch.com). Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

### **View & Junior View**

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly, plus there are some hard copies printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

# Can We Teach Passion for Christ?

BY DAVID POSEY

One of our themes in the parenting class this quarter is that parents should make every effort to help their kids become *passionate followers of Jesus*. Of course, that statement begs the question: is it possible to make or even *teach* passion for Christ — or *anything*?

Most of us would say, “no,” and I agree. But, if that’s true, then how can parents make developing passion a goal? Aren’t goals supposed to be attainable?

There’s an old saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink. However, someone observed that you can give him a salt-lick. I’m convinced that there are several things we can do that will help our children become more enthusiastic, more driven, more excited about following Jesus. There’s nothing automatic about it, but we can point them in that direction.

It’s important to remember, first of all, that Jesus told us that the first and foremost command is to “love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Jesus wouldn’t quote this Old Testament passage unless he expected us to keep it. The point Moses (and Jesus) makes is that if someone truly loves God with **all** his heart, soul and mind, that person is a passionate — *enthusiastic, zealous* — follower of Yahweh (or Jesus),” isn’t he? Yes the child has to fire the rockets and take off; but parents can take some steps to get them on the launching pad.

First, we should realize that “passion” is something the Bible talks about frequently, although it uses different words. For example, in Romans 12, Paul says that one who leads is to do it with zeal<sup>1</sup> (v. 8) and then commands all the Romans not to be sluggish in zeal<sup>2</sup> (v. 11). Titus 2:14 tells us that Jesus died to form a people who are “*zealous* for good works” and Peter says, “who will harm you if you become *zealots* for what is good?” (1 Pet. 3:13). I believe we can substitute “passion” or “enthusiasm” for “zeal” in all of these passages.

In II Cor. 5:14, Paul says, “the love of Christ *compels* us” (NKJV) and in 1 Cor. 9:16, Paul says “necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.” Paul is a model of one who had a passion for preaching the gospel.

Still, none of this suggests we can teach passion. We can’t. But we can search for ways to provide a spark or fan a flame. Think about the events in your life that have produced passion. If you were ever extremely hungry or thirsty, I’m sure you were passionate about finding food or drink (Jesus uses this analogy in Mt. 5:6). If you lose something precious, the longer it goes missing, you will grow more passionate about finding it (see Luke 15). If you are absolutely convinced of the truth about something, you will become passionate if someone opposes it (see several passages in Acts).

Of course, if you have developed a keen interest in someone or some activity, that can quickly turn to passion, too, for better or worse. The love we have for our spouse is an obvious positive example of that. But even simple things can promote enthusiasm. At some point in my young life, I was intensely interested in collecting things: first old postage stamps, then coins, then rocks, then baseball cards, then vinyl record albums. In those days, there were no video games or computers, so I had to find entertainment through other means.

I was enthusiastic about all of these things at one time or another. But what caused it? What was the “why?” In the case of postage stamps, coins and rocks, my enthusiasm was driven by hope — the hope of finding something valuable in those collections. For example, back then, a 1909S VDB penny was worth a few thousand dollars (in case you’re interested, today, it’s worth about \$115K).

Later, I was passionate about baseball, a love that grew out of a desire, however unreal, to become a professional baseball player. When I realized that dream was not realistic, it became more about identifying with baseball players on the team I was passionate about (and even some other teams — even SF Giants). Why? I’m not sure but it all started in 1955, when, at the age of 7, I was listening to game 7 of the World Series when the Dodgers finally beat the Yankees on a large radio at a friend of my parent’s house. It “caught my fancy” (as we used to say) and the rest is history — my enthusiasm, zeal, passion (call it what you want) for the Dodgers has never waned even though it produces frustration sometimes.

As I grew older, I was passionate about a lot of things: playing guitar, songwriting, fishing, golf, skiing, sales... and preaching. The only one of those activities in which the enthusiasm is still alive is the last one — preaching. Why? Because of all *those* things, it was the only passion that really makes a difference.

Perhaps that’s the key to developing passion in our kids. Teach them diligently (Deuteronomy 6) the things that are *truly important*, the *things that really matter* and *teach them WHY it matters*. Then teach it again and again... and *again*. Reread Dt. 6:4-7.

Do I need to add that all of that teaching is unlikely to do any good unless you are modeling passion and, in your daily life, doing your best to make the main thing the main thing — the things that last, the things that are truly important, the things that really matter. In fact, when your child is passionate about doing some thing, and asks your permission, a good question to ask them is, “does it really matter?”

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<sup>1</sup>The Greek word is *spoudē*, “earnestness, diligence, enthusiasm.”

<sup>2</sup>Greek, *zēlotēs*, enthusiast, adherent, one who has the feelings or attitudes of deep commitment to a person or cause.

# THE CULTURE COLUMN

## The Cultural Jesus

Are we serving the *real* Jesus or a reasonable facsimile — a version of Jesus shaped by the culture in which we live? It's easy for our view of Jesus to be colored by the culture we live in. That is why so many, who claim they follow Jesus, can invoke his name while engaging in sinful behaviors (adultery, homosexuality, greed — you name it) and make little or no attempt to live anything like Christ taught us to live.

The “cultural Jesus” is rarely a product of misinterpretation of scripture. Instead, it is more often a product of a total ignorance of scripture. Consider a woman who wears a cross as jewelry around her neck while living with her boyfriend and says “Jesus doesn't care because he wants me to be happy.” There is nothing in any book, chapter or verse of the New Testament that supports that claim. Jesus said that marriage is the only place where sexual union can take place (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). All other sexual activity is condemned (Matthew 15:19). Period.

Closer to home, those of us who are students of the Bible can also fall prey to viewing Jesus through a cultural lens. We may be egocentric and think that American culture, with its mores and values — at least 50-60 years ago — is the baseline for where we should be today.

That's nonsense and all of us lived during that time know it. The culture of Jesus has *always* been a counter-culture. It has *always* contradicted the conventional wisdom of — and confounded — the “ruling class.” It is not on the platform of any political party or movement. Christianity is its own movement, and is not of human origin and cannot be established nor sustained solely by human effort.

The true culture of Christ is ordained by Jesus, modeled by him and described in the New Testament. It's only visible in our times in the people who tenaciously follow Jesus and, where many are doing that, we'll find a church that is truly “the culture of Christ.” It will never be a perfect “society,” of course, but it will, in the words of Paul, increasingly take on the identity of Christ — and that's a beautiful picture:

...speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. *Ephesians 4:15-16*

This will never happen by vain attempts to resurrect 1950s America or some other “ideal culture.” Doing that denies the unique nature of the church as

Christ's “contrast society.”<sup>1</sup> Rodney Clapp calls this “the full Constantinianization of the church.” He writes,

The Constantinian church is by definition reactive and reflexive to the surrounding culture. It completely forgets the church's own culture-forming and sustaining capabilities. It denies any real tension between the church and the world; it overlooks the biblical awareness of Christians as nomads and resident aliens who will never be completely at home in a fallen world — even an affluent and exceedingly comfortable fallen world. And, it aligns the church with power, against those out of power.<sup>2</sup>

John W. Wright, in *Telling God's Story* (p 38), says

...this leads to believers who share the identical convictions of the society but possess a value-added dimension — Jesus in one's heart or a personal relationship with God or some other life-enriching experience... but still a member of the society as is.

He goes on to argue that the church, then, exists as a “value-added” subgroup of the society rather than a contrast society, as Jesus clearly intended it to be. A.

D. Nock, in 1933, wrote that instead of conviction and conversation, this approach encourages adherence (to the culture). The result of that, he says, is that “the biblical text, not the hearer, becomes converted.”

I was struck by that statement because I feel I've witnessed that mentality in churches of Christ. It is not popular to say this but so many churches are led by men of a certain political tribe and regularly trumpet those views even when they do not correspond identically to what Jesus taught. In those cases, it is the text that's being “converted” into something the hearers want to hear. The favored culture trumps the word of God.

This approach steers people away from the real Jesus to a Jesus that always agrees with the values of the society. If you grew up during the rather mild, “Father Knows Best” 1950s, you may see Jesus through that lens and yearn for “the good old days.” This leaves the impression that there was a time when Christianity was not at tension with the society, but that's not true. And the message our kids take from that view may shock us — they may subconsciously see Jesus as approving *current* American values — or at least not condemning them. That's a cultural Jesus, not the real Jesus. The real Jesus often makes us uncomfortable in our culture.

The point of all this is strikingly simple: let's learn who Jesus really is and teach *that* Jesus. There is only one way to do that, and we all know what it is.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Rodney Clapp, *A Peculiar People The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society*, 1996, p. 39