

MESSAGE LIVING WITH A FIRE BY BANNING LIEBSCHER



SET UP

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Christianity was never meant to be reduced to discipline, it was always meant to be a life of passion.

– BILL JOHNSON

- Deep inside each one of us is a desire to live passionately for God.
 - This passion surpasses personality types.
 - It can many times be misdirected at other things, buried under the clutter of life and hurt, but it is there nonetheless.

ILLUSTRATION: *We are drawn to the Olympics not just because of a sport we have never heard of, but because of the stories of athletes who lived with passion for something. We're willing to sacrifice all for a passion. Pay attention to what moves your heart; perhaps it's certain movies, music or people groups.*

- We are drawn to the stories of people who are motivated by love, fueled by a deep commitment to a person or cause, and were willing to sacrifice and go to great lengths for that individual or cause.
- Our lives were always meant to be lived with a passionate devotion, a fire, for the only One who is worthy of that devotion.
 - But if we are honest, so many of us struggle to live with passion. There are moments of it, but it can often wane and decrease over time.
 - **So, how do we live with a fire inside that never dims or is extinguished?**

SCRIPTURES

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As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

– JOHN 15:9

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We love Him because He first loved us.

– I JOHN 4:19

INTRODUCTION

- John 15 is a powerful passage where Jesus invites us into a lifetime of abiding in His love for us.
 - A mind-boggling thought is that the same way God the Father loves God the Son, is the same way Jesus loves us.
- The Christian life is a life of love. Many have thought that it was a life of work.

ILLUSTRATION: Reading the invitation to a themed party. Don't want to show up to a 90's Themed Party in a Pirate outfit.

- It's important to know what Jesus is inviting us into. Following Jesus is a life of love for Him that continues to grow for a lifetime and into eternity.

- **Big Question and Idea:** So how do we live with a fire, a passionate devotion to Jesus that is continually growing?

MAIN TEXT

1. OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS A RESPONSE TO HIS LOVE FOR US

A. The Christian life is a life of response

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You cannot love God apart from God.
— MIKE BICKLE

- ii. It is when we encounter God that our love for God is awakened.
- iii. 1 John 4:19 reference, we loved him because He first loved us.

B. Encountering His love for us

i. It has to go from information to revelation. Information is not what changes our lives or lights a fire in us, it's revelation that changes everything.

ILLUSTRATION: Watching a boxer hit hard with his right uppercut. Reading boxing writers say he hits hard with his right uppercut. Hearing the interviews of opponents that have been knocked out by his right uppercut. If you asked me if he hits hard, I would strongly say, "Yes!" But that is all information. It doesn't become revelation until I step in the ring and encounter his right uppercut for myself.

ii. The more I encounter His love for me, in worship, in prayer, in the Word, the more my love for Him grows.

C. The importance of worship in encountering His love

- i. Moments in His presence.
- ii. An atmosphere to meet with God.
- iii. Continually drawing close to in adoration and affection.

D. The natural outflow of encountering the love God has for us, is a love for God

2. UNDERSTAND THERE IS A WAR FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND AFFECTION

A. Where your attention goes, your affection follows

- i. The world is vying for your attention.
- ii. Illustration: At an NBA game, they pass out "thunder sticks" for the crowd behind the basket of the opposing team, so that when the player is shooting they can distract them. To move their focus for just a moment from the rim to the crowd so the player will miss.

B. Distractions are a powerful thing

- i. We have been programmed to have short attention spans.
 - 1. We live in a distracted society that is causing our attention span to shrink.
 - a. Illustration: My teenage kids not listening to an entire song.

2. Technology has radically affected our attention span
 - a. This affects us when we are called to “Abide” in the love that Jesus has for us.
- ii. We must learn to abide above all else
 1. Be vigilant with and limit distractions.
- iii. We also grow bored quickly
 1. Sometimes prayer is not exciting.
 - a. We have to be entertained all the time
 2. Learn to abide with Him, even when it’s not the most exciting thing you have done.
 3. The more you abide with Him, the more your love grows.

3. THE KNOCK OF JESUS MUST BE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE

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Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

– REVELATION 3:20

- B. God pursues us. He comes to our door and knocks.
 - i. We must respond to His knock. He longs to come in and dine with us. To reveal His love to us. We must respond to His knock.
- C. There can be no competition for the knock of Jesus

ILLUSTRATION: *Coming home from work, when I walk in the door, my kids would drop everything and run to meet me. Nothing they were doing was as exciting as being with dad.*

CONCLUSION

- If we are to live with a fire in our lives. If we are to grow in our passionate devotion to Jesus. We must learn to abide with Him.
- The call is not to work harder, but to abide more.