



Passionately Following Jesus So Many Others Will Follow - Part 1
By Karen Sue Nyquist

1. What Are People Looking For? - Many people are looking for a cause, a purpose that is greater than themselves. When they find one, some will become inflamed with a zeal, a passion. We see many on the news, protesting, marching, involved in sit-ins, etc., all for different causes. Christianity, Islam, Environmentalism, Socialism, Communism, all spread because of their proponents' passion, their zeal, and their focused efforts to spread their causes.

2. Millions are Hungry - There are millions of people around the world hungry for:
1) developing deeper relationships, 2) becoming a better person, 3) having a more purposeful life. They're hungry for deeper meaningful, satisfying lives. They're thirsty for purposes greater than themselves. The materialism and self-centered lives many have embraced are shallow or empty. Some are already involved in various religious or social movements, actively working to improve society, and to change the world. Others are still searching, asking, "Is there anything worth living for? Is there anything worth my time and energy?" Their lives seem lacking, not satisfying their deeper longings. Many are thirsty to be zealous, passionate about something. Others are not searching and need to be awakened.

3. When They See a Passionate Person - When those who are hungry for a cause see someone else who is on fire with a passion, they can be attracted and want to find out more about it. Even if they are already involved in a cause, they may even switch, if it seems more satisfying, meaningful, or important. They need to know the truth that is in Jesus Christ! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Saul of Tarsus was a zealous persecutor of Christians, arresting them, even having them killed. But once he met Jesus, his heart completely changed! He started passionately loving Jesus and Christians. He became Apostle Paul, zealously saving souls and establishing churches. He was probably the greatest evangelist of all time, converting thousands to Christ, and writing 23% of the New Testament. As Christianity spread, it was said about Christians, "These who have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). There are thousands of "Sauls" out there who can become "Pauls." Some are already activists, some are becoming radicalized, some may already be terrorists. They need to see passionate Christians! There are testimonies of previous terrorists who have been saved!

4. What Are Our Passions? - Are we Christians **1)** passionate about Jesus and have a deep relationship with Him? **2)** Are we working to make ourselves a better person? **3)** Do we have a cause and are we zealously working to improve society and the world? When people look at us, do they want to have what we have? Ask ourselves, "When people who are desperate for a cause, for a purpose, for a meaning for their lives, when they watch me, will they be intrigued? Inspired? Will my love for the Lord and zeal for His purposes be enough for them to leave their present causes, or to change their lives and become passionate followers of Jesus Christ? Paul said, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Will our lives wake up those who are not searching?

5. Passionate About Our Love for God - First, let's look at our love for God. Are we "on fire" for Him? When people examine our lives, will they want the relationship that we have with God? The Bible says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27). Why is that so important? Because that's what God wants and requires! His first commandment says, "You shall have no other gods before Me. ... For I, the Lord your God, *am* a jealous God" (Exodus 20: 3, 5). He puts us first (John 3:16), He expects the same from us. Other "gods" or idols are anything that we make our highest priorities: our jobs, our families, pleasing others, pleasures, possessions, money, etc. Even serving God is marred, if it becomes more important than our relationship with Him.

a. Our First Love for God - Do we still have our first love? Jesus said, "I know your works, your labor, your patience, ... Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. **1) Remember** therefore from where you have fallen; **2) repent** and **3) do the first works**, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place— unless you repent" (Revelation 2:2, 4-5). Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus is serious, we must obey Him. The world needs us to be on fire for God!

b. Examining Our Lives - "I want to encourage you to examine your life and see if you are 'Desperate for GOD.'" Ask yourself:

- Am I satisfied with my spiritual life?
- Am I complacent in my relationship with GOD?
- Do I LOVE to spend time in GOD's Word?

- Yes / No
- Yes / No
- Yes / No



Am I reluctant to miss my quiet time with GOD each day? Yes / No
 Is my hunger and thirst for righteousness unconditional? Yes / No
 In what area(s) of my life am I not desperate for God? _____

Don't let today pass you by. Let today be the day where you declare, 'I AM DESPERATE FOR GOD.' It is one decision that you will not regret." ("Am I Desperate for God - Part 2" - With True Hope Ministries by <https://withtruehope.wordpress.com> > 2013/07/05 > am-i-desperate-for-god).

c. Passionate for More of God - David prayed, "O God, You *are* my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You ... So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory" (Psalm 63:1-2). God told Jeremiah, "... but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me" (Jeremiah 9:24 NIV). Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). If we feel that we are not desperate to know God, to see His power and glory, to hear His voice more clearly, and to have more of Him in our life, we should cry out to Him. **Suggested Prayer:** "Lord, help me obey Your commands and return to my first love. I need more of You. Please, help me become desperate for You! I need to know You better. I want to see Your power and glory. I want to hear Your voice more clearly. You said, 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know' (Jeremiah 33:3). God, I am calling now! Show me great and mighty things. I am seeking Your face, Your heart, Your presence, Your glory! I need more of You. I need a deeper relationship with You. Don't let me be complacent, satisfied, not desperately wanting more of You! In Jesus' name, amen!" Date: _____

6. Passionate About the Baptism of (Being Filled with) the Holy Spirit - John the Baptist said,..."I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming,...He (*Jesus*) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 3:16). "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:3-4). Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Yes / No Paul said to "... keep on being filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18 Complete Jewish Bible). Ask ourselves, "Am I keeping filled with the Spirit every day? Yes / No Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Ask ourselves, "Are living waters (*the Holy Spirit*) flowing out of me?" Yes / No **Suggested Prayer:** "Lord, please fill me with Your Holy Spirit, fill me to overflowing! Help me learn to be continually filled with Your Spirit. I want others to be blessed and refreshed as Your Spirit as flows out of me. In Jesus' name, amen!"

7. Passionate About Becoming a Better Person - When people watch us, will they want to become like us? Carnal, fleshly Christians are a turn-off to others (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). The best way to be a better person is to allow the Spirit to produce His fruit in our lives. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance (*patience with others*), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV). Peter commanded, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ... self-control, ... perseverance, ... godliness, brotherly kindness, and ... love" (1 Peter 2:5-7). Let's ask ourself, "Have I diligently been trying to add more of the Spirit's fruit to my character?" Yes / No Let's do some self-evaluation. We know we can always improve in every area, but let's ask ourselves, "Am I seriously lacking any of these fruit? Which fruit do I have, but I really need to improve? Which fruit am I fairly strong in? Let's put a 2 on those we are strong in, a 1 on those that need much improvement, and a 0 on those we are lacking.

_____ love	_____ joy	_____ peace	_____ forbearance
_____ kindness	_____ goodness	_____ faithfulness	_____ gentleness
_____ self-control	Now, let's pray.		

8. Suggested Prayer: "Dear Lord, I am lacking some of Your fruit and need to become stronger in others. I repent of any sins that have been blocking my growth. Please, help me cooperate with You as You work to add these fruit to my character. Also, I want to passionately love You, have more of You in my life, have a deeper relationship with You, and hear Your voice more clearly. Help me live daily filled to overflowing with Your Spirit. As I pursue You, help me attract many others who will follow You also. In Jesus' name, amen!"

To be continued in part 2

