

**TITLE:** A Passionate Pursuit

**TEXT:** 1 Samuel 17 (David & Goliath)

## **OUTLINE**

A passion is a willingness to **suffer** for what you **love**.

A passion is a **conviction** that leads to **compulsion** no matter the **persecution**.

### **DETERMINE YOUR PASSION**

- Your passion is determined by your **story**. (v.1-16)
- Your passion will drive your **priorities**. (v.22-24)
- Your passion must align with God's **passion**. (v.26)

### **DEFEND YOUR PASSION**

- **Depend** on God's strength, not your own. (v.31-47)
- **Trust** that God will fight for His passions. (v.45-46)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Everyone is passionate about something. Some of us are passionate about sports. Others are passionate about travel or seeing new places, beautiful places! Some are passionate about their jobs or their finances, certain possessions or certain people, namely spouses or children. Still others are simply passionate about a good cheeseburger or a scrumptious piece of pizza!

For the past two weeks Pastor Darin has introduced our new series on calling. We are learning that our calling is most determined by our gifts, our story, and (as we will discuss today) our passions.

Passion is an interesting word. It's definitely a popular word in today's culture: "Follow your passion! Do what you're passionate about!" Most job interviewers love to ask you, "What are you passionate about?" I have a friend of mine that just retired from serving the Lord as a missionary for

almost all of his life in various parts of the world. Following his retirement, the associate pastor of the church he attends here in America asked him, “So now that you’re finished serving on the mission field, tell me, what’s your passion?”

Most people in our culture define “passion” as a strong emotion reflecting a strong desire - something that excites us, enamores us, enthalls us, captivates us, and even controls us. But if you study the original meaning of the word “passion,” you will realize it more closely can be defined as: ***a willingness to suffer for what you love.*** It comes from the Latin word *passionem*, which means “to suffer, to endure.” From this same idea we get “compassion”: *a willingness to suffer alongside another person.*

The word “passion” also carries with it a strong sense of compulsion or control. 2 Corinthians 5:14 in the ESV speaks of God’s love controlling the believer: ***“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all...”*** Passion is closely tied to affection: Both words possess a strong emotion. However, affection leaves self-control in the grasp of the person, while passion removes self-control from the grasp of the person. In essence, a passionate person is a compelled person, a person controlled by their strong emotion to do something, even if that something involves suffering. Anyone here who has ever been in love knows the lengths at which you’d go to make the person you love happy or safe. Love “makes” us do things we normally wouldn’t. ***You could say a passion is a conviction that leads to compulsion no matter the persecution.***

With this definition in mind, I want us to open our Bibles to one of the most famous stories in Scripture: 1 Sam 17: the story of David and Goliath. Here we meet a very young man likely no older than 19 defending his passion in a death match against a giant. Clearly a risk of great suffering was at play, but it was a risk David was willing to endure because of what he loved. Today we look at this story to see what determined David’s passion and what led him to defend that passion.

You have passions, too - things you love which you are willing to suffer for. Many of these are good things, even great things, but some of these might be futile things, selfish things, worldly things. My desire today is that you can better determine your unique passions and then decide to defend those passions no matter what. In fact, these are my two main points for today:

- 1) **Determine your passion**
- 2) **Defend your passion**

## **BODY**

***Beginning with determining your passion, our first point is that your passion is determined by your story.*** David was not always “King David.” He wasn’t born into royalty nor did he win his right to it. Instead, God alone was the cause of his kingship. In just the previous chapter, God speaks to Samuel in the midst of his grief over Saul’s failure as king that He has already chosen another king. God says in 1 Sam 16:1, ***“Fill your horn with oil (which would be for anointing a new king), and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”***

It’s good for us to stop right here and acknowledge that just as God was the author of David’s story, God also is the author of your story. God placed you where you are in the family you grew up in with the experiences you had all as part of His ordained plan. You didn’t author that; He did. Both the tragedies and triumphs of your life are all part of the story God is writing for you. Sometimes we try to mess up the story with our own sin and rebellion, yet God is still the author and even better, He’s the finisher! I’m not saying He authors our sin, but being the masterful writer He is, He’s able to gracefully work around our sin to still produce a great story. God’s great care in planning your story can only mean there is great purpose in your story. And if there is purpose, there most certainly will be a passion worth living for!

God doesn't waste pages or chapters of our lives. Even chapters 1 and 2 connect to and give meaning to chapters 8 and 9. Acknowledging God as the author and finisher of this story frees you to let go of your self-centered purpose and begin asking God for His purpose. Why was I born into that family? Why did I have to experience that? Why did I have to go through that heartbreak? Why has God given me this skill, gifting, or expertise? These God-centered questions get you to the purpose behind God's story.

I'm sure David was asking these questions after the way in which God chose him. In 1 Samuel 16, Jesse, David's father, brought seven of his children before Samuel to be chosen as king. He started with his three oldest sons, Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah. Each one took turns coming before Samuel, and even Samuel, being convinced by their brawny stature, that God would choose his anointed from them. Yet God made a keen point to Samuel. He said in v.7, *“Do not look on his appearance, or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”* God rejected all seven of Jesse's sons, and said, “Are these all your sons?” And Jesse replied, “No, the youngest is out keeping the sheep.” As soon as Jesse brought in David, God immediately spoke to Samuel, *“Arise, anoint him for this is he.”*

This goes to show that our story isn't determined just by how God places us but to what degree we place God in our hearts. The Bible says David was a man after God's own heart. God saw a certain purity, innocence, strength, and trust in David's heart that led him to choose him over all his older and stronger brothers. God reveals His purpose to those whose hearts are God-centered. God will build a God-centered passion out of those who patiently wait for God to direct their story.

This early experience in David's life gave him a God-entranced view of all things. It changed the way he saw the world. He now knew that God chose him and called him. This was God's doing and not his doing. This part in his story was the birthplace of his passion.

What about you? Can you look back on your story and key events that birthed a unique passion in you? Perhaps a certain struggle with sin has birthed a passion to see others also freed from its chains. Perhaps a certain trauma has birthed a passion to comfort others through similar experiences. Maybe working with a certain group of people has ripped open your heart to love them in profound ways. Whatever the case may be, your passion will be determined by your story.

What's true with any passion is that it will drive our priorities. ***This is our next point: Your passion will drive your priorities.*** If you want to see where your passions are, look at how you spend your time. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." You can look at the accolades you've gained and immediately gain an idea of what your heart cares most about. And let it be said that what you care most about is what you will sacrifice the most for.

David must have been perplexed when he came out on the battlefield to see his champion named Goliath scaring away the armies of Israel. It says in 1 Samuel 17:23-24, ***"As David talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard them. All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid."***

David began asking around why everyone was so afraid, and he learned that this giant came to defy Israel. To defy means to openly resist or challenge someone directly, or to force someone to prove something. Goliath was openly forcing Israel to prove the strength of their God. Yet from the way all Israel reacted, they didn't believe their God had enough strength to defeat this giant. So they cowered in fear and ran away!

What's important to remember here is that God's name, His glory, was on the line. Clearly Israel had no passion for God's glory by the way they reacted. As we said, your passions drive your priorities. Israel had a stronger passion for staying alive than for God's glory. They had a stronger

passion to maintain the joys and comforts of their personal world than to take a risk of losing that by taking a stand for God's great name.

This frustrated David to the core! Do you know that feeling when you experience a ridiculous issue with a company and you have to call customer support? Your blood begins to bubble as you begin rehearsing everything you want to say. Some of us love these moments more than others and we have to be careful not to say something mean. But what drives us to quickly make such a call is a passion for justice. We feel we've been wronged and we want to make things right.

When David saw this pathetic display on the battlefield, his blood began to boil in a desire to make things right. He said in v.26, *"For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"* David was maddened that any human or false god should stand against the only living God of Israel. His passion for God led to action on behalf of God. You can see that his passions drove his priorities. In v.32 David said to King Saul, *"Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."*

Our passions will compel us to do things others simply would not do. For those of you who have found a ministry you love to serve, you are willing to make sacrifices to be involved. But what becomes difficult is a person willing to make sacrifices for the wrong things. I once knew a man who, upon getting married, never decided to give up his bachelor life. He continued to be involved in a golf league, a bowling league, and daily happy hour stops at the bar after work. His lifestyle never changed after getting married. We could say that because his priorities never changed, his passions never changed. He remained more passionate about his self-centered interests than his newfound interest in his wife. As I'm sure you can predict, you know what happened to that marriage.

This is why it's important that your passion aligns with God's passion. This is our third point in determining your passion: ***Your passion must align with God's passion.*** At the very center of all our passions must be a passion for God's glory. Sometimes we like to think of our lives as

segregated between various responsibilities and passions: marriage, Family, work, school, ministry, hobbies, and then also God. But the correct picture has God at the center of each of these responsibilities. What drives me to honor my marriage is God's glory in that marriage. What drives me to love my kids is a passion for God's glory on display in my kids. What drives me to excel at work is a passion for God's glory to be displayed in the work I do.

What drove David to the battlefield with just a sling and five smooth stones was a passion for nothing other than God's glory. When I say "God's glory," sometimes that can sound ambiguous or confusing. By saying "God's glory," I specifically mean the manifestation of God's greatness. A passion for God's glory is a passion for God's greatness to be both seen and cherished.

David expressed this in 1 Samuel 17:46 when he said to Goliath, *"This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."* This was more than just a physical battle; it was a spiritual battle, too. In v.43, we see that Goliath cursed David by his gods. If Goliath and the Philistines won, it ultimately meant that their gods are greater than Israel's God. Based upon all David had seen and known of Yahweh up to that point, he just couldn't allow that to be so. His sole passion for God's glory led him into action.

Let's say, too, that the more you see God's glory, the more you want others to see it. Seeing and cherishing God's glory is the best fuel for a passion to grow into an obsession. When you see God at work through you in a certain way, it should drive you to see God at work in others in the same way. Ask God to purify your passions so that you more clearly see God in the center of that passion. If God isn't there, then learn to let that passion go. Ask God to birth a new passion for His glory in your heart.

***Once you determine what your God-centered passion is, aim to spend the rest of your life defending that passion.*** We see here that David was

passionate about God's glory and he was quick to defend it. But notice that he didn't go in his own strength; he went in God's strength. This need for dependence was somewhat easier for David because we learn from [v.33](#) that he was only a youth. The battle equipment Saul gave him was too limiting and encumbering. [v.39](#) tells us that David put the equipment off because he had not tested it. He wasn't used to wearing such attire, which means he wasn't used to fighting battles like a traditional warrior.

What he was used to was fighting in a different way. David had a flock that he regularly defended from wild predators. He says to Saul in [v.36-37](#), *"Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."* David had seen God protect him in times past, and he clearly acknowledges that it was the Lord who made this possible.

***Our first inclination is to trust in ourselves.*** We see an accomplishment and praise ourselves. David saw an accomplishment and praised God. It's essential that we have a conviction that God was the true victor in our past battles because there will soon come a battle too large for our own ability. David had defeated lions and bears but he hadn't faced an almost 10-foot giant accompanied by the evil forces of false gods!

You too will have both small and great victories that will tempt you to praise your own strength and grit. But there is always a bigger giant that wants to eat you for lunch. When that battle comes, trust in God's strength, not your own. This is our key point: ***Depend on God's strength, not your own.*** We learn trust and dependence from seeing God at work throughout our lives. We can recall previous battles and the victories God gave. ***We then learn to see our abilities as gifts and our weaknesses as strengths in God.***

When David went out to the battlefield, it wasn't just him. He knew there was a legion of God's army of angels standing beside him and behind him.



It gave him confidence to go forward. It gave him boldness to declare to Goliath in [v.45](#), *“You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”*

David’s bold confidence to face this giant wasn’t just because he had a passion to defend God’s name but because God also had a passion to defend God’s name. Nothing matters more to God than the upholding of His great glory. [Isaiah 48:9-11](#) says, *“For my name’s sake I defer my anger; for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.”*

God’s great passion is His own name! Some may think this is egotistical, but it just cannot be so with God. Why? ***Because our greatest soul satisfaction is found in living for Him.*** C.S. Lewis puts it so well:

*“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with. . . . The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is ‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.’ But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.”*

***When God’s passion becomes our passion, we can trust that God will fight for us.*** This is our point we are trying to make here: ***Trust that God will fight for His passions.*** God’s very mission, according to [Habbakuk](#)

2:14, is *to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*. Because He is passionate about this, we can be certain He is directing its success.

***In many ways, the entire story of David and Goliath is a picture of Jesus' battle against sin at the cross.*** Sin and Satan came upon the battlefield in an attempt to defy the very God of Heaven and earth. No ordinary human was able to stand against this giant; all failed and were left in fear and slavery. But because of God's passion for His own glory and His passion for our freedom to enjoy that glory, He sent an extraordinary human, a God-human, in the person of Jesus Christ. Much like David, He grew up in obscurity with no majesty that we should look at him or beauty that we should desire him.

Yet He was God's special anointed King that would go to the battlefield of sin on our behalf. When we cowered in fear, He went forward in confidence. When we chose comfort and ease, He chose the hard-road of self-sacrifice. And in that sacrifice of His own self, He slayed our enemy and forever defeated its curse. He then vindicated His great name by rising from the grave, showing who was superior and who was vanquished.

This is the true story represented in David and Goliath. God is the fighter, not us. God is ultimately the cause of the victory; not us. And God is the one who gets the glory, not us.

We can trust that anything we do that God is passionate about will result in God fighting for us. Therefore we do not need to fear setbacks, seeming losses, discouragement, our own weariness, the taunts of the enemy, or our very lives. This is because God will fight and ultimately win every battle concerning the glory of His name.

So when you know what you're passionate about, go forth to defend it, knowing God will fight and God will defend His glory.

## **CONCLUSION**

So the message for today is about determining and defending our passion. Based upon your unique story and gifting, God has given you a passion to see His glory on display. This passion could be for a particular cause or people group. But once you determine it and know that God is for it, you can defend that passion with great boldness and confidence. Because God's very name is at stake in that cause or people group, you can be certain that God will receive the glory due His name. All He asks is that we come join Him.

It could be that you've lost all sense of passion in your life. You may have interests but nothing driving your life toward risk and reward. I invite you first to reignite your passion for God. As you grow your passion for God, He will change your heart to become passionate about the things He's passionate about. Then you will uncover what specific causes most light up your heart and motivate your service.

If you're in here and you know what your passion is, but you've stalled out your pursuit of it, remember today who's ultimately fighting. It's not you; it's God. You may be discouraged over past failures, but know that God is passionate about your passion being accomplished. He will not let a God-glorifying passion to fail! Let us go in this confidence today.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**