



Stoke the Flames of Spiritual Passion!

Some Christians are able to sustain a passion for God for a lifetime. They know where they came from and they know where they are going.

By Kurt von Schleicher

Is Jesus the object of your passion? Do you ever pray for passion, for personal five-alarm revival? Are your closest friends in-love with Christ? Webster's says passion is a compelling emotion, a strong amorous feeling, love, a strong fondness, enthusiasm, or desire for something. It also says that when passion exists, there needs to be an object of this passion. It states there is a negative passion of lust too, but today let's look at grounds for the positive variety.

Was there ever a day in your life when you were more zealously in-love with Jesus than you are right now? What was that like and what were you involved with? Do you know someone who consistently seems excited about Jesus working through their life? Maybe you still know a Christian with non-stop passion?

Maybe you've read the biography of a Christian who burned in the world with holy fervor? If you have, I suspect that you're forever branded with their mark so to speak. Those godly men and women have an aggressive zeal and hunger for the things of God. They impact their society for Jesus. Many think their blazing passion will soon wane, but it just seems to burn white-hot for years. Some of these ministers explode like spiritual Molotov cocktails to inflame a whole generation with love for God. Others resemble a slow-burning coal, quietly glowing in the furnaces of everyday life, not known to any but their acquaintances—yet the Lord raises the spiritual temperature of Christians who come in contact with them and convicts the others.

Who lit them? What's ignited their souls? What divine fuel feeds the vehemence, the bonfire that rages in their inner being? Can we catch a spark from their God-given conflagration that will literally set our hearts ablaze?

Please, someone give me a hint!

This passion comes from none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Here's biblical my precedent.

The Bible talks about how ***“one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her***

tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace' (Lk 7:36–50).

Each denarius was worth a day's labor, so this was a huge sum of dough—about two years' full wages. And look how Jesus defends the ardent, devoted love of a scandalous but penitent woman—and rebuffs the self-righteous religious leader for his hardness and coldness of heart.

*Give me the love that leads others to the
Way, The faith that no devil in hell can
dismay The hope that no rejection of
sinners can tire The passionate zeal that
burns like a raging fire,
Let me not sink in sin to be a clod:
Make me Thy fuel, Thy witness,
O Flame of God!*

*"Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire." Psalm 104:4*

An Extravagant Love

What did our Lord say? **"Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list"** (Matt 22:37 Mess). She was doing this—worshipping Christ! But Simon (v. 40), wasn't very sympathetic towards Jesus at all. Undoubtedly his motive was either to entrap Jesus, or to find some reason to accuse Him. But there she was outside the door, an alabaster jar in her hands. Notice how this episode is kind of similar in many ways to the events described in Matthew 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9 and John 12:2–8, but it is clearly a different incident which took place in Bethany, near Jerusalem, during the "Passion Week." In the anointing at Bethany it was Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anointed Jesus. This incident takes place in Galilee and involves **"a woman ... who was a sinner"**—i.e., a prostitute. (There is no reason to identify this woman as Mary Magdalene either). Jesus was reclining at a low table, as was the custom. It

would have been shocking to all for a woman of such low reputation to come to a Pharisee's house. Such dinners involving dignitaries were often open to spectators—but no one would have expected a prostitute to attend. Her coming was bold. It took great courage, and reveals the desperation with which she sought forgiveness. She was obviously sick of her own way and her “weeping” was an expression of true repentance. The Pharisees typically showed nothing but contempt for sinners like this. And Simon was convinced that if Jesus knew her character, He would have sent her away, for her touching Him was presumed to convey ceremonial uncleanness.

If this man, Jesus, could read hearts as they said He could, He would know right away about her past. The Bible says, **“God guards knowledge with a passion, but he'll have nothing to do with deception”** (Prov. 22:12 Mess).

Undoubtedly before she came to Jesus she probably washed away the scarlet paint on her lips ...but how could she ever wash away the stains on her soul?

What would this Jesus say to her? This was a holy man and a great Rabbi, reclining at dinner with a Pharisee who refused even to carry a pin on the Sabbath. She was a harlot. Would they be cruel and send her away as so many others had done?

No matter what might happen, she knew she just had to see Jesus. Ever since she had heard Him in the marketplace telling of God's grace and forgiveness—even pronouncing that forgiveness Himself—she knew that she had to meet Him that very night face to face. She had to beg His mercy and ask for a new start. With what seemed like less courage than desperation, she ran inside the elegant, whitewashed Middle Eastern dwelling, darting past the servants who were not sharp enough to restrain her.

The Pharisee was startled. Can you just see him so surprised, tipping over his chalice? But Jesus remained totally calm, as if He was expecting her to come. She stood behind Him at His feet, about to say something, when suddenly the unfathomable hurt of many dreams gone bad, just erupted from her innermost being into a surge of tears cascading over His dry path-worn feet. Solomon said, **“Love is invincible facing danger and death. Passion laughs at the terrors of hell. The fire of love stops at nothing—it sweeps everything before it. Flood waters can't drown love; torrents of rain can't put it out. Love can't be bought, love can't be sold—it's not to be found in the marketplace”** (S. of S. 8:6 Mess).

Jesus looked into her eyes with a love she had never experienced with any previous so-called lover. But she needed a towel, so letting down her hair she began to gently wipe His feet, kissing them and bathing them with the perfume from her alabaster jar.

He had not pushed her or sent her away. He received her unspoken confession, and she certainly received His unspoken forgiveness through simple faith.

Simon the Pharisee objected to the non-orthodoxy of it all. That was how he was. But Jesus, never passing up a primo occasion to teach the truth responded parabolically and with straightforward profundity. The one who is beleaguered with heavy debt, He declared, will be overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude, when their debt is totally canceled. She passionately loves much because she has been forgiven much. Her lavish extravagance of appreciation was appropriate; she was expressing this through what she could give to Jesus.

Christ's words contain the secret of vertical passion. **Check it out -- the greater the debt, the greater the devotion.** This woman who was now free from the burden of her guilt, dishonor and shame, poured it out on Jesus, a generous love in response to a generous grace.¹ She made what I call *the Great Exchange* – a life of degradation for a squeaky-clean, new beginning. No gift, no sacrifice, no labor

was too great for her Beloved now. She got a life -- got her life back! That night something was kindled inside her. It was a strong passion for the One who had looked past her ugliness and shown her true love. James warned of the destruction that could occur from a wrong placed, careless word saying, ***“It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire”*** (3:5 Mess.). But conversely think about how our Lord can use the proper word to start a real revival!

Historical Pattern Here?

Throughout generations since, again and again, we find that the servants whose lives were afire with devotion to Jesus were profoundly aware of how deeply indebted they were to His grace. As His friend, do you know how much you have been forgiven?

For example, who was more passionate than Augustine, the fourth-century bishop of the North African city of Hippo? He was a brilliant and arrogant rebel in his younger days. This jerk broke his Christian mother's heart with his extreme waywardness. He fully gave his body over to sensual sins and his brain over to intellectual sins. He took a concubine and dabbling in the dark heresies of the Manichees which was an early pseudo-Christian cult.

Nevertheless, like the immoral woman with the alabaster jar, the young Augustine eventually realized the depth of his depravity and brokenness. Looking back years later, he recalled what occurred, saying to the Lord, *“You stood me face to face with myself, so that I might see how foul I was, how deformed and defiled, how covered with stains and sores. I looked, and I was filled with horror, but there was no place for me to flee away from myself.”* Just like the lady Jesus forgave, Augustine was dealt with at last and he cast himself down before the Lord, weeping bitterly, just to hunt for forgiveness and a new life. After he was forgiven, this young man served God with a white-hot passion that seared the hearts of all who got to know him. He stayed ever mindful of his indebtedness to Jesus. He grew to be a great theologian and teacher of the Church. He prayerfully plunged himself into the depths of God's Word and knowledge, and understanding and wisdom, with the passion of a pearl-diver gone mad -- seeking costly precious jewels. In the years since then, Augustine's fierce loyalty to God has been read in the many pages of his writings left behind. His writings have set aflame the minds of saint after saint.

Do You Need Forgiveness?

Come to Jesus! Do you need forgiveness again? **In your attitude, don't let yourself get too far from the day your spiritual debt was canceled. Remember God's Word and call to mind what you were, how distant you were, and how you felt BC.** Like the woman with the jar of perfume, Augustine's putrid-past was painted scarlet, all too obviously in need of Christ's cleansing blood. Are we saying, then, that only forgiven harlots, heretics, and the like are capable of a passion for God? A hundred thousand times, NO!

Think back to the biblical account of the penitent woman. She was not the only retched offender in that dining room in need of being “washed.” Simon, the Pharisee—the epitome of prideful self-righteousness, cruel judgmentalism, and hardness of heart—also needed God's righteousness and cleansing from sin. But he royally blew it. He didn't grasp the sheer enormity of his own debt before God.

Perhaps this irreligious, religious leader had no track record of outright adultery, murder or thievery, but he was an idolater with self first. Perhaps outwardly he could claim as the apostle Paul later did, that in his careful observance of God's law, he was ***“faultless”*** (Phil. 3:6). No doubt this Pharisee was a tithe-er with his money, mint and dill. But as Jesus sternly warned the religious affiliates and colleagues of His day, this man was in danger of neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23–24).

Jesus Christ chided his host for not having provided even the most common of courtesies to a visiting dinner guest. No water for My feet?--man, what a glaring oversight! Jesus demanded nothing for self. But yes, washing a guest's feet was an essential formality in those days. Not to offer a guest water for the

washing of feet was tantamount to a major insult. Jesus added pointedly: **“Whoever has been forgiven little loves little”** (Lk 7:47). Let’s understand fully the meaning of this parable. Let’s grasp the import of these words.

What Jesus was not saying was that this Pharisee needed only a little forgiveness in contrast to the great need of the harlot—though that is more than likely how Simon the Pharisee interpreted Jesus’ words. No; Simon’s need for God’s mercy and grace was every bit as huge as hers. It was every bit as huge as Augustine’s need. It was every bit as huge as your need or my need. But he was forgiven little because his narcissistic, self-righteous view of himself said he didn’t need the forgiveness. He had shortsighted introspection and insight.

Jesus wasn’t saying here: “Hey, if you haven’t done much wrong, your love for God will be shallow.” He was saying: “Whether or not you recognize it or not, God’s grace is lavish. And whoever recognizes the extravagant generosity of God’s grace will love Him accordingly.”

Lacking a past like Augustine’s past—one of indulgent worldly dissipation—we might be tempted to think that our vertical debt is so minimal. If so, we’ll also be tempted to offer Him a love that’s so minimal. But the truth of the matter that I am trying to drive home is that we all owe Him a humongous debt of passionate gratitude because sin is sin and we **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom 3:23).

Review Luther’s Findings

The sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther knew the seriousness of those words from the book of Romans. Yes, despite a personal history that was relatively unsullied with the kinds of sin people tend to consider greatly damning. With a deep sense of his separation from God, he entered a monastery and subjected himself to severe ascetic disciplines as he searched for divine pardon which he previously thought he could somehow earn.

Luther’s trespasses were of the sort that a real Pharisee might have overlooked them in himself, but Luther couldn’t overlook them. Luther knew they were signs of a deeper, thoroughgoing impiety, a mutiny against the authority of God that incurred an unpayable, unbearable spiritual debt. *“Though I lived as a monk without reproach,”* he later wrote of his youth, *“I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience.”* The knowledge that even seemingly “trivial” transgressions were painfully offensive to the Lord, thrust Luther by his own admission, *“to the very abyss of despair,”* so that he even wished he’d never been born.

With this in mind, can you just imagine the jubilant transformation in Martin Luther’s life when at last he comprehended how God’s huge kindhearted-mercy was enough for him, yes to justify even him? We typically think of Luther’s great insight as the rediscovery of “justification by faith”; but in another sense we might just as accurately say that Luther rediscovered the sovereign extravagance of God’s grace. **When Martin knew he had been fully forgiven, he recognized, perhaps as well as anyone has ever known, just how much he had been forgiven; and because he was forgiven much, he loved much. He had a passion for the truth!** In a hymn, Luther depicts his spiritual expedition from strong anxiety to conviction to forgiveness to strong passion:

*"In devil's dungeon chained I lay
The pangs of death swept o'er me.
My sin devoured me night and day
In which my mother bore me.
My anguish ever grew more rife,
I took no pleasure in my life
And sin had made me crazy.
Thus spoke the Son, 'Hold thou to
me, From now on thou wilt make it.
I gave my very life for thee
And for thee I will stake it.
For I am Thine and Thou art mine,
And where I am our lives entwine
The old Fiend cannot shake it.'"*

This monk, Martin Luther, with Master of Arts in Sacred Theology, an ordinary Catholic lecturer at Wittenberg, who was born in a small dorf called Eisleben, Germany—whose father Herr Hans Luther, a hardworking copper miner that strongly wished his son would become a lawyer—was now totally bananas for Jesus Christ! And regardless of what others near or far wanted, Martin wanted to remain totally on-fire for the Lord. In fact the rest of Luther's days, he did burn with a zeal for God—a God he had once hated. At the risk of excommunication, exile, and even death, the German reformer devoted his life to proclaiming the lavishness of God's unmerited mercy. Hear his heart's prayer:

Lord God, you have made me a pastor in Your church. You see how unfit I am to undertake this great and difficult office, and if it were not for Your help, I would have ruined it all long ago. Therefore I cry to You for aid. I offer my mouth and my heart to Your service. I desire to teach the people - and for myself, I would learn ever more and diligently to meditate on Your Word. Use me as Your instrument, but never forsake me, for if I am left alone I shall easily bring it all to destruction. Amen.

From Luther's example, even those without an immoral, scandalous past can discover that they too have been "forgiven much"—and can be motivated to love God much.

Aggressively Fueling the Holy Passion

From the testimonies of both Augustine and Martin Luther, we can tell what it was that ignited their passion for God. It was an acute awareness of the depths of God's grace. Whether our sins were massive or tiny, sin is sin and the knowledge that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us can stir in us a lavish devotion in response to God's lavish mercy.

But what will fuel our passion for a lifetime? How do we change our simple gratitude into a lifelong mind-set of thankfulness for God's extreme goodness? Again, for clear hints we can look at the lives of those in earlier generations who lived and demonstrated that kind of sustained ardor for the Lord.

One year my wife and I spent some vacation time in Siena, Italy. It was so old and beautiful, rich in history. Have you ever read about Catherine of Siena? She was a fourteenth-century Bible lover and social activist. She boldly portrayed to her world a passionate friendship with the Holy Spirit that expressed itself in self-denying service for others. She generously gave of herself for the poor and the sick through long hours of hard work as a nurse in homes and hospitals. When the plague tore up countless lives from her northern Italian hometown, and many fled the ill and dying for fear of succumbing to the disease themselves, she was brave to care for them. She courageously stood with the victims and she diligently recruited others to help her help them.

What kept Catherine's passion going through so many years of devoted service unto Jesus? In the *Dialogue*, a compellingly beautiful literary account of Catherine's extended prayer conversations with God, we find sufficient evidence of the "fuel" that fed her upward obsession: This determined Christian spent a lot of time alone with the Lord, but she also spent a lot of time out among the common people. In Catherine's hours of prayer, she gave herself often to meditating on the greatness of what she called God's "fiery mercy."

Catherine didn't view God's grace as a mere doctrine to be believed. God's great mercy, and the human wickedness that necessitated that mercy, was for her a daily and inexorable reality. Like Martin Luther, Catherine recognized her sinful rebellion despite the absence of obvious scandal. Unlike Martin, Catherine learned at an early age that God's Agape love was stronger than all her weaknesses. Therefore she meditated on His love and prayed to obtain His type of selfless love, so much so in fact, that this intercessory endeavor became as famous throughout Europe as her practical works of love. Listen to the burning passion and gratitude of this lady:

O eternal Mercy, You who cover over your creatures' faults! . . . O unspeakable mercy! . . . My heart is engulfed with the thought of You! For wherever I turn my thoughts I find nothing but mercy! . . . O immeasurably tender Love! Who would not be set afire with such love!"

Through many hours of such daily communion with God, and pondering deep within herself the inscrutability of human transgression and divine grace, Catherine kept alive her simple relationship with Jesus. In the words of this forever grateful lady, the Christian who keeps in mind how Christ poured out Himself for us with "burning love" will themselves "catch fire with unspeakable love."

Thanks For all the Small Things

We can also find another secret to how we can fuel our passion for God in looking at the life of Francis of Assisi. This thirteenth-century itinerate preacher and evangelistic reformer, known to contemporaries as the "Troubadour of God," spent his time in teaching others to celebrate the grace of God—not just in Christ's sobering cruel death and resurrection, but also in the delightful gifts of daily existence. According to Francis' famous biographer, G. K. Chesterton, the commonplace and ordinary graces of life compelled Francis to acknowledge his continuing indebtedness and gratitude to Christ, for he knew "there is no way in which a man can earn a star or deserve a sunset."

When we look at Francis' patterns, it is evident to see how he shared with Augustine and the others we've mentioned, a deep sense of his own unworthiness. He grew up in a town known in his day as "New Babylon," and as a young person he had done much to contribute to the community's decadence and party-hardy-reputation for brazen immorality. According to an early biographer, young Francis was a wild, lawless carouser, a spoiled, selfish, rude and vain snob who once boasted, "One fine day the whole

world will bow to me.” Not surprisingly then, after Francis repented and was born again, he deeply regretted such an arrogant past.

Even so, the quality for which Francis has perhaps been best remembered is his unabashed joy in the simplicity, beauty and goodness of God’s creation. No brilliant flower of the field, no graceful sparrow in flight escaped his grateful appreciation. For Francis of Assisi, giving thanks and praise to God for all the creatures that God made, was a daily discipline that also cultivated in those around him a passionate love for their Maker. It was infectious and it changed sinners!

Wherever he went, this joyous saint boldly called people to repent of their ungratefulness and to recognize the magnificent splendor of God’s goodness. In fact, Francis’s desire to serve God as His “troubadour” was so intensely fierce, people often called him mad. But didn’t people also call Paul mad? What kind of passion, they wondered, would lead a man into spending so much time alone in communion with an unseen God? What kind of passion would lead a person to preach to the animals of the field and the birds of the air and anyone else eavesdropping? What kind of passion is this that would lead a person to tap dance before the Pope—to calmly walk through enemy battle lines to confront a Muslim Sultan—so that all could hear the glorious Gospel of God’s love?

Must we imitate such unusual behaviors in order to imitate Francis’s devotion? If the Spirit so leads you. We shouldn’t be so quick to judge the wisdom of such a man as mere madness. In spirituality as in physiology, to those accustomed to functioning at a temperature below normal, 98.6 degrees feels like a fever. But that’s so normal. What am I saying? I’m saying that to have radical passion for Jesus is normal with a capital “N.” But maybe like those of that day, Francis’s passion burns us a bit because we’re not yet fully ablaze ourselves? In any case, we should learn to emulate humble Christians like Francis to fuel our devotion to God. We can do this with the unassuming firewood of thanks for God’s gifts in everyday life.

We can learn from the passionate vision of the Apostle Paul. He was also keenly aware of all that was forgiven him. Addressing the Corinthians, Paul declared, ***“I care about you so much—this is the passion of God burning inside me! I promised your hand in marriage to Christ”*** (2 Cor. 11:1 Mess). Prophetically, King David declared, ***“Passion for your house burns within me, so those who insult you are also insulting me”*** (Ps 69:9). You can learn of the depths of David’s love by his thorough repentance (see Psalm 51). This adulterer and murderer was forgiven much. Yes, these people loved God very much!

Properly Directing Our Passion

Evangelist D.L. Moody was another passionate soul who knew to what great extent he had been forgiven? And as a result he felt a deep burden for those stuck in sin around him. He knew that they too could just as easily be set free, as he was. His passion and gratefulness worked itself out through words and works that literally rocked a wayward nation, back to God. But he learned some important lessons along the way too. One night for instance when Moody preached in the city of Chicago, he decided to give his listeners a night to think over the question *“What will you do with Jesus?”* Then he asked them to consider coming back the next evening to hear him preach again. The next morning though, Chicago lay in ashes. On October 8, 1871, the very night of his message, the Great Chicago fire started. Many of the people in his audience who had been sitting under the sound of his voice had died in that blaze. To Moody’s dying day, he always regretted and felt profoundly sorry that he had told the people to wait. He never forgot that hard-learned lesson. He sought the Lord for greater soul-winning passion and later penned these words:

“I have never dared to give an audience a week to think of their salvation since. If they were lost they would rise up in judgment against me. I want to tell one lesson I learned that night which I have never forgotten, and that is when I preach, to press Christ upon the people then and there, and try to bring them to a decision on the spot. I

would rather have my right hand cut off than to give an audience a week now to decide what to do with Jesus.”

This reminds me of the words of Bailey Smith who remarked, *“If the fires and passion of evangelism die in the evangelist, they will very likely burn out in the church.”* From the lives of all these men and women of God—Augustine, Luther, Catherine, Francis, Paul, David and Moody—we can draw one final lesson about sustaining a passion for God. Though each of them took a vocational path quite different from the others, they all translated their heart-felt devotion into positive action, taking on a concrete mission in life to influence as many as possible.

They discovered, as we must, that a passion unchanneled is a passion soon dissipated. **Do you continue to go back to the Lord, asking for the details of what he has called you to do?** Each one of these firebrands employed their own unique gifting and temperament in the life-mission undertaken. For Augustine, a brilliant theologian and writer, the love he felt for God became a roaring passion to understand and expound God’s grace as revealed in the Bible. For Luther, an eloquent and forceful preacher, it became a boisterous passion to proclaim God’s grace in the free Gift of salvation in Christ. For Catherine, a tenacious and compassionate activist for the underdog of sorts, it became a radiant passion to demonstrate God’s grace in a practical way. And for Francis, a humble and cheerfully exuberant troubadour, it became a beaming passion to all-out celebrate God’s grace in the midst of His natural world. Whatever the road taken, the roadside and those waiting there, were set ablaze by these men and women of God who knew how much they had been given and forgiven, and who carried the burning torch of a grateful heart. The words of Chesterton, though written of Francis, could be said of them all:

It is the highest and holiest of the paradoxes that the man who really knows he cannot pay his debt will be forever paying it. He will be forever giving back what he cannot give back, and cannot be expected to give back. He will be always throwing things away into a bottomless pit of unfathomable thanks.

As with the woman Jesus forgave, theirs was a fulsome, effusive love in response to a lavish grace. Theirs was an extravagant devotion to a more-than-munificent God to whom they owed a debt that was always growing, and always canceled. One of the beautiful hymns of the church describes the concept of the burning heart very well:

*Teach me to love Thee more than Thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the Heav’n descended dove,
My heart an altar and Thy love the flame.²*

Please serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. The free fiery grace that ignited these believers’ hearts is now offered to you as well. Is your heart cold as ice, lukewarm,³ or on-fire? **Right now, let Jesus kindle your life afresh in His blazing passion—so that your heart, too, will be an hot inferno for God!**



¹ As a sinner before meeting Christ there was a time when I (Kurt von Schleicher) really struggled in my flesh to reform my own life from my powerful addicting bondages of sin and I simply failed to manumit myself from the chains so to speak. And it wouldn’t be hard to imagine that those of us who

unsuccessfully tried to free ourselves can recognize more easily what we've been freed from and more easily feel grateful inside. All Christians have been forgiven so much though.

² This is from the song, Spirit of God, *Descend upon my Heart* by Gorge Croly and Dredrick C. Atkinson.

³ Being lukewarm is when a born again Christian is not solely looking to Jesus to meet all their needs. They are the most miserable of all people having too much of the world to be happy in the Kingdom and too much of the Kingdom to be happy in the world system. They have one eye on the world to meet their needs and they are trying to live for Jesus their own way. ***"In a sense, I need to realize how lost in this life I still am apart from Jesus' Lordship."*** --Woody Denman (A Dallas friend).