



**MADE FOR**  
**MISSION**  
DISCOVERING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD CREATED YOU

## SERIES OVERVIEW: Made for Mission

*"Passion"*

Preacher: Pastor John Mury

May 26, 2019

[Series Sermon Recordings](#)

[Discipleship Resources](#)

### SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

Note cards (or paper) and pens.

### QUESTIONS?

Email Abby

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**PLEASE NOTE! Sermon questions will go on break at the end of this series through the summer. They will return in September. Over the summer, broader questions will be available.**

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

HOW TO USE: *The three sections below (opening, sermon content questions, and application) represent the three connections we emphasize at Highrock: connecting to **God's People**, connecting to **God Personally**, and connecting to **God's Purposes**. Select at least one question from each section or create questions that are more specific to your group.*

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### WEEKLY CHECK IN

Use a few minutes at the beginning of your time to follow up on any action items shared from last week. Was there a *next step or application* challenge that they took on this past week? What did they learn about themselves and following Jesus?

### CONNECTION QUESTIONS

Choose ONE of these that fits your group, or modify it so that it will fit your group better. These can make great **opening questions** or **ending questions**. If you have had a really in-depth conversation, ending on a light note can help transition to concluding your time together on a less intense question.

1. Take time as a group to write down or think for a few minutes about what themes you are beginning to notice arising from your conversations about how God might be inviting you into mission (these can be small or large ways, they are all significant). Are there other theme that stand out to you about your purpose? Notice how these same thing might come up over the rest of the series.
2. When have you experienced a mountain top experience (a retreat, conference, etc.) ? What is passion that is stirred up there usually like?

### SERMON QUESTIONS

Use a **couple of the questions** below or make up your own. You can always begin with: "Do you have any questions about what you heard in the sermon this week?" Or, "What stood out to you from the Pastor's sermon?"

1. In this season of life, what are you passionate about? How do you identify that this thing is something you are passionate about: Through your actions, your calendar, your books on your nightstands, relationships, podcasts, how you spend your money etc.?  
  - a. What were you passionate about as a kid? What did you do that showed your passion?
2. What is important to have alongside our passion as a guide? What does it look like for passion to have direction and purpose?  
  - a. What could be the effect of pursuing passion but not having clear direction or vision for it?
  - b. What elements have helped something you are passionate about last?  
    - i. **Sermon Reference:** *“Instead of all those previous, inspiring quotes about passion, I’m more likely to resonate with **Ben Franklin**, who said: “If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins.” Passion needs guidance. Passion needs direction.”... “Nehemiah is one of my heroes. And one of the things I love about his story is that he discovered and lived out of a passion was all those things. His passion: LASTED -- it didn’t fade away like a New Years resolution. It was a passion that brought LIFE to so many, not the destruction that our wild passion can often create. And his passion inspired him to make great sacrifices in LOVING God and others. I want a heart like Nehemiah’s.”*
3. Read [Nehemiah chapter 1](#) together. Then consider the following questions:  
  - a. What stands out to you from this passage? Can you relate to Nehemiah’s reaction to hearing about the state of Jerusalem and the Israelites? Have you ever been moved to tears by news you have received? Have you ever been moved to mourn and pray and fast for an extended period of time?
  - b. When you are experiencing a state like Nehemiah’s what have your prayers to God been like? Or, do you tend to respond to those circumstances with prayer or not? Why is that do you think?
  - c. What do you notice about how Nehemiah prays: how he addresses God, language, verbal posture, etc.?  
    - i. **Sermon Reference:** There were no safe spaces for Nehemiah’s people or for worshiping God. Nehemiah’s reaction to the news was immediate, and powerful **Nehemiah 1:4** *When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.* Have you ever been moved to tears by a new report? Have you ever been moved to mourn and pray and fast for an extended period of time?
  - d. What sustained Nehemiah during his time of fasting and acting out of his passion? What were the costs to him personally? What do you see as his priorities through his actions?  
    - i. **Sermon Reference:** Many of us are willing to give out of our excess. But what if you realized that God wanted you to give wholeheartedly, and cheerfully? What if it would mean that you would have to lower your standard of living? That’s what Nehemiah did -- a sacrifice fueled by godly passion.
4. Thinking about the sermon last week, how might your passions be born out your painful or challenging experiences? Share about what that thread from the experiences to your passion/s is/are?  
  - a. **Sermon Reference:** *“Nehemiah’s people had lived for decades in captivity. They longed to return to their home. And the shame of his people was a shame upon their God. After all, how can you trust a God who won’t, or can’t protect, the people. So Nehemiah is heart-broken. There’s an important truth about passion here. Quite often, our strongest passions come out of our deepest pains. That’s even what the word means. The word “passion” comes from the Latin “passio-” which means suffering. And you can think of it as a 2-fold kind of suffering. To love something so much that it hurts. And to love something so much that you’re willing to suffer for it.”*

5. Consider a time when you were comforted in your struggle/ challenging season. What was comforting? How has that shaped how you comfort others who are in a difficult season?
  - a. **Sermon Reference:** “As you seek to discover and live out of your passions, isn’t it amazing and wonderful that God might use our deepest hurts to develop our most powerful passions? As the Apostle Paul said: [2 Cor 1:3-4] *we comfort others with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.* For Nehemiah, his pain of exile and the pain of his people fueled his passion.”
  
6. For what might you desire to pray in the likeness of Nehemiah’s passion? Is there something in your life, in your community locally or globally for which you can pray for God to use you for?
  - a. Is your passion something you have been observing from a distance? What would it look like to get off the sidelines?
  - b. Are there fears you have or doubts which you notice that arise when you think about asking God to use you? What does it look like to trust God with those too?
    - i. **Sermon Reference:** “Do you have the passion to pray like that -- to ask God to use you as the answer to your own prayers? “God, I don’t just want to be a spectator while you do all the work! No, Lord -- I want to be in the game! Lord, I don’t just want you to comfort so-and-so, I want you to use ME to comfort that person. Lord, I don’t just want you to bring my co-worker to faith, I want you to use ME to bring them to faith!” Now that’s a passionate prayer!”
  
7. Recall the story of the runner Eric Liddell: How do you respond to Pastor John’s question, is there something you love, but you’ve just never considered it as a way to connect with God more deeply?
  - a. **Sermon Reference:** “How about you? Is there something you love, but you’ve just never considered it as a way to connect with God more deeply? Again, running is that for me, but what about you? Remember, every good gift is from God above, so at the very least, you could grow in appreciation for the giver of that gift. Might God be inviting you to grow in gratitude for the gifts that you are enjoying?”
  
8. Discuss together, how would you define shame?
  - a. Do you carry the weight of shame that paralyzes your heart rather than opening it up to whole-hearted passion? Is it possible that the shame that paralyzes you now could become the very thing that God transforms into passion for serving God and others?
  - b. What would it look like to allow God in to transform your shame and begin to live wholeheartedly?
    - i. **Sermon Reference:** “I know too many people who seem paralyzed by their pain and shame. But God stands ready to work all things [Romans 8:28] for good, even the things you wished had never happened. What about you? Do you carry the weight of shame that paralyzes your heart rather than opening it up to whole-hearted passion? Is it possible that the shame that paralyzes you now could become the very thing that God transforms into passion for serving God and others?”
  
9. How can the practice of gratitude in your life help you maintain what you are passionate about? How might this practice also help you connect with God as the giver of the gifts we have? How might you begin to practice gratitude in your life?

## APPLICATION/S

1. Read these questions below, where do you find yourself resonating with God’s invitation for you? Why?
  - a. *Is there a way in which God’s Spirit might be inviting you to love something you love even more?*
  - b. *Maybe something you’ve neglected as being not important enough? Or something that’s been crowded out by less important things? How might you start to pursue that love again?*

- c. *Is God perhaps inviting you to learn to love God through what you love?*
  - d. *Do you love the gift and it's time to love the giver of the gift?*
2. What does it look like to live your passion out of your identity as one loved by Jesus? How does this anchor point orient how you think about your passions and how you might then live them out? Why might it matter where you root your identity as you seek to figure out your passion?
- a. How might you remind yourself of Jesus' love for you this week as you ask God to help bring clarity to your passions.
    - i. **Sermon Reference:** Jesus, of course, was the ultimate example of passion. He loved us enough to suffer anything on our behalf. And his suffering only seemed to fuel his passion for us -- calling out for forgiveness for his persecutors, even from the cross. And he calls us to follow him, to carry our crosses, daily. To continue to make sacrifices, out of love, which as we've seen, is precisely what gives us the capacity to love even more. To love more and more like Jesus.
3. Pastor John shared 3 points for developing passion summarized below. How do you find yourself identifying with these three ideas? Which might God be inviting you to explore your passions right now?
- a. **Love what you love (even more):** "I believe that idea is exactly what the Psalmist is getting at in **Psalm 37:4**: *Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.* That doesn't mean that God will simply give you everything you want. Instead, the idea is that as you follow God with your whole heart, God will grow your heart along the way."
  - b. **Love God (and others) through what you love:** "When you learn to recognize that every good thing that you love is a gift from God, your love for those things can grow a love for God in you. As the Bible says [**James 1:17**]: *Every good and perfect gift is from above. There is a way to appreciate the gift so that we love the giver even more. And God is the ultimate giver.*"
  - c. **Find your passion in your pain (and in your shame):** "Both Pastor Meghan and I have children with special needs. And I can see how that pain in her life gives her a passion to fight for inclusion for those who appear to be least in our community. These are godly passions rooted in our pain...Your pain, and even your shame, can become the very wellspring of passion that drives you to complete the work that God wants to do through you, and in you!"

## CLOSING

Summarize the key points of your discussion and encourage people to **share one action step** they could take during the next week based on what they have shared. **Take time to pray together.** Write those down and start next week by checking in with how it went, or better yet, check in during the week!

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## RESOURCES

### SERMON SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

#### Nehemiah 1

*The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:*

*In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.*

*They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."*

*When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said:*

*“Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.*

*“Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’*

*“They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”*

*I was cupbearer to the king.*

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## SCRIPTURE STUDY: 5Cs

If you are interested in studying the scripture more deeply, one method is to use the 5 Cs. Read through the passage and move through each C. The goal is not to move through them quickly, but to really consider each section. If you wanted to study the passage together, you, as the leader should take some time beforehand to complete the Cs and it can be helpful to have group members come prepared with the first 3 already considered. Then, as a group, you can briefly talk over some of the points and have a longer conversation about curiosities and conclusions. This study tool will be posted within all of the discussion questions.

- **Context:** What is the literary context of the passage? What comes before? After? Context within whole book? Relation to main idea of section, book, testament, whole Bible?
- **Christ:** How is Jesus revealed here? If in OT, prefiguration, typology, prophesy, implications for Christ's person and work? How is he needed, anticipated, fulfilled?
- **Crux:** What is the main idea? Try and find a section of the text that states it and have reasons for why that is the main idea? How do the other points support it?
- **Curiosities:** What is surprising about this text? Controversial? Mysterious? Shocking?
- **Conclusions:** What are the implications for our lives? Application? How do we think, feel, and act in light of this text?

## READING THE BIBLE

[Pastor Dave has provided a few suggestions](#) for Bible reading plans, daily devotionals, and Bible commentaries to help you understand God’s Word as you familiarize yourself with it.