

# The Development of Passion

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As a children's minister, you must have passion for what you do! Without passion, you will struggle to have the energy needed to continually give what is required of you. Without passion, you won't be able to survive the challenges that stand before you. Without passion, you may find yourself wanting to quit on a regular basis. How do you get this passion? From where does it come? How can you increase the passion you already have? The answers to all these questions are connected to your spiritual health and perspectives.

It is interesting, and perhaps no coincidence, that the qualities of a gardener are nearly identical to those required by God of his people: willingness to work; vision for the results; patience; concern for individual plants (or people); concern for the whole garden (or world). As you study these characteristics, ask God to help you examine your own readiness to be a passionate gardener in children's ministry.



## Qualities of a Gardener (connected to scripture)

1. **Willingness to work** – "...work as unto the Lord." (Col. 3:23)
2. **Vision for results** – "...we have this hope as an anchor for the soul" (Hebrews 6:19)
3. **Patience** – "Wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14)
4. **Concern for the individual plants** – "Mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15)
5. **Concern for the whole garden** – "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)

God's Word is filled with requirements and blessings. God's love is unconditional in the sense that His love is available to all, but His blessings are clearly connected to conditions. If you want to experience a full basket of ministry fruit, you must be willing to develop godly character through commitment, obedience, devotion, and sacrifice. Think about the work that it must take to raise orchids. I've never done it, but I've been told they require specific conditions and endless attention. Once you make the decision to raise orchids, you must read everything you can find on orchids, interview successful orchid growers, and be willing to learn through your mistakes. Becoming a children's ministry gardener is no different. You can acquire all the right tools, be given a fancy title, and even develop a powerful children's ministry logo, but if you are not prepared spiritually your fruit will be scarce.

## Celebrate Your Passion For Children

It may seem strange, but I have met people in children's ministry who show no signs of any passion for children! Can you imagine how that affects God? He created, gifted, trained, and called us to children's ministry. If we don't passionately care about children, and if that passion doesn't propel us to lead children to God, then God's efforts are in vain. Let's look at passion for a few moments here. While you read these brief descriptions, ask God to help you examine your own passion for children.

### The Characteristics of Passion:

- Passion has a sense of urgency
- Passion grows over time and can occupy every thought or plan
- Passion causes action, sometimes leading to exhaustion or death
- Passion increases with opposition
- Passion reproduces rapidly

## Examples of Passion:

- Fans at a sports event
- Political campaigns
- Organizations (i.e., MADD Mothers Against Drunk Drivers)
- Patriotic celebrations and parades
- Your feeling about the pictures you carry in your wallet or phone



## How Do You Get Passion?

- Experiencing an extreme loss or pain
- Research/studying
- Convictions of parents
- Identification with another's loss pain
- In response to another's sacrifice or gift
- Spending time with someone who has passion

## Jesus: Our Greatest Example Of Passion

The passion that drove Jesus' physical life here on Earth came from having created everything, and desperately wanting all His creation to enjoy what He, as Creator, offered to them.

His passion compelled Him to

- take a stand in the face of the most ominous political and military power in the known world.
- speak out and take huge risks.
- stop and touch a leprous man, a little child, and a woman caught in adultery.
- kept him silent as His jealous accusers brutally killed Him.

Do you have passion like that? Does your passion for the lost children of this world keep you up at night? Does your passion for the confused, frightened children of broken homes drive you to make a difference in at least one of them? No matter how much passion we feel we have, there is always room for more!

Are you a passionate gardener ready and willing to plant the seeds of the Gospel in the soil of children's hearts? Keep in mind that the source of your passion must be the Lord! You can give yourself all sorts of pep rallies about children or ministry, but if you don't find yourself feeling the feelings of God, you will soon see your pumped-up passion fizzle down to nothing. Seek the Lord's passion. See life and children through His eyes. Feel His hope and anticipation about what could be. Become His voice, hands, and feet as you passionately care for His children!

## Pathway of Passion

Passion will increase as you become more intimately connected with the most passionate person ever: God. It makes sense that the people who are examples of the lowest levels of passion are those who are the farthest away from an intimate relationship with God. Those "heroes" of passion (Mother Theresa, Joan of Arc, Paul the Apostle, Billy Graham, etc.) are those whose relationships with God could easily be classed as intimate. Where are you on this pathway?

1. Establish a firm foundation. Remember that God saved you while you were a sinner (Romans 8) and that you don't have to work to earn salvation (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Remember that God created you with unique abilities (Psalm 139: 14, 15; 1 Corinthians 12:7,18) and that it is he who empowers you (2 Corinthians 4:5-18). While God wants to support you (2 Chronicles 16:9), the only condition is that you seek him and want to serve him (2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 1).

2. Build protective walls. Don't worry about what may happen. Trust God but guard your thoughts (Proverbs 3:5; Philippians 4: 6-9). Be aware of your weaknesses (Psalm 119:9-11) but focus on your goal, your passion (Nehemiah 6: 9).
3. Grow through challenges. Don't lose hope (1 Corinthians 15: 58; Hebrews 6: 19). Learn from your mistakes (James 1:2-8).
4. Plan for progress. Pray for God's provision and leading (Proverbs 3: 5,6). Then take action based on what you know (Matthew 25:21) and go in His power (Acts 1:8).