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Greetings Friends,

Many things will help you on the road to success, but nothing will make you put one foot ahead of the other more than passion.

Information does not guarantee success. If it did, everyone that grew up with a set of encyclopedias or a local library would count themselves successful. In fact, everyone that has access to the Internet today would and should be a success if mere access to information was the key.

Upbringing, money, opportunity—they all mean nothing if you do not have the fire in your belly and lightning in your blood. That fire manifests itself in different ways. Some call it determination. Some call it belief. Still others call it persistence. However you label it, the symptoms are the same and are easily recognizable: you are not put off by setbacks; you are willing to pour yourself out to achieve your desire; you have already seen your success in your mind's eye.

President Calvin Coolidge was describing this very characteristic when he said, “Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan ‘Press On’, has solved, and always will solve the problems of the human race.”

Why do some press on while others falter? Why do some pick themselves up and continue while others lay down forever? Passion! Greatness belongs to those with passion, as it should, and the passionate should enjoy the fruits of their labor as well.

A man once told Bill Hybels that he never shares his faith with anyone, “I would never want to inflict the burden of God on anyone,” Wow, that is not at all the God I know. The God I know invaded my world with love, acceptance, and grace and stuck me on the back of a launched rocket at age 16 that I still haven't peeled myself off. Nor do I want to anytime soon! Who is the God you know?

Is the God you know full of grace and mercy and compassion? Is the God you know mysterious, surprising, and captivating? Is he forever unchanging and yet always brand-new? Does he inspire you with his big ideas about how your life can really count? Is he faithful?

Romans 5:8 summarizes Christ's redemptive strides: It was when we were helplessly in the throes of sin that Christ extracted himself from the ultimate “circle of comfort” called heaven to step across time and space to rescue us. Jesus took a decided step toward the ungodly, embracing the worst this planet had to offer with acceptance and love and forgiveness. Miraculously, Christ's death for rebellious and sin-scarred people declared amnesty for everyone. Think about it: Giving your life for a noble person is one thing, but laying it all down for vagrants like us? It was an undeserved and unexpected move, to say the least. And the correlation is revolutionary to Christ-followers: We take walks across rooms today—to say a word for God, to enfold a lonely person in community, to stretch out a hand of care—because He first took such a walk.

If you've ever wondered why God would go to such lengths to prove his love, you're in good company. To clear up any confusion his first-century audience might have had about why he came, Christ said, "I came to seek and to save what was lost." That's it. People were Jesus' One Thing. And they still are. People who are sick. People who are lonely. People who are wandering, depressed, and hopeless. People who have gotten themselves tangled up in suffocating habits and destructive relationships.

Everyone has taken some wrong turns. Everyone is in need of forgiveness and redemption and healing. Everyone needs to know the love that only my Father can provide. That is why Christ came. And still today, as you love people, serve people, point people toward faith in Christ, redirect wayward people, restore broken people, and develop people into the peak of their spiritual potential, you reaffirm your understanding of your primary mission and passion in the world.

Luke 19:10 records Jesus' ambition or purpose in coming to the earth and dying on the cross, in very clear and simple terms. Jesus, speaking about himself says: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost." Perhaps the most important purpose and passion for Christ Followers is to seek out those in our circle of contacts who are lost and searching and help to introduce them to one who wants to rescue them, forgive them, and set them free. I believe that one is Jesus Christ.

Imagine the Body of Christ ignited with the very Fire of Heaven, full of God's Presence, Grace, Boldness, Love and Becoming what God called the New Testament Church to be...ambassadors of the King of the Universe, displaying His Glory to the world and capturing souls for eternity.

Imagine what would happen if every Christ-follower started living their life filled with passion to do God's will, an obsession to become accepting, forgiving, peace-loving and guided daily by God's direction and an ambition to intentionally reach out to friends and neighbors with a God who loves them? The result would change the world.

Somehow, that sounds like Authentic New Testament Christianity. Imagine God's People empowered to win the lost, heal the sick, preach Good News to the Poor, deliver the captive and set people free to live life full of God's grace, favor, ability, blessing and fulfill His purposes in their lives and the lives of others.

My challenge to you is "Pray with purpose and Live with passion!"

Blessed,
Pastor Phil & Rhonda
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The Gospel of Mark
BROUGHT TO LIFE
by Alan Atwood
JOIN US FOR THIS REMARKABLE LIVE PRESENTATION
EASTER SUNDAY
April 12
8:00 AM and 10:00 AM
Heartland Christian Center
170 State Road 49, Valparaiso, Indiana

Sunday Morning Series
MYTHBUSTERS
With Dr. Phil Willingham
10AM Sundays following Easter

Do all religions lead to God?
Do all good people go to Heaven?
Does what we believe really matter?
How can I be wrong if I'm truly sincere?
Doesn't everything happen for a reason?