

What consumes you?

John 2:13-17

Introduction

1. Jesus cleansed the temple – **John 2:13-17**
 - a. **(v. 16)** – the reason for His intense action – irreverence in God’s house, using the holy place for common purposes.
 - i. **(v. 14)** – Such would be used for the sacrifices, but there was no authority to do the buying and selling of such in the temple. (Other acceptable places to do so.)
 - ii. **Cf. Matthew 21:13** (later situation) – **“den of thieves”** indicates that irreverence was only part of the problem – greed was involved too.
 - b. **(v. 17)** – the connection made by the disciples.
 - i. The character of the Messiah would be one of intense zeal for God’s will.
 - ii. Consuming zeal – **Psalm 119:139** – engulfed His entire being – i.e. such is what defined Him entirely – some would say obsession.
 1. **“Zeal for Your house will consume me.” (NASB)**
 - iii. Zeal of such degree, and in such quantity that it would lead even to His own adversity – **Psalm 69:9** – what is quoted.
2. Most everyone is passionate about something. Usually, this consumes them in their thinking, time, and motivation.
3. We must be careful about what consumes us.
 - a. What do we spend time thinking about?
 - b. What sparks a fire in us in conversation?
 - c. What do we spend time doing?
 - d. What are we passionate and zealous about?
- I. What consumes you?
 - A. Work?
 - a. Work is something good commanded by God:
 - i. **2 Thessalonians 3:6-12** – those who were disorderly as idle busybodies commanded to work.
 - ii. **1 Timothy 5:8** – must provide for our own.
 - iii. **Ecclesiastes 5:18-20** – labor, and its fruit is a gift from God.
 - b. Work, however, should not consume us – **Ecclesiastes 2:17-23** – ultimately vain.
 - i. A picture of consuming work – **James 4:13-17** – changes perspective, life motivation, and priorities.
 - c. Extra hours, bringing it home, over valuing in comparison to what is most important, etc.
 - B. Education?
 - a. Education, wisdom, knowledge has value – **Ecclesiastes 2:13; 7:11-12; 9:16-18**
 - b. However, like work it is vain – **Ecclesiastes 2:12-16; 12:12**

- c. Occupying all your mental energy, making perfect grades, equating such with self-worth, etc.
 - C. Worry?
 - a. Many things to worry about – **Matthew 6:25, 31**
 - b. Worry overwhelms – **Matthew 6:34** – worrying about things that aren't even a reality yet.
 - c. Worrying accomplishes nothing – **Matthew 6:27**
 - d. Consumed with watching/reading the news, fretting over the stock market, financial adversity, over thinking physical health, etc.
 - D. Liberties/Opinions/Indifferent Matters?
 - a. Liberties should not become our master – **1 Corinthians 6:12**
 - b. These matters have nothing to do with service to God – **Romans 14:1-4, 17; 1 Corinthians 8:8; Galatians 6:15**
 - c. Being consumed by these matters – i.e. overly involved and concerned with them – leads to contention – **James 4:11-12**
 - d. Opinions about COVID-19 and related policies/regulations, politics, patriotism, etc.
 - E. These, and others, are all matters which may have a part to play in our lives, but must be censored, and regulated. These matters must not be our identity. These matters should not consume us. OUR LIVES SHOULD BE CONSUMED WITH SOMETHING FAR MORE IMPORTANT.
- II. What should consume you?
- A. Zeal for God's Will
 - a. Jesus' consuming zeal was for His Father's will – **John 2:16-17**
 - i. Not concerned about the physical building – **Matthew 24:1-2; Acts 7:48-50**
 - ii. Rather, concerned with the things of God – **Matthew 21:13** – that which was dedicated to holy matters pertaining to God.
 - iii. From early on – **Luke 2:49**
 - iv. To the end – **Matthew 26:39** – even to His death in accord with God's will.
 - b. God's house now – **1 Timothy 3:15** – church, support of truth.
 - c. Zeal for:
 - i. Matters pertaining to the church – **Romans 12:4-6** – in whichever way you can function.
 - 1. **Romans 12:11** – not slothful.
 - ii. Matters pertaining to the truth:
 - 1. **Psalm 119:97** – meditation all the day. (Always thinking about it.)
 - 2. **2 Timothy 2:15** – diligent study for being approved of God.
 - 3. **Jude 3** – contending for the faith. (Always concerned with protecting it.)
 - 4. **Matthew 28:18-20** – spreading the truth. (Always concerned with telling others about it.)

B. The nature of this consuming zeal (do we have it, and how would it appear?)
(John 2:13-17):

a. Informed

- i. **John 2:16; Matthew 21:13** – Jesus’ zeal came from a knowledge of God’s will.
- ii. Zeal that consumes comes from time spent in the object of such zeal – **Proverbs 4:23; Mark 7:20-23** – starts with the heart.
- iii. Zealous in good things – **Galatians 4:17-20** – Zeal in itself is not virtuous.
- iv. Zeal without knowledge – **Romans 10:2** – destructive, and useless.
- v. Consuming zeal should not be based in anything false or frivolous, but in the eternal foundation of truth revealed by God.
 1. Why do we waste time on the ephemeral when we have the knowledge of the eternal? (**1 John 2:17** – passing away vs abiding forever)

b. Controlled

- i. If Jesus lost control, He sinned. We know this was not the case.
- ii. His actions were deliberate and justified – **John 2:14-17** – made a whip of cords.
- iii. Consuming zeal that does not involve an infallible standard will be out of line – **John 16:2-3**
 1. If we are overly zealous for matters that don’t pertain to God’s will we will fail in service to God.
- iv. Consuming zeal for the things of God will cause us to alter our decisions accordingly – **1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 9:19-23**
 1. Consuming zeal for other matters loses sight of what is important, but zeal for God’s will is constantly examining the situation through the lens of spiritual truth.
 2. **Such zeal will stifle any other matters as it takes precedence.**
 3. **“For the love of Christ controls us” (2 Corinthians 5:14, NASB)**

c. Active

- i. Jesus did not ignore the irreverence, but addressed it – **John 2:14-17**
- ii. The very concept of consuming zeal is that which takes most if not all of one’s time, resources, and energy.
- iii. **John 9:4-5** – Jesus’ time, resources, and energy were spent in activity belonging to His Father.
- iv. **Ephesians 5:15-17** – it is circumspect and takes advantage of opportunities to further God’s will.

d. Persistent

- i. Jesus cleansed the temple more than once – **John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55** – John’s gospel records 3 Passovers in Jesus’ ministry.

1. 1st temple cleansing was around the first recorded Passover.
2. **Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-46** – second cleansing was after His triumphal entry nearing the end of His ministry.
3. Jesus' zeal for His Father's house at the beginning of His ministry did not wane toward the end of His ministry.
 - ii. Some are initially zealous, but the fire is put out by adversity due to having no root – **Matthew 13:20-21**
 - iii. Some have their zeal only for a little while before the world entices them – **2 Timothy 4:10**
 - iv. Some let the fire die out over time – **Revelation 2:2-5** – zeal must be nurtured to persist.
- e. DOES ZEAL FOR GOD'S WILL CONSUME US, OR SOMETHING ELSE?
- f. OF WHAT DOES OUR LIFE CONSIST?
- g. WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO US?
- h. ARE WE CULTIVATING THIS ALL-CONSUMING ZEAL WHICH OVERPOWERS ANYTHING ELSE IN OUR EXISTENCE?

Conclusion

1. Throughout His life Jesus manifested that His Father's will consumed Him. God's will was His entire focus, and took up all His time and energy.
2. It is easy to be distracted with many things and misdirect our energy and passion toward things that are not worth the while.
3. We need to cultivate the zeal which Jesus had for spiritual matters – a consuming zeal.