

# Fasting guide

## day 17. passion for God

The day Jesus entered Jerusalem before His death and resurrection is known as Palm Sunday. This marks the beginning of the week of Christ's passion. The word 'passion' comes from a Latin word which means 'suffering'. The suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross has always been referred to as The Passion. There is even a movie by that name. In modern times, we have come to apply the word passion to mean any kind of strong feeling, or commitment, even though it more properly it describes a suffering for some worthwhile thing.

In many ways we have lost this sense of the word, in part perhaps, because there is so little of this kind of passion left in the western world. We ascribe the word passion to how we feel about sports teams, music, or our political views. Would you be willing to suffer for those things? How different is the passion of Jesus: directed by God and willingly accepted. Jesus actively chose His path and the sufferings that followed. In Jesus we see not only the full depth of God's passion for us and the suffering that was a necessary part of it, but also the full depth of one perfect human's passion for God (in Jesus): obedience that led to death.

How do we respond to God's call to follow Him? Are we passionate? Or passive? To walk with Jesus, who said, *"take up your cross and follow me,"* we must accept God's direction and choose to follow the path laid out for us. This is a path of certain passion (suffering), but also certain hope because of the victory we have through Christ's resurrection.

**Matthew 10.24-32, 38-39 (TEV):** (Jesus teaches his disciples) "No pupil is greater than his teacher; no slave is greater than his master. So a pupil should be satisfied to become like his teacher, and a slave like his master. If the head of the family is called Beelzebul, the members of the family will be called even worse names! So do not be afraid of people. Whatever is now covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known. What I am telling you in the dark you must repeat in broad daylight, and what you have heard in private you must announce from the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows! Those who declare publicly that they belong to me, I will do the same for them before my Father in heaven. "Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples. Those who try to gain their own life will lose it; but those who lose their life for my sake will gain it."

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**Psalm 130 (NLT):** A song for the ascent to Jerusalem

From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help. Hear my cry, O Lord. Pay attention to my prayer. LORD, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you.

I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word. I long for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, yes, more than watchmen wait for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is unfailing love and an overflowing supply of salvation. He himself will free Israel from every kind of sin.

- How are you passionate in your love for the Lord?
- In what areas do you actively choose God's ways and desire to live for Him?
- Or, do you passively follow Him?
- In what ways do others look at your life and see your passion and consuming love for Jesus?
- Ask God to enable you to passionately love and follow Him.

### Prayer:

Lord, thank You for Your passionate love for me that You would die for me. And thank You for Your passionate love for the Father, that You would obey Him, even to death. Lord, I am so often harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd—how can

I find my way unless You help me? Have mercy on me. Lead me Lord. Come, and give me the strength I need to follow You in doing the Father's will. Bless the time I give to You this week. Pour Your blessing over me. Give me a passionate love equal to Yours.