

## Theme for 2021

### **WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT; WE ARE ONE IN THE LORD!**

#### **‘They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love.’**

*“I have commissioned them to represent me just as you commissioned me to represent you. And now I dedicate myself to them as a holy sacrifice so that they will live as fully dedicated to God and be made holy by your truth.” “And I ask not only for these disciples, but also for all those who will one day believe in me through their message. I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to become one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me. For the very glory you have given to me I have given them so that they will be joined together as one and experience the same unity that we enjoy. You live fully in me and now I live fully in them so that they will experience perfect unity, and the world will be convinced that you have sent me, for they will see that you love each one of them with the same passionate love that you have for me.”*

**John 17:18-23 The Passion Translation (TPT)**



#### ***This Week’s Thought – January 31, 2021***

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*“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.” Psalm 84:1-2 (NRSV)*

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**“We’re ALL in this TOGETHER.”** As humans, we are made to desire. The longings we feel are not to be discounted or easily ignored. In fact, they are windows into the state of our soul and health of our heart. So often, the problem is not with desire, but is found with the nature of our desire or desires.

When our hearts are captured by disordered desires, the solution is not to stop desiring. A failure to desire is a failure to be human! God gave you desires as a gift, as a means by which we are made aware of His goodness, mercy, and love.

The Psalms are filled with language of desire and intimate prayers of longing. We see this in Psalm 84: *“My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord.”*

This psalm is an unapologetic embrace of *rightly ordered* desire and passion. Our problem in life is not that we burn with passion, but if we’re honest, it’s that we burn with passion for something or someone other than God first. (Matthew 6:33)

What is it that you desire the most in this life? Be honest with yourself. Whatever it may be for you, the problem often is not with the thing itself, but the fact that it might, even subtly, replace and/or take away from your ultimate call to desire the Lord *above all things*. You and I therefore must choose today to actively and intentionally cultivate holy desires. It’s like I said earlier, *our desires are windows into the state of our soul and health of our heart*.

The things you desire do not simply happen to you in a passive way. No, we make choices and decisions that lead to the deepening and expansion of our loves. So today, by the power of the Spirit at work in you, choose to pursue God through virtuous habits of faith that deepen your longing for Him.

*“O God, You are my God; with deepest longing I will seek You; My soul [my life, my very self] thirsts for You, my flesh longs and sighs for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.”* (Psalm 63:1 AMP)

**Application:** What desires and longings do you have that threaten your ultimate first love for Christ? (Revelation 2:4)

**Prayer of reflection and response you might pray this week: “Dear LORD, You are my God. You are my Refuge, my Strong-Tower. You are the One on whom I depend because You are faithful and trustworthy. My heart feels battered, my spirit worn, but You are my strength — the One on whom I lean for support. You tell us to come to You when we are weary and heavy-laden. I hear You calling me Lord. I hear Your gentle whisper speaking my name and I choose to respond. I choose to run into Your arms, lean upon You and accept Your offer to lift my burdens from my shoulders into Your capable Hands. My deepest longing is for You, for You alone satisfy. You alone are my hope. You alone are my peace. You alone fill the empty places in my heart. You alone make it ‘well with my soul’. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate Name of Jesus, Amen!”**

**Yours in Christ, Pastor King**