

Effective Faith

James 1:27 HCSB Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

The theme of the day is surrender; discovering and fanning the flames of passion for God which ultimately should lead you to bring your passions to the foot of the cross. The first thing that must be done is to ensure that you have in fact discovered saving faith – that you have in fact surrendered to the Lord. Let's look at some signs of true surrender.

1. It is **personal**

- **John 3:3 HCSB** Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- **Luke 13:3-5 HCSB** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well!
4 Or those 18 that the tower in Siloam fell on and killed--do you think they were more sinful than all the people who live in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well!"

2. It is **purifying**

- **1 John 1:7 HCSB** But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23 HCSB** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. It is **positive**

- **1 John 3:14 HCSB** We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.
- **2 Timothy 1:12 HCSB** and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.

4. It is **powerful**

- **1 Peter 1:5 HCSB** who are being protected by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
- **2 Timothy 1:12 HCSB** and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.

5. It is **productive**

- **John 15:16 HCSB** You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.
- **Acts 1:8 HCSB** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This brings us to the second half of the equation. The first was determining that we have indeed surrendered. The second is bringing our passions to the foot of the cross.

The Lord desires our heart (faith) (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24)

- **Hebrews 11:6 HCSB** Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him.
- **John 8:24 HCSB** *Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*

But He also desires our hands (works) (Luke 6:46)

- **Luke 6:46 HCSB** *"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things I say?"*

Works are an important part of our discipleship

By them we fulfill our original purpose (Ephesians 2:10)

- **Ephesians 2:10 HCSB** For we are His creation--created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

By them we glorify God (Matthew 5:16)

- **Matthew 5:16 HCSB** *In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

By them we give indication of true discipleship (John 15:8)

- **John 15:8 HCSB** *My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.*

If we don't produce fruit we are likely cut off John 15:1-2, 6 cf Hebrews 6:7-8

- **John 15:1-2 HCSB** *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper. (2) Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit.*
- **John 15:6 HCSB** *If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*
- **Hebrews 6:7-8 HCSB** For ground that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it, and that produces vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for, receives a blessing from God. (8) But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and will be burned at the end.

How do we bear fruit? Regardless of the form our passion takes – what should it do? What are the indicators of a passion that is fully surrendered to the King?

1. **Winning souls to Christ** (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 1:13)

- **Matthew 28:19-20 HCSB** *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*
- **Romans 1:13 HCSB** Now I want you to know, brothers, that I often planned to come to you (but was prevented until now) in order that I might have a fruitful ministry among you, just as among the rest of the Gentiles.

2. **Sharing with those in need** (Romans 15:25-28)

- **Romans 15:25-28 HCSB** Now, however, I am traveling to Jerusalem to serve the saints; (26) for Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. (27) Yes, they were pleased, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual benefits, then they are obligated to minister to Jews in material needs. (28) So when I have finished this and safely delivered the funds to them, I will go by way of you to Spain.

This is evidence of God's grace at work in the givers (2 Corinthians 8:1-2; 9:12-14)

- **2 Corinthians 8:1-2 HCSB** We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: (2) during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity.
- **2 Corinthians 9:12-14 HCSB** For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God. (13) Through the proof of this service, they will glorify God for your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with others. (14) And in their prayers for you they will have deep affection for you because of the surpassing grace of God on you.

3. **Developing Christ-like character**

This indicates we are walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22-23)

- **Galatians 5:16 HCSB** I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
- **Galatians 5:22-23 HCSB** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

This indicates we are diligent in growing the true knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 1:5-8)

- **2 Peter 1:5-8 HCSB** For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, (6) knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, (7) godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (8) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. **Praising God and giving thanks continually** (Hebrews 13:15)

- **Hebrews 13:15 HCSB** Therefore, through Him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess His name.