

## One Deep Passion

Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:23-24, 5:8

By David Reed July 27.2008 Crossroads Christian Fellowship

(shown with picture: Dirt Road) Larry McMurtry, known for his [book] *Lonesome Dove*, wrote another book about roads—the many roads he had driven on and the hundreds of miles he had explored across America. At last, returning in memory to the place where he grew up in east Texas, he recalls that his father had seldom gone much farther than the dusty roads near his dirt farm. Comparing his own travels to his father's localized life, McMurtry admits, "I have looked at many places quickly. My father looked at one place deeply."

Today, I hope we will come to know God in a way that will help us to grow deeper in our living with and for God. While life has a tendency to fly by, God has invested in and is deeply committed to an eternal relationship with you and I. It is a relationship God has decided to look deeply into. Our father has looked passionately and deeply into one place.

Our passages describe God in a surprising way. I hope there no end to the ways God surprises us. For when we cease to be surprised by God— we will believe we have God figured out – and then find ourselves in a truly difficult place. Let's look.

Exodus 34:14

Don't worship any other god. God, his name is The-Jealous-One - is a jealous God.

### **Deuteronomy 4:23-24**

So stay alert. Don't for a minute forget the covenant which God, your God, made with you. And don't take up with any carved images, no forms of any kind - God, your God, issued clear commands on that. God, your God, is not to be trifled with - he's a consuming fire, a jealous God.

### **Deuteronomy 5:7-9 The first two of the 10 Commandments**

No other gods, only me. No carved gods of any size, shape, or form of anything whatever, whether of things that fly or walk or swim. Don't bow down to them and don't serve them because I am God, your God, and I'm a most jealous God.

Have you ever thought of God as being a jealous God? A jealous God! How can a God who is holy, just, loving, gracious, merciful, and long-suffering possibly be jealous?

Haven't we been taught that Jealousy is negative and leads to sin and destructive actions. **Jealousy** typically refers to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, a type of anxious insecurity, that happen when a person believes a valued relationship is being threatened. Jealousy is associated with envy and coveting – desiring what another person has, competition, and contention for physical things or the status of another. It has overtones of selfishness, suspicion, and distrust, and implies a hideous resentment or hostility toward other people because they enjoy some advantage.

A first-grade girl came home and proudly reported to her dad that she was now officially a "Brownie." Not to be outdone, her three-year-old brother rushed up to Dad and proudly announced he was a cupcake! (Kayleen J. Reusser, Bluffton, Indiana. Christian Reader, "Kids of the Kingdom").

Joseph's brothers sought to kill him because they were jealous ([Genesis 37:11](#)). Their sinful attitudes resulted in sinful acts; first they plotted his death, then cast him into a pit, and finally sold him into slavery.

In the book of Acts when the apostles preached with power and performed miracles of healing. Multitudes were added to the Lord and the Jewish religious rulers were furious over this threat to their position and authority. Scripture records, "they were filled with jealousy" ([Acts 5:17](#)). First, they threw the apostles into prison and later had them flogged. Their selfish motives were unmistakable.

We know there is a sinful side to jealousy and it is ugly. But there is also a righteous side.

[Greek](#) word for jealous is ζήλος (*zelos*) – zeal , The usual Biblical translation is Zeal and refers to a state of passion.

Surprisingly, God is not only described as being a jealous God, as we read in Exodus 34 one of the *names* of God is "Jealous",...The Jealous one. That name, as we have learned in "The Truth Project" is "El Qanna" (kan-aw).

We can only know this because God has revealed himself to us. Borrowing again from Dr Tackett, even though we have been given a great deal of revelation about who God is we not have the capacity to know God fully because the question "Who is God" has an infinite answer. We can only know God in part and then only so because God has revealed himself to us

So when we do not fully understand and cut ourselves off from that revelation, and because we have a nature that wants to serve itself and do what is contrary to God's desire - we seek to fill the void with something. We make God into a sun, a moon, a tree, a forrest, an ocean, a bank account, a life-style, the wind in our faces, a feeling...and this is what kindles God's jealousy.

Knowing God fully is not only impossible, it's not our purpose – our purpose is to know God passionately and live for God alone.

### ***God Is Jealous for His Holy Name.***

Moses had come down from the mount with the two tablets of the law in his hands only to find the people of Israel carousing in idolatrous worship before the golden image of a calf. He dashed the tablets to the earth, burned the calf and ground it to powder, then

commanded the Levites to discipline the people. It was a vivid expression of God's jealousy operating through His servant Moses.

When the crisis was past, God invited Moses back to Mount Sinai. That was when He revealed His glory to Moses as no one had ever seen it before. Moses saw Him as a compassionate, gracious, long-suffering God who abounds in mercy and truth ([Exodus 34:6](#)). The culmination of that revelation came a few moments later when God said, "Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, lest it become a snare in your midst. But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is El Qanna –The Jealous One, is a jealous God" ([Exodus 34:12-14](#)).

God's name is the epitome of who and what He is, and He says His name is Jealous. Jealousy is not merely a passing mood with God. It is part of the essence of His person. While God has many names, when the sin of idolatry threatens, he cannot be other than jealous. Since He is the highest and greatest being there is, infinitely holy and glorious, He must be passionately committed to preserving His glory, honor and holiness. He must zealously desire exclusive devotion and worship. To do less would make Him less than God. Remember He said about Himself:

Isaiah 43:7 Bring to me all the people who are mine, **whom I made for my glory**, whom I formed and made." 42:8 "I am the Lord. That is my name. **I will not give my glory to another**; I will not let idols take the praise that is mine.

God is holy, sovereign and supreme over all. Were He to share His glory with other so-called gods, it would be a lie and make Him untrue to His own nature—less than the preeminent God He is. He must be faithful to Himself and maintain His sovereign and holy place, and He wants His creation to attribute to Him that degree of honor. Basically, that is what He means when He says, "I shall be jealous for My holy name" ([Ezekiel 39:25](#)). His jealousy does not grow out of insecurity, anxiety, frustration, covetousness, pride, or spite, as ours usually does. It is the natural and necessary by-product of His absolute sovereignty and infinite holiness.

[Psalm 135:4](#). For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession

[Hosea 2:19](#). In fact, He views her as His wife. Through the Prophet Hosea He said to the nation, "And I will betroth you to Me forever"

[In Revelation 19:7](#) Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself.

Jehovah is passionate about His relationship with His "wife." There is no selfishness in His jealousy. It is the appropriate expression of His holiness. There is intense joy in

fidelity and deep pain, sadness, and a consuming fire is experienced when it is betrayed and broken. We are often not able to understand how much we love another until something comes along to threaten it. So it is with God, we can not understand God's love for us until we are able understand God's jealousy (Dr. Tacket, The Truth Project) –and understand the lengths God has gone to jealousy and passionately defend the eternal relationship. We might think it small of God to be jealous of what goes on in our hearts until we understand the immense love God has poured into creating us and buying us back from sin.

We have been created for God's glory and honor not our own or for the glory and honor of anything else in this world or anything beyond it. Part of God's jealousy rightly protects the glory and honor due God and God only.

God's glory is seen and God is honored when we desire God above ourselves and more than anything. The Apostle Paul qualified for that company. "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:20-21). By his nature God will not yield that glory to any other. What is amazing is the supreme, holy, and sovereign God of the universe seeks to be glorified through sinful people. This jealous God does not demand allegiance and faithfulness but offers a covenant relationship that El ganna jealously guards through his Son's own life.

If God, by virtue of His essential being, must be jealous for His uniqueness and His holy sovereignty above all, then those who know Him and want to please Him should be just as jealous for Him. If we are serious about our relationship with Him, we shall exalt Him above everyone and everything else in our lives; we shall be absolutely dedicated to living for His honor; we shall be zealously committed to doing His will. The primary goal of our lives will be to show the world that our God is the one true and living God—that He alone makes life meaningful and worthwhile.

When Michigan residents Christine Bouwkamp and Kyle Kramer got married in the spring of 2007, they held a wedding reception that was anything but traditional. Instead of hosting a formal dinner, they held a simple reception at their church where guests were invited to help distribute food to people in need.

In the weeks leading up to their wedding, Christine and Kyle had decided they wanted to begin their marriage with an act of service to Christ. With that goal in mind, they figured out how much money they would have spent on a more extravagant reception and instead used that money to purchase five thousand pounds of food for those in need. The week of the wedding, the couple spread the word that a truck with free food would be at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship. Immediately after they exchanged their vows, Bouwkamp and Kramer put on aprons marked "Bride" and "Groom" and joined their wedding guests in

distributing food to 100 neighborhood families. When asked about the charitable act, the happy couple simply said they wanted to "bless God for blessing us with each other."

So God has made it that we are participants in his jealousy guarded honor and glory - by living passionately and jealously for God we honor and gloryify an eternal relationship the jealous one has initiated and jealously guards in Christ.

In his book *Hidden in Plain Sight*, author and pastor Mark Buchanan writes about a woman named Regine. Originally from Rwanda, Regine came to Christ while reading her sister's Bible during the genocide that ravaged her country. When she fled to Canada for refuge, she met her husband, Gordon. They decided to return to Rwanda to show the love of Christ to the people who had once been her enemies. Regine told Mark Buchanan this story of *living for the honor of God*:

A woman's only son was killed. She was consumed with grief and hate and bitterness. "God," she prayed, "reveal my son's killer."

One night she dreamed she was going to heaven. But there was a complication: in order to get to heaven she had to pass through a certain house. She had to walk down the street, enter the house through the front door, go through its rooms, up the stairs, and exit through the back door.

She asked God whose house this was.

"It's the house," he told her, "of your son's killer."

The road to heaven passed through the house of her enemy.

Two nights later, there was a knock at her door. She opened it, and there stood a young man. He was about her son's age.

"Yes?"

He hesitated. Then he said, "I am the one who killed your son. Since that day, I have had no life. No peace. So here I am. I am placing my life in your hands. Kill me. I am dead already. Throw me in jail. I am in prison already. Torture me. I am in torment already. Do with me as you wish."

The woman had prayed for this day. Now it had arrived, and she didn't know what to do. She found, to her own surprise, that she did not want to kill him. Or throw him in jail. Or torture him. In that moment of reckoning, she found she only wanted one thing: a son.

"I ask this of you. Come into my home and live with me. Eat the food I would have prepared for my son. Wear the clothes I would have made for my son. Become the son I lost."

And so he did.

***Participating in God's honor will lead us where we would never go ourselves. The jealous one calls us to live that life.***

(Mark Buchanan, *Hidden in Plain Sight* (Thomas Nelson, 2007), pp. 187-189; submitted by Lee Eclov, Vernon Hills, Illinois)

Remember these words? “Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, lest it become a snare in your midst. But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is El Qanna –The Jealous One, is a jealous God” ([Exodus 34:12-14](#)).

We live in a pagan society where money is god and material possessions are the chief object of man’s worship. We need people who will be very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, people who will stand alone if need be against this insidious and contagious brand of idolatry and show the world that the Lord is God who meets the greatest need of the human race, people who will adopt a simpler lifestyle and use their resources for His glory rather than for their own comforts and pleasures.

We live in a pagan society where entertainment has become an idol. Today it is blatant as we hear about the next American Idol and we see an imbalanced amount of attention placed on the “stars”. If you don’t believe it, as of last Monday people – our family included - have given 158 million dollars to see the new Batman movie . We sit before screens of all kinds consumed by some need to entertain otherwise idle hands and mind. We willingly give away our time and resources to fill a void. Isn’t that approaching Idolatry? Filling a need or void with anything but God? How much time do we spend on the internet? Satan has not so subtly slipped in a few new altars to sit in front of.

There is no doubt that these are a few of the modern day idols. Is it possible to participate and not commit idolatry? Instead of tearing down altars and smashing the sacred pillars of the world’s idols we have come to embrace them.

No spouse with any moral fiber wants to share their husband or wife with another, and neither does God. A spouse expects exclusive devotion and purity. I am zealous for the exclusiveness of our marriage. When someone or something comes along to threaten that relationship, especially if someone is trying to seduce her, jealousy and passion arises to defend and protect it and that is a righteous jealousy. When a believer goes after other lovers, that is, when they worship other gods and thus commits spiritual adultery, El Qanna is jealous. When the term jealousy is applied to God in Scripture it is usually because His people are worshipping idols. In the second of His ten commandments He warned them not to do that, but they failed to listen to Him.

For they provoked Him with their high places, And aroused His jealousy with their graven images ([Psalm 78:58](#)).

That same idea is present in the New Testament. After a discussion of idolatry in the church of Corinth, Paul asks, “Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” ([1 Corinthians 10:22](#))

Coming face to face with God is to realize we are not created, given life - to live it for ourselves but for the glory of our creator – to live in such a way that others are able to see our God and the love of our God in our living. We are invited to live jealously for God.

### **Ephesians 3:14-21**

My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit - not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength - that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in.

And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God. God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. Glory to God in the church! Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!

Glory down all the generations! Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!

***In John 17:1-3 God tells us through John that, “*** Jesus said these things. Then, raising his eyes in prayer, he said: Father, it's time. Display the bright splendor of your Son So the Son in turn may show your bright splendor. **2** You put him in charge of everything human So he might **give real and eternal life** to all in his charge. **3** And this is the real and eternal life: That they know you, The one and only true God, And Jesus Christ, whom you sent.”

God has bound together knowing God in a personal relationship to Eternal life. It is not a scholarly or a clinical knowledge, not how much of the Bible we can recite but how much of it we live because we love the one who has revealed himself through it.

### **Philippians 3 7-10 (NLT)**

I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. As a result, *I can really know Christ* and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead! I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! *But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be.*

Van Morris, Mount Washington, Kentucky, and Brian Lowery, managing editor, PreachingToday.com; source: Anne Cetas, "Serving Together," Our Daily Bread (June 2008)

- Thousands are coming to hear him preach. His ministry has gone global. He has a new book coming out. That's quite a résumé for a boy without any arms or legs!

Nick Vujicic, a 25-year-old Australian, was born without limbs. Vujicic's parents, devout Christians who planted a church in Australia 11 months before Nick was born, found it hard to understand how God could use their son's loss for good. But he has.

Reading in Sunday school about being made in the image of God seemed like a cruel joke to Nick. He seesawed between despair and begging God to grow arms and legs for him. He contemplated suicide the year he turned 8. When he was 15, though, one story in the Bible answered one of his toughest questions.

"When I read the story of the blind man ... Jesus said he was born so that the work of God could be revealed through him," Vujicic said. "That gave me peace. I said, 'Lord, here I am. Use me. Mold me. Make me the man you want me to be.'"

Vujicic learned to write using the two toes on a partial foot that protrudes from his body. He also learned how to throw tennis balls, answer the phone, walk, and swim. He invented new ways to shave and brush his own teeth. He even earned double degrees in accounting and financial planning by age 21. He has since become a motivational speaker to Christian congregations in over 12 countries, and he has ministered to over two million people face to face. He also oversees Life Without Limbs, an organization for the physically disabled. *No Arms, No Legs, No Worries*, his first book, is scheduled for release in 2009.

Van Morris, Mount Washington, Kentucky; source: Ruth Schenk, "No Arms, No Legs, No Worries: Man Uses Disabilities to Reach the Masses," *The Southeast Outlook* (11-29-07)

- In his book *Hidden in Plain Sight*, author and pastor Mark Buchanan writes about a woman named Regine. Originally from Rwanda, Regine came to Christ while reading her sister's Bible during the genocide that ravaged her country. When she fled to Canada for refuge, she met her husband, Gordon. They decided to return to Rwanda to show the love of Christ to the people who had once been her enemies. Regine told Mark Buchanan this story of *agape* love:

A woman's only son was killed. She was consumed with grief and hate and bitterness. "God," she prayed, "reveal my son's killer."

One night she dreamed she was going to heaven. But there was a complication: in order to get to heaven she had to pass through a certain house. She had to walk down the street, enter the house through the front door, go through its rooms, up the stairs, and exit through the back door.

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The woman had prayed for this day. Now it had arrived, and she didn't know what to do. She found, to her own surprise, that she did not want to kill him. Or throw him in jail. Or torture him. In that moment of reckoning, she found she only wanted one thing: a son.

"I ask this of you. Come into my home and live with me. Eat the food I would have prepared for my son. Wear the clothes I would have made for my son. Become the son I lost."  
And so he did.

*Agape* lovers do what God himself has done, making sons and daughters out of bitter enemies, feeding and clothing them, blazing a trail to heaven straight through their houses.

Mark Buchanan, *Hidden in Plain Sight* (Thomas Nelson, 2007), pp. 187-189; submitted by Lee Eclov, Vernon Hills, Illinois

Forty great soldiers from Cappadocia in Rome's vaunted twelfth legion shared Paul's jealousy for God some two hundred fifty years after his death. Licinius was reigning over the eastern portion of the empire but was sensing an increasing military threat from the west. He became more and more repressive in his policies, particularly toward Christians. To solidify his strength, he called on his armies to demonstrate their support by offering a sacrifice to the pagan gods.

Most of the legion stationed at Sebaste, a city south of the Black Sea, dutifully complied, but the forty Cappadocians, all Christians, respectfully declined. For more than a week they were placed under guard, where they sang and prayed together continually. Their captain pleaded with them: "Of all the soldiers who serve the emperor, none are more loved by us and more needed right now. Do not turn our love into hatred. It lies in you whether to be loved or hated." "If it rests with us," they replied, "we have made our choice. We shall devote our love to our God."

It was sundown when they were stripped and escorted shivering to the middle of a frozen lake with guards stationed along the shore. A heated Roman bathhouse stood ready at the shore for any of them who were prepared to renounce their faith in Christ and offer a pagan sacrifice. Their jailer stood by with arms folded, watching, as a bitter winter wind whipped across the ice. But through the whistling wind the soldiers could be heard singing:

Forty good soldiers for Christ!  
We shall not depart from You as long as You give us life.  
We shall call upon Your Name whom all creation praises:  
Fire and hail, snow and wind and storm.  
On You we have hoped and we were not ashamed!

As midnight approached, their song grew more feeble. Then a strange thing happened. One of the forty staggered toward shore, fell to his knees and began crawling toward the bathhouse. "Thirty-nine good soldiers for Christ!" came the weakening, trembling song from the distance. The jailer watched the man enter the bathhouse and emerge quickly, apparently overcome by the heat, then collapse on the ground and expire. The other guards could not believe what they saw next. The jailer wrenched off his armor and coat, dashed to the edge of the lake, lifted his right hand and cried, "Forty good soldiers for Christ!" then disappeared over the ice into the darkness.

All forty were dead by the next day, but it was the jailer who caught the captain's notice as their bodies were being carted away. "What is he doing there?" he demanded. One of the guards replied, "We cannot understand it, Captain. Ever since those Christians came under his care, we noticed something different about him." The martyrs of Sebaste were jealous for the name of their God, and it had a profound impact on that jailer who looked on. Our jealousy for God will have a similar effect on the people around us.<sup>6</sup>

Are we understanding God a bit better now? The Jealous one passionately guards his holy name, nature and sovereignty. This Holy God is jealous for you because he made you. He

seeks your heart and to dwell for eternity in an intimate relationship. God responds jealously, passionately when sin comes along and threatens his honor and that relationship. The jealous one proposes that in living out his purposes we will glorify him, and in glorifying God we find everything for which we were created. The Jealous one has called us to live a life worthy of his love in Christ. He invites us to live for him so others will see him and come to know his son.

How does it feel to understand that you are the one deep passion of the creator of the universe? How does it feel to know the creator of the universe is jealous for you?