

DIRECT YOUR POWER, PURPOSE AND PASSION

Week #3 of a 6-Week Series, "Ignite Your Spirit: An Inner Journey"

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One day, Mr. Purdue came up with a great idea for the Catholic Church. Immediately he got a ticket to Rome and made an appointment to see the Pope. He sat before him and said, *"It's great to meet you, Your Eminence. I have a little proposal for you. I was sitting in church yesterday and I came up with this. Purdue Chickens would like to give you \$1 million if you will change 'give us this day our daily bread' to 'give us this day our daily chicken.' What do you think?"*

And the Pope just shook his head and said, *"No; I really don't think so."*

Mr. Purdue was very persistent. He went on and said, *"Purdue Chickens is prepared to give the church \$5 million to change 'give us this day our daily bread' to 'give us this day our daily chicken.'"*

The Pope thought for two or three seconds, but still said, *"No, really; I don't think so."*

Now, Mr. Purdue was determined. He brushed the sweat from his forehead and went after it one more time and said, *"We are willing to give the church \$500 million -- half a billion -- if you will just change, 'give us this day our daily bread' to 'give us this day our daily chicken.' What do you think?"*

And the Pope actually thought for a bit, and then he said, *"Sure, you've got a deal."*

Later that day, the Pope had a meeting with all of his cardinals, and he said, *"I've got some good news and some bad news. The good news is the church has gained \$500 million. The bad news is that we lost the Wonder Bread account."*

So I've got some good news and some bad news. The good news is we're going to continue with Week #3 of our six-week series on our theme this year: "Ignite Your Spirit." The bad news is: there is another joke forthcoming later in the talk.

So, you remember when we lit our candles at Christmas? We lit our candles to reignite the light of the Christ in us. And, you know, sometimes with the busyness of life, we set resolutions and they begin to fade and we don't think about them anymore ... or even pursue them or try to achieve them. This year, our resolution is a *spiritual* resolution: that this year our goal and intention is to ignite our spirit and take the inner journey that's needed to achieve this.

You know, in Week #1, the message was entitled, "Awaken the Spark Within." Week #2 was "Fuel the Flames of Forgiveness." And today, the message is "Direct Your Power, Purpose and Passion" so that we can continue to ignite our spirit.

How many people ever had a time in your life where you had no idea where you were going? You felt no direction, and you felt no focus? Anybody ever have a time like that in your life? How many people ever worked really hard all day -- busy, busy, busy -- and at the end of the day felt like you got nothing accomplished? Anybody ever have that one? And how many people still feel at times that you still haven't found your purpose? Or at least you're not sure what to do with the next phase of your life? Anybody you than that experience?

You know, a friend of mine -- I think I've mentioned this a few times -- his name is Bob Koehler. He said one of the most profound, intriguing questions. He said, *"On the day you were born, you were given the opportunity of a lifetime. And so, what are you doing with your opportunity of a lifetime?"*

I love this question, because it begs the question: Am I as happy or pleased or feeling as good about how I'm living my life as I would like to? Or is there some area I want to change or improve or work on or heal or expand or transform?

I truly believe how well we live this opportunity of a lifetime is directly related to how well we direct our power, our purpose, and our passion. And the thing is: with these three, we already have them. We already have power. We already have purpose. We already have passion. The question is: How well are we directing it? How well are we managing it? How well are we guiding it in our lives?

On a scale of 1 to 10 -- 10 being the highest -- of directing your passion, power, and purpose as well as you'd like ... on a scale of 1 to 10, where are you? And how many people would agree that there's some room for improvement on how well you direct your power, your passion, and your purpose?

Well, that's what we're going to look at today. What are the three things that we need to learn how to direct better to ignite our spirit, which are our power, purpose, and passion?

Let's look at the first one. We already have a lot of power. We're born that way! We are created in the image and likeness of the Creator, which means that we are creators. Every one of us has the power to create built in us.

When Jesus said, "*The kingdom of God is within you*," he was saying that the power, purpose, and passion is already in you. When he said, "*You shall do the things that I've done and even greater*," it means that the power is in you.

One of my favorite Scriptures that really illustrates how powerful we are -- and Jesus was really trying to emphasize it -- was Matthew 11, Verse 22 to 24. And it was just after Jesus had cursed the fig tree and it had withered and died. And the disciples asked him, "*How did you do that?*" And this is what he said.

He said, "*Truly, I tell you, If you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So, I tell you: whatever you ask in prayer, believe you have received it, and it will be yours.*"

And so let me just reread it, emphasizing one word. Not changing anything, just emphasizing one word, and hear the difference. "*Truly, I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*"

Can you hear the difference? Can you hear where the emphasis is? I find it interesting. Only two verses, but "you" is mentioned seven times and "your" mentioned twice. So, nine references to you and your and how powerful we are.

And it goes even further, because this illustrates ... he mentions three types of power. The power to curse and wither. So, we have the power to curse the things in our lives and they will wither. We have the power to remove mountains. Any obstacles we can remove; we have that power! And it says, whatever you ask in prayer; we have the power to attract and draw and manifest anything we want in our lives. This is a whole lot of power that it says that we have.

And, with power, you can do one of two things with it. You can **DIRECT YOUR POWER**. But we also sometimes dissipate our power. How many people ever felt, like, you've said or done different things that has given your power away? Anybody ever had that experience?

The fact is: we have all this power, and yet there are so many ways that **we give our power away** on a daily basis. Here are some of them. Anybody ever worry and spend a lot of excessive time worrying? Mark Twain put it this way. He said, "*I'm an old man, and I've known many problems, but most of*

them never happened." I'll bet you most of the things we worry about, never even happen.

Some of the other ways we give our power away are: fear; holding grudges; resentments; complaining; judging; not setting boundaries; seeking other people's approvals; procrastination; speaking negatively about our job, our money, our home, our relationships; over-apologizing; avoiding doing heard things; and not asking for what we want.

How many people have ever not asked for something you wanted because you were afraid you'd be embarrassed or it might upset the other person? Anybody ever hold back asking? Like, you know what you want! And yet, we are afraid sometimes to ask. There are all kinds of ways that we dissipate our power instead of directing it.

And so, the first way to direct our power is to stop giving our power away..

And the second one is to **connect with the true Source of power** -- the true Source that makes all things possible -- by grounding ourselves spiritually, immersing our mind in the Mind of God on a regular basis. Of being still -- of sitting in the silence, connecting, knowing our oneness with the eternal Presence within us.

You know, I've been a commitment to myself -- and you'll probably notice it -- that every single talk I do, I mention turning within and praying, connecting. Because it's always the right answer; it's always the best answer; and it always will be the greatest power and the greatest way to handle or address anything in our lives.

And there's a line in Unity that says, "*Where your attention goes, your energy flows.*" And what greater attention can we give than centering our hearts and minds in the awareness of the divine nature and Presence within ourselves? The Source that makes everything possible?

Jesus said, "*The lamp of the body is the eye. If the eye is single, the whole body will be full of light.*" So, it's such an important thing to give our attention -- center our hearts and minds – in God; center in the Source.

And then the second thing that we'll talk about is the importance of doing things daily and doing things over time. You know, there are some things that only time can make a difference; that only time can make stronger, make deeper, and to make better.

You know, I think I've mentioned this several times, and I just love this example. Don Henley said that the Eagles played their songs better 30 years after they were hits than when they originally did. And the reason is, I think: the more you play, the more you devote yourself to it, the more you become one, you know, the deeper that awareness and that connection. That the instrument ... there's a smoothness, there's a depth, there's a meaning that comes out that only time can allow and make happen.

You ever notice, like, lasagna and stuff are better two or three days later? There's something that only time can help with!

I remember I saw this Ziggy cartoon once, and Ziggy was there and he said, "*The only thing I don't like about life is it is just so daily.*" And our spiritual practice is daily! If we want to align, activate and direct our spiritual power, guess what? It's got to be daily: daily connection to that Power.

Now, the thing is: we're so powerful, listen to all of these spiritual powers -- creative abilities -- that we've been given. The power of the word. Power of the thought, our feelings, our imagination, our vision, our faith, our belief, our intention, our attitude and our actions, to name a few.

And what it's saying is: your words matter. IN what you're trying to create with your life, your thoughts matter. Your attitudes matter. Your intention matters. Your faith matters. Your belief matters.

You know, we are always creating, whether we're aware of it or not. And so, if there's something we're not liking in our lives right now, two things: one, we are sometimes allowing these things to happen by not being more intentional; and that we have the power to actually recreate something better. Recreate something different that we would like to have.

So, my question, in terms of your creative power: If you don't like what's going on in your life, what would you like to create? How would you like to direct your creative power differently right now in your life to create a different and better outcome?

And one of the most important things for us to know, if we want to be great creators, is: What do I want to create? What would you like to create? What would you like to become? What would you like to change? What would you like to transform? What would you like to heal? What would you like to improve?

This is an important, important part of our spiritual practice. Sometimes we think that vision and imagination and goals are child fantasy things. No! It's actually a divine faculty. And in Proverbs 29: 18, it tells you that it is. It says, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*"

I always think that's interesting: Where is no vision that people perish? What perishes? I think it's your joy. I think it's your motivation. I think it's your excitement. That, when there is something to work towards, it gives us a channel for our creative energies to be expressed. But it gets us kind of fired up. We look forward to it. We get excited and curious about how we can make those things manifest in greater ways.

So. I want you to think right now: What's one thing you would like to do to direct your power to creating something better in your life? What's just one thing? Are you willing to start, just in this moment, to direct your power in a way that's going to attract even greater things?

What happens is: when you hold an intention or a vision or idea, the world and the universe begins to start moving. People will be drawn to you. Things will be drawn away from you. Things begin to happen when we hold our intention.

We are creators, and we have the ability to **direct our creative powers and our abilities**. The question is: What do you want to create? You know, directing our power is to stop doing things that give our power away, connecting to our power, but then getting clear about what you want to create.

And so, again, think of one thing right now that you want to direct your spiritual power and your vision towards attracting and creating.

"I direct my spiritual power."

Together: [with congregations] *"I direct my spiritual power."*

"I am a confident creator."

[Congregants:] *"I am a confident creator"*

"I am a magnificent manifester."

[Congregants:] *"I am a magnificent manifester."*

"I am an amazing attractor."

[Congregants:] *"I am an amazing attractor."*

"I'm a dynamic demonstrator."

[Congregants:] *"I'm a dynamic demonstrator."*

"I direct my spiritual power!"

Together: [with congregants] *"I direct my spiritual power!"*

That's the first thing for us to do to continue to ignite our spirit.

Second thing is to **DIRECT OUR PURPOSE**. To direct our purpose. So, what is your purpose? Do you know your purpose? Do you live in your purpose? You liking your purpose?

One of the things I find interesting -- because that's one of the questions ministers get asked the most: Haven't found my purpose. Don't know what my purpose is. And one of the reasons I think we have a hard time with it is because we really connect our purpose with our job.

Now, for some people, that's true. But not for everyone. You know, our purpose isn't necessarily what we get paid for. Our purpose is not necessarily what we do for 40 hours a week. Our purpose doesn't necessarily define ourselves.

Mark Twain said, "On the day you were born" ... I mean, *"The two most important days of your life: one is the day you were born and the second is the day you figure out why."* Everyone has a purpose. Everyone is given gifts and talents to share and to help others and to contribute to this world.

The Book of Romans, Chapter 12, Verse 6 to 8: *"We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith. If it is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. If it is encouraging others, then give them encouragement. If it is giving, then give generously. If it is to lead, do it diligently. If it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."* Again, our purpose does not necessarily mean our job.

There's a book; somebody said, *"You've got to live the 'slash.'"* Because we always think like we're one thing, but there are a lot of people who are a slash who have a different discipline or area of interest or talents.

Like, my brother is a professor-slash-poet. That is a huge interest. He's been writing poetry for like 20 years or more, and he loves it. People have read some of his poetry at funerals and different events. You know, I know someone that's a lawyer-slash-theater director. You know, a singer ... a teacher who was a singer and actor (slash-actor). I know a bus driver-slash-stained glass maker. I mean, there are all kinds of things; that we do not need to limit ourselves or what our purpose is.

When you look at purpose, to me, it's about: What has meaning for you? What adds value to your life and adds value to the lives of others? Is it making a difference? Is it feeling fulfilling? To me, those are the questions we ask when we think about purpose.

And it's not just one thing. It's an ongoing expression of the gifts that are within ourselves. Because your job changes doesn't mean suddenly that your purpose changes. If your purpose is to heal or encourage or transform -- or whatever it might be. That, no matter what you're doing, that gift is going to be expressed and come forth in some great way.

So, one of the things we need to do is to **pay attention**. So what is it that brings me joy? What is it that people say, *"Boy, you're really good at that!"*? I mean, what are those things that feel like they're just aligned with our soul? To me, to direct our purpose really is about listening and tuning into that higher level of what is it that has meaning and brings me joy and makes a difference and people make comments on? I mean, I think it's an important thing for us to ask.

You know, it says in the New Testament, *"If you are lacking in anything, ask God, who gives generously."* And so, sometimes asking God: What is my purpose? What are you calling me to express in this situation or in this relationship? Where does my joy meet the world's needs?

And, to me, **ask, listen, and pay attention are the ways we direct our purpose.** Because the more we tune in and listen for guidance -- listen for guidance, keep asking, listening and paying attention -- we will go from feeling like we're pushing a rock uphill to actually moving and going with the flow.

Charles Fillmore said, "*It is not your job to invent purpose. It is your job to let it unfold.*" Because it's already in us! We just need to pay more attention. Stop putting the focus on job and just putting it on what's bringing your joy and what's making you feel fulfilled. What are you good at? What is helping other people?

I love when Jesus said, "*I must be about my father's business.*" And so, every one of us must be about our soul's business. What is your soul saying? And are you willing to listen, ask and pay attention? So that is to direct our purpose.

And the last one is **DIRECT OUR PASSION.** Anybody ever go to a restaurant and were served by someone who was very reluctant and rude? Not really that even into their job? And have you ever been served by someone who was joyful and, like, they were born to be wait staff? They were so joyful, so positive, you were so excited to even give them a great tip because they just did something.

There's something about the energy of passion. And I combine three things when I think of passion: **zeal, enthusiasm and [joy].** There is a positive radiant energy of joy that we infuse into any and everything that we do that I think is so powerful.

In the first church I went to -- the United Church in Canada -- on their bulletin every week was a quote written by Ralph Waldo Emerson that said, "*Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.*"

In the Book of Romans, Chapter 12, Verse 11, it says, "*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord.*" And so, what this is saying is to bring your joy. I mean, how do you show up in life?

And the way we have passion and zeal is by feeling meaning and caring for what we do, and having interest in what we do, and thinking, "*How exciting it is that I get to do this thing! And I get to do this thing with other people! And even when it's a pain in the butt some days, I still love that I get to do this!*"

And one of the things I think that's important about directing your passion is **finding a place where you honor your own uniqueness and live and be authentically who you are.** Sometimes when we're young, we are taught how to conform. We are taught sometimes not to express our true selves. Sometimes we feel uncomfortable in our own skin. Sometimes we feel like we don't belong.

But if we really want to direct our passion, passion is about enthusiasm for your own unique life and your own unique self and how you show up and being good and feeling good about who you are and how you are in this world. To me, owning our uniqueness is our greatness. Oscar Wilde said, "*Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.*"

Being authentically you -- honest with yourself, true to yourself -- is the greatest gift that you can give the world. Anybody can say anything, but what's the thing you want to say? That's what your smile is -- your unique smile. Your gifts are unique gifts, and it's important to share those. Direct your passion, your enthusiasm, your zeal; it's what you bring forth in your spirit in all you do.

A man was stumbling by a riverside because he was totally drunk. And he was wobbling and he fell into the water. And he got up and there was a Baptist preacher baptizing people right at the water. He staggers over and the preacher grabs him and smells all the alcohol in and think, "*This man needs to be saved.*"

So, he dunks him down into the water, pulls him back up and he says, "*Are you ready to find Jesus?*"

He said, "Yeah."

And so, the preacher dunks him, and he pulls him out and says, "*Brother, have you found Jesus?*"

He said, "No, not yet."

And then the preacher puts him down even more -- for a longer time. And he pulls him up, and he said, "*Brother, have you found Jesus?*"

And the drunk man says, "No, I haven't."

The preacher's getting really upset and annoyed and frustrated. Why? And then he dunks him down for 30 seconds. His arms and legs are flailing there, and he pulls him back up; he gasps for air.

And the preacher said, "*For the love of God, have you found Jesus?*"

And the drunk guy wipes his hand and takes a deep breath and says, "*No, but are you sure this is where he fell in?*" Okay. Okay. That's what I did with the opportunity of a lifetime: to share that joke. Okay.

The fact is: every single one of us are blessed to have this incredible gift. The question is: How do we want to live it? We have all the gifts and the abilities and the powers to shape it into whatever it is that we want.

And so, this week, are you willing to put some focus on directing your power? Not giving your power away, but directing and utilizing it towards what you want to create with this life? Are you willing to direct your purpose: listening and asking, and connecting with what really truly brings you joy, not what you get paid for? And are you willing to direct your passion, your spirit, your joy, your energy, and authentically expressing and being who you are?

Let's all keep working on igniting our spirit by choosing to direct our power, purpose and passion.

God bless you all.

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