

As an athlete at some point in our lives, we found a connection with this sport that made us feel something

That when we stepped out on that court or field we found ourselves in a place of fulfillment filled with moments of achievement

And even though it took a toll on us

We decided that it was worth showing up 2 times a day

It was worth being there at 5 am

And it was worth being so physically drained in the pm

And we're not naive enough to be deceived into thinking that this wouldn't be difficult, but we decided that we were passionate enough to become collegiate athletes

But I fear that we're not being transparent here

Because maybe you have had days and you have had months where you have hit a wall and reached the point of burn out

And there is a list of workouts and meetings and matches that you must attend and you must pretend to care about, but there is not any passion to drive it

And all you want to do is run the other direction

Or maybe you have reached the point where you tried to pursue a God

Who you think has a list of chapels and meetings and commitments that he says you have to attend and you have to pretend to care about, but there is no passion present that gives you any reason why

And all you want to do is run the other direction

And maybe this objection is a complexing side effect of trying to do things for God out of forced obligations and being left frustrated and confused

Because you've not yet been introduced to a valid enough reason for why He's worth any of it

Well I'd like to introduce you to why he's worth it

And I don't know what you know about God but in getting to know him better, I've learned that one of God's defining characteristics is the way he is deeply motivated by passion

God's passion wasn't about a sport, it was about people

But this was not a passion of selfish obsession but of selfless love

Selfless love that led to a deep compassion for every member of humanity

Compassion that broke his heart over seeing people broken-hearted with broken lives and a broken sense of hope

But what would passion's purpose be if it didn't lead to action

Compassion led God to meet humanity where it was

He walked our streets

He spoke our language

He demonstrated for us the way to have life and life to the fullest

You see they don't call it the passion of the Christ because Jesus religiously went to the temple every day

But because he was so set on rescuing people from what they are trapped in that he would suffer immensely in order to achieve it

Because to fix our brokenness someone had to be broken in our place

And don't miss the depths of God's passion for grace

You see it was when we spit in his face that he decided we were still worth dying for

It's hard to process the passionate love of Jesus being crucified so that I would have the freedom to decide against my fate being the eternal separation from the only one who can give life

And that Jesus is offering me a life that is not defined by my mistakes and number of the times I fell short from the finish line

But one defined by him daily reminding me that I am worth it

And that's where the story starts

That is our reason why

We love *because* God first loved us

Because I didn't become passionate about reading a book, worshiping, and praying because it was my religion

It was a result of being drawn in by this type of love that was worth everything that I had to offer

I became a college athlete because I love playing tennis and I decided it was worth it

And I became a follower of Jesus because he didn't just tell me he loved me, he proved it

And I decided to love him back because trust me when I say he is worth it