

# ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

## Part I – Zeal Defined

Introduction: Titus 2:11-15

1. God's grace makes salvation available to all men.
2. Yet, God's grace also teaches us how we are to live both to receive and to honor the gift of salvation.
  - a. We must deny ungodliness and worldliness.
  - b. We must live sober, righteous, and godly lives.
  - c. We must hold on to the hope of Heaven.
  - d. We must remain the pure and peculiar people of God.
  - e. We must be zealous of good works.
3. Often, as we focus on what we are not to do, we fail to devote ourselves to what we must do.

### I. Zeal Defined

- A. Definitions from the Greek
  1. *Zelotes* (ζηλωτης) – “A zealot, one burning with zeal; most eagerly desirous of a thing.” (Acts 21:20; 22:3; 1 Cor. 14:12; Titus 2:14 – *zealous*)
  2. *Zeloo* (ζηλωω) – “To have warmth of feeling for or against; to burn with zeal, to be heated or boil with desire for good; to desire earnestly; to pursue.” (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1, 39; 2 Cor. 11:2; Gal. 4:17; Rev. 3:19)
  3. *Zelos* (ζηλος) – “Heat, ardor, excitement of mind, fervor of spirit.” (John 2:17; Rom. 10:2; 2 Cor. 7:7, 11; 9:2; 11:2; Phil. 3:6; Col. 4:13; Heb. 10:27)
  4. *Zeo* (ζεω) – Root Verb – “To be hot; to boil; to be fervent in spirit.” (Acts 18:25; Rom. 12:11)
  5. When used in a negative sense, these words refer to envy, jealousy, or a burning desire to do evil.
- B. A closely related word is *enthusiasm*.
  1. It comes from two Greek words: *en* (meaning, “in”) and *theos* (meaning, “God”).
  2. Thus, the idea of ‘enthusiasm’ is having God within.
  3. He is the source of one's zeal and excitement for the work to be done.
- C. Zeal is a burning within toward that which is good, a desire toward righteousness.

### II. Zeal Personalized

- A. Salvation from sin is an individual responsibility (Phil. 2:12; Acts 2:40).
- B. Yet, when one is saved, he enters into fellowship with God.
  1. Into Christ / put on Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14)
  2. Christ in you (Col. 1:27-28; 3:11; John 15:4-5)
- C. Thus, Christ is seen in the Christian (Matt. 5:16; 1 Tim. 4:12).
- D. This motivates the Christian to live with zealous enthusiasm (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:23).
- E. However, this zeal is individual and personal – no one can have it for another (cf. Matt. 25:26-30).

### III. Zeal Misapplied

- A. As important as zeal is, it is often misdirected or misapplied in life.
- B. This same Greek word used in a negative sense refers to envy, jealousy, or a burning desire to do evil.
  - 1. The devil is zealous in his efforts to defeat righteousness (1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:11; etc.).
  - 2. By this same attitude, people can become tools of the devil (Jam. 3:13-16; cf. Acts 13:45; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20).
  - 3. Thus, the work of the church is halted, damaged, or destroyed.
- C. Zeal is misapplied when one's desire for the worldly is greater than one's desire for the spiritual.
  - 1. Zeal is necessary for success in any endeavor (cf. Luke 16:8).
  - 2. We are often zealous in our endeavors to gain earthly treasures.
    - a. We plan and purpose.
    - b. We devote time and expend energy.
    - c. We sacrifice and struggle.
  - 3. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, how do we compare in our zeal for spiritual treasures (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21).
  - 4. Are we weighed in the balances and found wanting (cf. Dan. 5:27)?
- D. Zeal is misdirected when it is used only for an outward show or self-glorification (cf. Matt. 6:1-8).
- E. Zeal is misused when it is focused on the doctrines and traditions of men (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10-17; Rom. 16:17-18).
  - 1. Evangelistic zeal of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses
  - 2. Zeal toward Catholicism, Calvinism, Premillennialism, etc.
  - 3. Zeal in following a man, preacher, religious leader, etc.
- F. Zeal is misapplied when it is without knowledge of the truth (Rom. 10:1-4).
  - 1. Must be careful of this in youth (physical and spiritual)
  - 2. Must be sure of following the whole counsel of God (cf. Col. 3:17)
  - 3. Must beware of self-deception (cf. Acts 22:3-4; 26:9; Gal. 1:14)