

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

Part II – *Zeal Described*

Introduction: Titus 2:11-15

1. God's grace makes salvation available to all men.
2. Yet, God's grace also teaches us to be zealous of good works.
3. In our last lesson, we saw zeal defined as a burning desire toward that which is good.
4. We saw zeal personalized as an individual need and responsibility for each Christian.
5. We saw zeal misapplied as jealousy, worldliness, and pride.
6. In this lesson, we will learn the four characteristics of zeal.

I. Characteristics of Zeal: FERVOR

- A. The word 'fervor' refers to an attitude of intensity and energy in one's labor.
- B. Three times, the Greek word for "zeal" is translated as "fervor."
 1. Acts 18:25 – Apollos was "fervent in the spirit" when he taught.
 2. Romans 12:11 – Christians are "fervent in the spirit" when serving.
 3. 2 Cor. 7:7 – The Corinthians were of "fervent mind" toward Paul.
- C. Being fervent is the opposite of being lazy (Rom. 12:11; cf. Prov. 6:6-11; 10:26; 13:4; 18:9; 24:30-34; 26:13-16; Isa. 56:10; Matt. 25:26).
 1. Idleness opens the door to many temptations to sin (cf. 2 Thes. 3:10-12; 1 Tim. 5:13).
 2. The Christian must not be lazy concerning good works (Eph. 5:14-16; 6:6-7; Col. 3:23-24).
 - a. His soul is at stake
 - b. Other souls are at stake
 - c. The word of God, the church, the needs of others, etc.
- D. We must be fervent in prayer (Col. 4:12; Jam. 5:16).
- E. We must be fervent in love (1 Pet. 1:22; 4:8).
- F. 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.

II. Characteristics of Zeal: URGENCY

- A. For an illustration, consider the example of Abraham (Genesis 18:1-7).
- B. Too often, we "run around" after worldly things so much that we have little energy left to "run after" good works.
- C. The church is to be filled with life (1 Pet. 2:5; 1:3; cf. Heb. 4:12; Acts 7:38).
- D. Because our good works are a matter of life and death, we must engage them with urgency (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2; Luke 14:21-24; Acts 8:30; 16:30-34; Gen. 19:15).
- E. Because time is limited, we must work with urgency (John 9:4; Ecc. 9:10; Isa. 38:18-19).

III. *Characteristics of Zeal: WORK*

- A. Living the Christian life requires labor – hard work.
- B. Studying and learning the Scriptures requires hard work (2 Tim. 2:15; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Tim. 4:13, 16).
- C. 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)
- D. Remaining faithful to the Lord requires hard work (Titus 3:8; Prov. 4:23; Psa. 119:4; Heb. 4:11; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:12-14).
- E. Resisting the devil requires hard work (1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Thes. 5:5-6; 1 Cor. 16:13).
- F. In our next lesson, we will see zeal displayed – how it looks when the work of the church is carried out with enthusiasm.

IV. *Characteristics of Zeal: STEADFASTNESS*

- A. The Christian must never lose zeal for the Lord's work.
- B. We must stand fast when others retreat (2 Thes. 2:15; Col. 1:22-23).
- C. We must work when others grow weary (2 Thes. 3:13; Gal. 6:9-10).
- D. We must fight when others surrender (2 Tim. 1:18-19).
- E. We must endure when others give up (2 Tim. 2:3-5).
- F. We must hold on when others grow weak (Heb. 3:14).
- G. We must persevere – even unto death (Rev. 2:10; 14:13).