

Zealously Serving God

- I. This is an exhortation to be zealous for God, His word, His church, His religion, His gospel, His truth, His commandments, His people, and His service; and to provoke you unto love and to good works (**Heb 10:24**).
 1. Zeal *n.* - **1.** In biblical language, rendering L. *zelus* (or *æmulatio*), Gr. *φῆλο*, denoting ardent feeling or fervour (taking the form of love, wrath, 'jealousy', or righteous indignation), with contextual tendency to unfavourable implications (emulation, rivalry, partisanship). **2.** In a specialized sense: Ardent love or affection; fervent devotion or attachment (to a person or thing). Obs. or merged in sense 4. **3.** Ardent, earnest, or eager desire; longing. Also const. inf. or clause. Obs. or merged in 4. **4.** (a) Intense ardour in the pursuit of some end; passionate eagerness in favour of a person or cause; enthusiasm as displayed in action.
 2. Ardent *adj.* - 1. Burning, on fire, red-hot; fiery, hot, parching.
 3. Fervent *adj.* - **1.** Hot, burning, glowing, boiling. **2.** Of persons, their passions, dispositions, or actions: Ardent, intensely earnest. From 17th c. almost exclusively with reference to love or hatred, zeal, devotion or aspiration.
 4. Do these words describe your devotion to God?
- II. Zeal towards God and His religion is good *if it is according to knowledge*.
 1. God is zealous (**Isa 59:16-19**).
 2. Jesus Christ exhorts His churches to be zealous and repent (**Rev 3:19**).
 3. We should be zealous of good works (**Tit 2:14**).
 4. It is good to be zealously affected *in a good thing* (**Gal 4:18**).
 5. Paul commended the Corinthians for their zeal in church discipline (**2Co 7:11**).
 6. There is a reward to a zealous Christian which can pass down to his children, and by which the whole church can be benefited (**Num 25:10-13**).
 7. But not all zeal is good if it is not according to knowledge.
 - A. The unbelieving Jews in Paul's day had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (**Rom 10:2-3**).
 - B. They *zealously* tried to bring the Gentiles in the Galatian churches under the law of Moses (**Gal 4:17**).
 - C. Prior to his conversion, Paul was very zealous toward God, even to the point of persecuting the church (**Act 22:3; Gal 1:14; Phi 3:6**).
 - D. Paul sincerely thought that he was doing the right thing by opposing Jesus Christ (**Act 26:9**).
 - E. Many a Catholic or Muslim crusader has thought that he was doing God service when he killed Christians (**Joh 16:2**).
- III. We need to be zealous toward God's word.
 1. The word of God is like a *fire* (**Jer 23:29**).
 2. The word should *burn* in our hearts when we read and hear it (**Luk 24:32**).
 3. We should feel an intense urge to declare the word of God to people as if it were a *burning fire* within us (**Jer 20:9; Psa 39:3; Job 32:17-20**).
 4. Is this how you feel?
 5. We should regard the scriptures more highly than our food (**Job 23:12; Mat 4:4; Psa 119:103; Jer 15:16**).
 - A. Would you go a day without eating and not realize it? How about a day without reading the scriptures?
 - B. Do you consider reading your Bible like sitting down to a filet mignon, or to poor tasting medicine which you only take because of the doctor's orders?

6. We should regard the scriptures more highly than wealth and riches (**Psa 19:7-10, Psa 119:72,127; Pro 8:10-11; Pro 16:16**).
 - A. Is that how you feel about the Bible?
 - B. If you found your house broken into, would you first check your desk, or your safe?
7. We should zealously study the word of God and search through it as if searching for hid treasures (**Pro 2:1-6; 2Ti 2:15; Act 17:11**).
 - A. God will reward those who diligently seek Him (**Heb 11:6; Jam 1:5-6; Dan 10:12**).
 - B. How badly do you desire to know the truth?

IV. We need to be zealous toward God's house, the church.

1. The church is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (**1Ti 3:15**).
2. We ought to have a *zeal* for it like Jesus did (**Joh 2:13-17**).
3. How passionate are you about the church?
4. We ought to regard it more highly than any other place (**Psa 84:1-2,4,10; Psa 27:4**).
5. How important is the church to you?
6. The church ought to be preferred over all else (**Psa 137:5-6 c/w Heb 12:22-23**).
7. We ought to endeavor to assemble with the saints as often as possible (**Heb 10:25**).
8. Would you miss work for the same reasons you miss church?

V. We need to be zealous toward God's people.

1. A pastor ought to have a *great zeal* for his church (**Col 4:13**).
2. We should prefer (*to put forward or advance, in status, rank, or fortune*) each other before ourselves (**Rom 12:10**).
 - A. Do you put the needs of your brethren before your own?
 - B. If your family needs something, are you always there to help? Is it the same with your brethren?
3. Our brethren ought to be our companions (**Psa 119:63**).
4. When is the last time you had one of your brethren over for dinner, or went out for dinner with them?
5. Brethren ought to communicate with each other often (**Mal 3:16**).
6. When is the last time you talked with your brethren outside of church?

VI. We need to be zealous in evangelism.

1. Paul's fervent desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they would be saved from their ignorance and works-based righteousness (**Rom 9:1-3; Rom 10:1-4**).
2. Do you have a deep desire for the conversion of the lost?
3. The Thessalonians were commended because the word of the Lord sounded out from them to people all over the place (**1Th 1:8**).
4. If he were alive today, would Paul write to our church the same words?
5. Paul's spirit was stirred in him when he saw the idolatry of both the heathen and God's people alike and he therefore disputed with them (**Act 17:16-17**).
6. When was the last time you disputed with someone over their pagan practices or false beliefs (Christmas, Easter, Halloween, Arminianism, Premillennialism, etc.)?
7. We should *earnestly* contend for the faith (**Jud 1:3**).
8. Don't be quick to condemn others' *ignorant zeal* concerning evangelism if *you* are not zealous about Biblical evangelism.
 - A. It is true that the zeal of Arminian "soul winners", Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormons is not according to knowledge.
 - B. It is true that knocking on doors and giving out tracts is not Biblical evangelism.
 - C. But if you are doing *nothing* to evangelize the lost, you best not be condemning others.

- D. Are *you* ready to give an answer when any man asks a reason of the hope that is in you? (**1Pe 3:15**)
 - E. Are *you* praying for open doors of utterance? (**Col 4:2-4**)
 - F. Are *you* praying that the word of the Lord will have free course and be glorified? (**2Th 3:1**)
 - G. Are *you* praying that God's word will not return unto Him void, but will accomplish that which He pleases? (**Isa 55:11**)
 - H. Are *you* casting your bread upon the waters with hopes that it will return after many days? (**Ecc 11:1**)
 - I. Are *you* walking through the doors that God opens for you? (**1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12; Rev 3:8**)
 - i. This could be answering questions when asked instead of avoiding them.
 - ii. This could be telling a person burdened under a heavy load of sin about Jesus who died for sinners.
 - iii. This could be speaking up when you see someone sinning or hear them using the Lord's name in vain or expressing false doctrine.
 - iv. This could be giving a person a word of comfort when they are down.
9. This church is not going to grow if the fervent desire for such is not in our hearts and prayers.
- VII. We need to be zealous prayer.
- 1. God hears and answers fervent prayers (**Jam 5:16-18**).
 - 2. God hears and answers prayers made with importunity (*troublesome pertinacity in solicitation*) (**Luk 11:5-10; Luk 18:7-8**).
 - 3. We should be fervent in prayer for each other (**Col 4:12**).
- VIII. We need to be zealous in giving to the Lord.
- 1. The churches of Macedonia were praised for their liberality in giving to those in need, even when they themselves were in deep poverty (**2Co 8:1-4**).
 - 2. Paul likewise commended the church in Corinth for their *zeal* in giving to help the poor saints in Jerusalem (**2Co 9:1-2 c/w 1Co 16:1-3**).
- IX. We need to be zealous in love and charity.
- 1. We should love each other *fervently* (**1Pe 1:22; 1Pe 4:8**).
 - 2. Don't be quick to condemn others' *misguided* zeal in charity if you are not zealous in charity *yourself*.
 - 3. It is true that the zeal in charity of many who profess to be Christians is not according to knowledge.
 - A. This could be giving financial help to those who should be working to support themselves.
 - B. This could be giving money to organizations who allege to help the poor in foreign countries.
 - C. This could be supporting the federal government's foreign aid programs.
 - D. This could be giving out free food or water at public events to try to interest people in "accepting Jesus" or attending their church.
 - 4. But if you are doing *nothing* to help the poor, the needy, the sick, the outcasts, or the lonely (**Mat 25:42-43; Jam 2:15-16**), then don't condemn others who are trying to do so, albeit in a misguided fashion.
 - 5. Don't ever think that spiritual gifts, the knowledge of the truth, giving to the poor, or suffering persecution are substitutes for genuine charity (**1Co 13:1-7**).