

# Radical Zeal

## Lesson 2: Why Have It

If you truly understand why zeal is so important to your spiritual life of service to God, you will do everything you can to develop, use, maintain, and spread it. But, without the right motivation, you will struggle to add this kind of radical zeal that pleases God to your life and use it in the way God desires. Instead, you may find yourself never quite getting around to working on your zeal. Therefore, we need to search the Scriptures to see why you should consider it of utmost importance to develop the kind of radical zeal God's word approves.

**1) Every other spiritual condition displeases God.** God never approves of any spiritual condition that cannot be properly described as being zealous. Consider a brief survey of the five churches Jesus rebuked in Revelation 2-3 (the other two were only commended and encouraged). The church of Ephesus (2:1-7) was commended for doing many good things but was rebuked for doing those things without having the love God desires. The church in Pergamum (2:12-17) was commended for holding to the name of Christ during the time of persecution but was rebuked for tolerating false teaching. The church in Thyatira (2:18-29) was commended for their works and endurance but rebuked for tolerating false teaching and immorality. The church in Sardis (3:1-6) was commended for having a few who were spiritually alive but rebuked for the rest being spiritually dead. The church in Laodicea (3:14-22) was not commended and was rebuked for their lukewarm condition. Particularly consider this congregation that was neither cold nor hot in their service to God. This was a repulsive condition to Jesus, as He would evidently rather people be all the way against Him than be lukewarm. His cure for their condition was to be zealous and repent! Then, all the other congregations also failed to have the radical zeal Jesus wants from His people in their service to the

Lord, as they did not zealous serve Him as they should (Romans 12:11)!

**2) Jesus died to produce zeal in you.** Jesus was zealous for you to the point that He willingly left Heaven, came to earth, suffered, and died so that you could be saved from your sins (2 Corinthians 8:9). In seeing your poverty and choosing to sacrifice Himself for you, He redeemed you with the cost of His blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). There was simply no other way for you to be saved from your sins. Now, you need to consider *why* He chose to do this. Yes, it was because He loves you, wants you to be saved from God's wrath, and wants you to live eternally in Heaven (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-11; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9). But, there is more. Consider Titus 2:11-14. Jesus also gave Himself for you to make you part of His special people who would be zealous (eager) to do good works. Therefore, Jesus did not do everything He did for you so that you would just go through the motions of living for Him, tolerate sin and false teaching, have a reputation of being a "Christian," and/or be lukewarm in His service! Instead, He wants you to reflect over all He has done for you and be zealous for Him!

**3) To fuel good works.** All that God has done for you is intended to make you into His masterpiece that will then do good works (Titus 2:14; Ephesians 2:8-10)! For, there are many things Jesus expects you to do with your remaining time on this earth to serve Him. However, these good works do not just happen by accident. For, they are sacrificial in nature. Something must provide the motivation for these good works to be done – and to be done in the spirit God desires. Zeal for God will provide the fire that fuels all that God wants you to do. For, it takes your works of service to God out of the realm of something that "has" to be done to being what you desire to do (1 John 5:3-4). It takes your service from seeking the "minimum

requirements” to get to Heaven to seeking how you can glorify God to the best of your ability (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5). This kind of zeal that fuels the service of good works produces the proper combination of our motives plus good works that God is pleased with, making our food to do the will of God (following Jesus’s example, John 4:34)!

**4) There is too much at stake not to be zealous.** We have seen that God wants you to be zealous and any other condition displeases God (James 4:17; Romans 6:23). So, this means that your soul and where you spend eternity will be impacted by whether you are zealous as God desires or not. For, there will be many who profess Jesus as Lord and have done some good things who Jesus will sentence to eternity in Hell (Matthew 7:21-23). As we saw in Revelation 2-3, doing some good things without radical zeal to obey God simply is not sufficient. Also, without zeal for good works, you will be much more likely to tolerate sin and false teaching in your own life. Then, not having this zeal will also impact the souls of others. For, God has chosen to use those who follow Christ to share His message of salvation with others (2 Timothy 2:2, 24-26), encourage those who are trying to follow Him (Hebrews 3:12-13), correct those who have turned away from Him (James 5:19-20), etc. So, if you are not zealous, you simply will not take this responsibility as seriously as you should – to the detriment of their souls!

True zeal is necessary to pleasing God. This is what Jesus died to produce in you. It is needed to fuel the good works God wants you to do. Then, both your soul and the souls of others are dependent on your zeal. Therefore, if any of these things are important to you, you must do what is needed to cultivate, use, maintain, and spread the zeal God desires in your life!

## Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What did you learn from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God’s service?

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