

Radical Zeal

Lesson 3: How To Develop It

Just knowing that you should be zealous does not make you zealous. Instead, many know these things and never unlock the radical zeal God wants in their lives. Therefore, there must be more than just taking in information about zeal. In fact, we can learn from those who were truly zealous for good works in the Scriptures to see what was present in their lives. This, then, will serve as a blueprint for you to develop (and even increase) in zeal for Christ.

1) Draw near to God. God is the *only* source that can provide the kind of zeal He desires. Therefore, you will never kindle the fires of zeal through any other means (i.e. through experiences, relationships, books, etc.)! For example, Jesus spoke of being the True Vine that produces life so as to produce fruit (John 15:1-8). This was how Peter and John were able to passionately defend the cause of Christ in Acts 3-4, though they were otherwise uneducated and untrained men (Acts 4:13; Matthew 4:19). Therefore, those who desire to be zealous for Him will actively, intentionally, and regularly draw near to Him (James 4:7-10). This involves submitting (yielding) to whatever God says, putting off evil things in your life, being miserable concerning the sin you have committed, and humbling yourself before God. Being serious about drawing near to God will also require you to put certain things in place in your life. These include diligent Bible study (1 Peter 2:2-3), prayer (Philippians 4:6-7), and gathering to worship with other Christians (Hebrews 10:24-25).

2) Let Christ's love control you. For you to be zealous in the good works Christ desires from your life, you must truly appreciate the price He paid for your salvation (1 Peter 1:18-21). This was a continual theme of Paul's writings when he spoke of his own service to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Galatians 2:20; 1 Timothy 1:12-17). Understanding the love of Christ, though will require you to study the Scriptures so as to let the Holy Spirit pour out God's

love through its pages (Romans 5:5)! Let every page deepen your understanding of your brokenness and what God has done to save you through Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-11). Then, recognizing this great love that has been shown for you should cause you to reciprocate selfless love for Christ so that your life is controlled by whatever He desires of you (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Therefore, make it your goal to grow to more fully understand and appreciate the love of Christ each day (Ephesians 3:16-19)!

3) Long to be with God. Everything about serving Christ requires you to be focused in a spiritual way rather than a physical way (Romans 8:5-8). It only stands to reason, then, that those who have become focused on or distracted by the things of this world will not truly live to please God (Mark 4:13-20). This can even happen among those who profess to follow Christ. Although we can know the Bible's teachings, we can still be focused on our lives on this earth and feel at home in this world rather than pressing toward the eternal home of the soul. Yet, Paul pressing toward Heaven was a prominent attribute that led to his zealous service of Christ (Philippians 1:20-24; 3:7-17; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18). You must embrace your existence on this earth as being like an exile (stranger, pilgrim) who is passing through this land on your way to a much better place (1 Peter 1:1-2). As such, you will have many earthly trials, but your longing to be with God for eternity in Heaven will keep you serving Christ (1 Peter 1:3-9)!

4) Embrace what is at stake. In the midst of all that goes on in life from a physical perspective, it can be easy to lose perspective as to what is really at stake. For, while you deal with the daily grind of life, you can miss the spiritual war that every person on earth is fighting (Ephesians 6:10-13). The stakes are either spending eternity in Heaven or Hell! Once

again, Paul knew what was at stake for both himself and others and used this to motivate his service to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11; 1 Timothy 4:16). This means that you will have to take your own daily life serious in Christ's service (Philippians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:11-12). Then, you must be able to see the spiritual needs of those who are around you (Matthew 9:35-38; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)! As you do, you must consider the implications if you choose to do nothing!

5) Recognize your usefulness to God. It is unfortunate that many people seem to undervalue the contributions they can make in God's service. Yet, God wants every saint to be equipped to do His work and contribute what he/she can (Ephesians 4:11-16). The Bible, in fact, is full of examples of how God would use "ordinary" people to do extraordinary things (i.e. Moses, Gideon, Mary, Peter, etc.). One example of this is a Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well and learned He was the Messiah (John 4:28-30, 39-42). The Scriptures regularly speak of how you are expected to do whatever you can in God's service (Romans 6:12-13; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-10). In fact, you (and others who follow Jesus) are God's plan for doing His work on earth today! Consequently, you must regularly challenge yourself to push beyond your "comfort zone" to do what faith in Jesus requires.

There is no real secret to developing radical zeal. The things we have identified are simply things that come from studying the Bible with an honest heart that is looking to apply what you read. For, God's word is powerful and will ignite and then grow this kind of fire inside of you *if* you will not just read it for information, but for transformation! Seeking God in this way will make you become passionate for those things He has a passion for!

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?

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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