

NEVER LOSE YOUR ZEAL

TEXT: (Romans 12:9-13, NIV)

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

KEY VERSE: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11, NIV).

INTRODUCTION

1. "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27, KJV).
2. "No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (I Corinthians 9:27, NIV).

I. THINGS TO AVOID

A. The Devaluing of Truth

1. "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (II Timothy 4:3, NIV).
2. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10, NIV).

B. Diminished Reverence

1. "They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (II Timothy 4:4, NIV).
2. "For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (II Thessalonians 2:11-12, NIV).

C. Losing Your Love for God

- 1 "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2-3, NIV).

II. THE PATH OF LOST ZEAL

A. A Darkening of the Heart

1. "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Romans 1:21, NIV).
2. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21, NIV).
3. "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23, NIV).
4. "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24, NIV).

5. "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another" (Romans 1:24, NIV).

B. Acceptance of Foolishness

1. "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles" (Romans 1:22-23, NIV).
2. "Claiming to be wise, they became fools [professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves]. And by them the glory and majesty *and* excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for *and* represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles" (Romans 1:22-23, Amplified Version).
3. "They pretended to know it all, but were illiterate regarding life. They traded the glory of God who holds the whole world in his hands for cheap figurines you can buy at any roadside stand" (Romans 1:22-23, Message).

C. Became Filled with Shameful Lusts

1. "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another" (Romans 1:26, NIV).
2. "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable" (Leviticus 18:22, NIV).
3. "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion" (Romans 1:26-27, NIV).

D. A Depraved Mind

1. "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done" (Romans 1:28, NIV).
2. "They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12, NIV).
3. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them" (Romans 1:29-32, NIV).

III. THE ANTIDOTE

1. "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality" (Romans 12:9-13, NIV).

A. Remain on Fire for God

1. “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11, NIV).
2. “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16, NIV).

B. Stay Focused on the things of God

1. “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12, NIV).
2. “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5, NIV).

C. Develop a Giving Spirit

1. “Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13, NIV).
2. “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1-2, NIV).
2. “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:9-13, NIV).