

A Zeal Of God, But Not According To Knowledge

I. Introduction:

A. What good is faith without works (**James 2:14-26**)?

1. The church in Ephesus [started in **Acts 19:1-7**] was reminded of God's grace and that they were created in Christ unto good works (**Ephesians 2:1-10**).
2. The church in Corinth was reminded to always abound in the work of the Lord (**I Corinthians 15:58**).
3. No matter your abilities (**Matthew 25:14-30**), there is work you can do as a Christian (i.e. **Matthew 5:14-16**, **Romans 12:9-16**, **Ephesians 5:22-6:9**, **Philippians 1:27**, **Philippians 2:1-2**, **Philippians 2:14-16**, **Titus 2:1-10**, **Hebrews 3:13**, **Hebrews 10:22-25**, etc.).

B. All good works are found within the Scriptures (**II Timothy 3:14-17**).

1. If God has not asked for it, it is not a good work (**II Samuel 7:1-7**).
2. We have to hold to the pattern (**II Timothy 1:13**) and know for sure that our works are good according to God (**Proverbs 3:5-7**, **Proverbs 14:12**, **Proverbs 21:2**, **Ephesians 5:10**, **I Thessalonians 4:1-2**, **I Thessalonians 5:21**, and **Revelation 22:18-19**).

II. Body: Sometimes People Are Hard At Work In Ways They Think Please God, But They Are Wrong (**Romans 9:31-10:3**).

A. Some were extremely zealous (**John 16:1-3**).

1. Think of Paul (**Acts 7:51-8:3**, **I Corinthians 15:9**, **Galatians 1:13-14**, and **Philippians 3:6**).
2. Peter could think of no harm coming to Jesus, but he was wrong (**Mark 8:31-38** and **John 18:1-11**).
3. There were zealous individuals who affected the congregations in Galatia (**Galatians 4:17**) and not for good (**Galatians 1:1-9**, **Galatians 3:1-3**, and **Galatians 6:12-15**).

B. That is not to say that zeal is bad, if it is properly placed (**Galatians 4:18**; cf. **Proverbs 19:2**).

1. Think about what the grace of God teaches (**Titus 2:11-14**).
2. How Epaphras was zealous (**Colossians 4:12-13**).
3. Zeal can even be contagious (**II Corinthians 9:1-2**; cf. **I Corinthians 16:1-4**).
4. Think of Paul's conversion and how he went from a sinful zeal to a godly zeal that made the enemies of God take notice (**Acts 24:1-5**).

C. Some just put forth their hands to do what God has not authorized them to do (**I Chronicles 13:1-14**; cf. **Deuteronomy 10:8** and **I Chronicles 15:1-3**).

1. For example, many have twist (cf. **II Peter 3:15-18**) **James 1:26-27** and have built institutions to care for the fatherless and the widows.

a. God didn't ask for institutions to be established. He said the individual Christian's work was to "visit" [to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes; Thayer] the fatherless and widows in their affliction (**Matthew 25:31-46**).

b. The reason this was written is never discussed by those who overzealously do what God has not asked. It was written to mid-first century Jewish Christians (**James 1:1**; cf. **Acts 8:1-4**). They were in error in many ways (**James 2:1-13**, **James 3:9-10**, **James 4:1-11**, **James 5:1-7**, etc.).

c. Specifically, the widows and fatherless had long been abused among the Jews and that needed to stop with these erring saints (**Isaiah 10:1-2**, **Ezekiel 22:7**, and **Luke 20:46-47**).

d. When it comes to taking care of widows within the body of Christ, there is a pattern to follow (**I Timothy 5:3-16**).

2. There are those that become overly zealous and want to be soul winners (**Proverbs 11:30**). Yet, they end up doing more harm than good because they don't know what or how to teach (**Luke 6:39**).

3. There are those who are overly zealous to have fellowship with brethren so much that they do not properly test to see who is faithful. They have an ignorant test (are you a non-instrumental, non-institutional member of the church of Christ). That is not enough (**I Corinthians 1:10**, **I Corinthians 4:17**, **Philippians 3:16**, **I Timothy 1:3-7**, and **James 2:10**). By such, they err (**Revelation 2:14-16**; cf. **Matthew 7:15-20**, **Ephesians 5:6-11**, **I Timothy 5:22**, **I Timothy 6:3-5**, etc.).

4. In a point mentioned when we discussed "Pretentious Morality"... There are those who are overly zealous to defend the faith (**Jude 1:3-4**) that they err in doing so (**Proverbs 14:7**, **Proverbs 19:27**, **Matthew 7:6**, **Romans 1:28-32**, **Romans 16:17-18**, **II Corinthians 12:19-20**, **Galatians 2:1-5**, **II Timothy 2:14-23**, and **Titus 3:9-11**).

5. There are those that are overly zealous to do good unto all (**Galatians 6:10**) that they ignore Scriptures such as **II Thessalonians 3:10** while giving financial aid to those whom they shouldn't.

6. Sadly, more examples could be given. The point is, know what is right before you become zealous and do what is wrong.

III. Conclusion: Zealous works for God, that are not right with God, are a waste of time and energy (**Matthew 7:21-23**).