

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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## DIRECTING OUR ZEAL

Jim Stauffer

The concept of zeal in the minds of most is a very positive thing. It provides the energy necessary to achieve whatever goals we have in any endeavor. The same is true for the Christian as he carries out his responsibilities as a servant of the King.

However, zeal without guidance can cause us to go farther than the Lord or become more restrictive than scripture and thus be the one who, *goeth onward and aideth not in the doctrine of Christ.* (2 John 9)

Jesus is described as zealous for His Father's house. (John 2:17) Paul says his Jewish brethren had a *zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* (Rom. 10:2) We can see Jesus overthrowing the tables of the money changers, an extreme action, but one necessary to set things in order and done by the One who had such authority. We can also see Paul's Jewish brethren rejecting Christ because they failed to understand the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament scriptures they were attempting to uphold. In one case the Lord was moved by His zeal to act appropriately on behalf of His Father while the Jews through their failure to understand God's word, dishonored Him by zealously rejecting His Son.

In the following passage Paul issues a warning that false teachers also have zeal and will use it cunningly. **Gal. 4:17** *They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them. 18 But it is good to be zealously sought in a good matter at all times, and not only when I am present with you.* It is obvious the false teachers sought to draw the Galatian Christians to their cause by exclusion. Social pressure was the method used by those who were trying to bind certain aspects of the Law of Moses on the disciples of Christ. This, Paul identifies as zeal on their part in an attempt to cause the Galatians to return that zeal toward the false teachers.

Throughout the scripture we find zeal as both a good and bad thing. When one is genuinely zealous for Christ and the good works for which he has been created in Christ Jesus, it is exactly what God wants it to be. (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14) But when it causes us to go beyond what scripture teaches and to bind the concepts and precepts of men rather than what scripture teaches, it becomes a bad thing. When not

guided or channelled by the truth of God's word it eventually turns to jealousy or envy. Consider this example. **Acts 17:5** *But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. (jealousy = zeal)*

There was a religious sect of the Jews called Zealots in New Testament times. They were defenders of the Law of Moses. So zealous were they for the Law, they would violently defend it against real or perceived enemies. They bore another name, *Sicarii*, because they customarily carried daggers beneath their cloaks. If they found someone who disrespected the Law or even those who were anti-Jewish, they would attack them with these daggers.

Now we all know how Jesus honored the Law during His time on earth. It was God's law at the time. But neither the Law or Jesus called on such extreme responses as those of the Zealots to defend either the Law or the Jewish nation. Their zeal was not according to knowledge, that is it did not comport with the tenets of the Law.

Historically the Zealots became famous for capturing the Masada, a Roman fortress, in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple burned to the ground. Around 1000 of them defended that fortress for nearly 3 years until the Roman Army was finally able to storm it and tear down the walls. Once inside, they found all those Zealots had taken their own lives rather than surrender to the Romans.

This sounds like a courageous story and maybe from the human view it could be considered such. But from the view of God's word these were men whose zeal was not according to knowledge and their end inglorious because they acted on their own authority and went beyond that which was written. In their zeal for the Law, they overlooked the very promise made to Abraham which was a central theme to the Law and was carried out by Abraham's descendant, Jesus of Nazareth.

Was it zeal that led them astray? No, it was as the prophet of old said, *My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.* (Hos. 4:6)

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Brethren, our charge to keep requires zeal for the house of our Father, such zeal that we are told by the Apostle Peter to defend the truth of the gospel in the face of persecution, *with meekness and fear.* (**1 Pet. 3:15**)

Let us always set the truth as the standard for our lives and be certain to speak that truth in love.

## WORLDLINESS. # 5

*Jim Sasser*

(Editor's note: In our study on worldliness last week, we began to notice the need for discrimination in our use of the God-given drives and lawful desires; to keep them from becoming tools of the Devil to use upon our lust. We were using an article on the subject by brother D. Ellis Walker. We now will continue where we left off and conclude this series).

Now for a glance at the **emotions**. For example, let us consider **anger**. WE are born with emotion. For instance, stand over a small baby and press his arms straight down by his sides and watch him turn red and soon he will bellow his rage. This natural emotion must be properly controlled and directed. To demonstrate the idea I am trying to present I offer the following illustration: I once read a story of a peg-legged man who, in crossing a street, knocked a child down, deliberately stepped on it with his wooden leg, and then went on his way without even looking back. A person would have to be terribly calloused not to be angered at a sight such as that. What would you have wished to have done to the man with the wooden leg? Would you have desired to kill him? If so, that would have been lust -- unlawful desire. However great our anger may be, we must so control it that our desires will conform to the Lord's will. Paul says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." **Eph. 4:26.**

We need to be careful of our conduct so that we will neither be guilty of unlawful desire nor the cause of it in others. Of course, it is possible for us to be guilty of unlawful desire when there is nothing to provoke it. Peter recognized that there is a class of people who have "eyes full of adultery." **2 Pet. 2:14.** Their hearts are so corrupt that the presence of the most modest and innocent person may excite them to thoughts of adultery. However, each one of us should be careful of his speech, dress, and conduct, lest he be the cause of an unlawful desire passing through someone's heart.

IS THERE ANY ESCAPE? How may we keep from loving the world and the things of the world? We must begin with a thorough education in the word of God. Without it we cannot discriminate between godliness and worldliness. Here is the best statement of this matter that I have ever read: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of

offense unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." **Phil. 1:9-11.**

This thorough education must be coupled with the resolution to put "on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." **Rom. 13:14.** The resolution demands that no provision may be made for the expression of a single unlawful desire and at the same time it requires that Christ's will be expressed in one's life. The denial of the flesh's desire is declared to be a crucifixion of it? "And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof." **Gal. 5:24.** Furthermore, the Christian's life is to be so full of spiritual activity that flesh will be unable to express itself: "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." **Gal. 5:16.**

Let none deceive himself about countenancing anything that will stir up unlawful desire, for lust will surely be seduced by temptation, sin will be conceived and brought forth, and death will follow as the consequence. Therefore all literature, conversation, and associations that stir up unlawful desires must be avoided, for, in the words of James, "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death." **Jas. 1:14,15.** An unlawful desire in the heart, like the germ of life in a fertile egg, will "hatch out" into the very act of sin, whenever the proper conditions are present.

REMEMBER. Remember: the world with all of its pleasures, treasures, glory, fame, glitter, glamour, etc., will soon pass away. Paul says in **1 Cor. 7:31**, "The fashion of this world passeth away." We are temporary residents in this world; our stay in this world is very brief. No wonder that Peter entreats us, saying, "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." **1 Pet. 2:11.** The Bible teaches that the person who lives according to the will of God will survive this world and live forever: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." **1 Jno. 2:17.** Since the world and its lusts pass away, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" **Matt. 16:26.**

Of Moses it is said, "He chose rather to suffer ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season." **Heb. 11:25.** He could see the fickleness of sin. Sin is deceptive. Moses knew that it was only for a time that sin could be enjoyed and that then he must pay the wages of sin, death. AWAKE! AWAKE! my brethren.

## GRACE RECEIVED IN VAIN

**2 Cor. 6:1** and working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.



No one could receive the grace of God in vain if it accomplishes its purpose without conditions on our part. Besides, if grace saves us without our cooperation, why should Paul exhort them not to receive it in vain? No one has anything to do with receiving anything that comes to him unconditionally. But, and let us speak it reverently, God's grace is powerless to accomplish anything for you without your cooperation.

**1 Cor. 15:10** *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* God's grace made Paul what he was, because it was not bestowed upon him in vain; and it was not bestowed upon him in vain because he labored, cooperated with God's grace in his own conversion and in the growth and development of his own character. Should a benevolent man of means find; a poor, homeless boy, ragged and dirty, and take him to his own home, bathe and clothe him, feed and educate him, he would be bestowing his grace upon the boy. When the boy makes a successful and useful man he could look to his benefactor and say of him, "By his grace I am what I am." But had the boy been unruly and refused to study, the man's grace would have been bestowed on him in vain.

## GRACE COMES TO ALL

If people are saved by grace without conditions on their part, why are not all saved? Grace comes to all.

**Titus 2:11** *For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world;* The grace of God comes to all teaching us. Some refuse the teaching; hence grace has no opportunity to confer upon them the salvation it brings to all. God's grace provided the means of our salvation, brings salvation to us and teaches us how to appropriate it.

The next move is ours. This is illustrated by the event of Pentecost. **(Acts 2)** God had provided salvation, and through Peter made it known to the people, and graciously taught them how to obtain the remission of sins. The issue then rested with the people. The next move was theirs. But so much was at stake Peter earnestly exhorted them to make that move saying, *Save yourselves from this crooked generation.* **(Acts 2:40)** They could save themselves only by performing the conditions upon which salvation was so graciously offered. They were too anxious about their salvation and too intelligent to hesitate and argue that obedience on their part would eliminate grace. They felt the guilt of sin so heavily that they knew that any means of escape offered them was a matter of great favor, great grace to them. Hence they made no delay in being baptized.

*An Illustration:* Two small boys, walking along a railway near a country village in Tennessee, discovered a broken rail. They knew the passenger train was about due, and their hearts went out in sympathy for all on the train. They rushed up the track, and as the train came in sight one of the boys began to wave his red handkerchief. This was his only means of teaching the

engineer that danger was ahead. The engineer stopped the train and saved himself and all on board. Their grace appeared, bringing salvation by teaching the engineer. He gave heed and saved the train from wreck, but had he refused to heed the teaching and plunged on into destruction, the grace of the boys would all have been in vain. By their grace on the one hand, and through the engineer's faith in them on the other, the train was saved. Hence, I think we can easily see how we are saved by grace through faith.

**Eph. 2:8** *for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not of works, that no man should glory.* Grace provided salvation and teaches how to appropriate its benefits; and we, through our faith, lay hold of the salvation offered. On Pentecost **(Acts 2)**, the people were saved by grace through faith, simply because their confidence in God led them to perform the conditions announced to them.

*Divine and Human Sides of Salvation:* There are two sides to the matter of salvation, the divine and the human; and there are two principles of operation, grace and faith. On the divine side grace performed the necessary conditions to bring salvation to man; and on the human side faith must perform the necessary conditions to appropriate the blessings provided by grace. Hence we are saved by grace through faith. Grace on the part of God made Naaman's cure possible; faith that led Naaman to carry out God's stipulated conditions made the cure a reality.

*Other Illustrations:* Noah found favor with God, and God saved him from the flood. But there were two sides to his salvation, the divine and the human, grace and faith. Grace made his salvation possible, and faith, active faith, prepared the ark. **(Heb. 11:7)** He was, therefore, saved by grace through faith. Jesus looked with favor on the blind man. **(John 9)** Having anointed his eyes with clay, Jesus commanded him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. By faith he went and washed, and came seeing. He was cured by grace through faith.

Salvation is the free gift of God; but it takes two to perfect a gift, one to make the offer and another to accept. That which is thrust on us without our consent is, in no sense, a gift. God gave Israel Jericho **(Josh 6)**, but they had to do certain things to come into possession of the gift. He gave them the land of Canaan, but they had to subdue it. Both gifts came to them by grace and faith.

*The Marriage Feast:* Read **Mat. 22:1-14**. The feast was prepared, and the announcement was made: *All things are now ready: come to the marriage feast.* Note carefully the expression: *All things are now ready.* The feast was fully prepared and ready for the people, and they were invited to enjoy its bounties. The next move was theirs. And Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like this. This was a free feast, graciously prepared for the people; but many of them did not eat. The feast was not crammed down unwilling throats, and the kingdom of heaven is like this.

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**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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## **NEWS AND NOTES:**

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL, AND JAN PATRICK. STEVE AND SUZANNE WIMP CONTINUE TO BE AFFECTED BY A VIRUS. MARY CZIRR HAS RETURNED HOME.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: GIVING ANSWERS TO DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS AND WEDNESDAY: THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

**NEW MEMBERS:** MATTHEW AND EMALI PRICE. BE SURE TO MEET AND WELCOME THEM TO OUR NUMBER.



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10