



## BALANCING ZEAL AND KNOWLEDGE!

### Introduction:

- A. **(Slide #2)** Text: Rom. 10:1,2 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup>For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”
- B. This Text Gives Insight Into Struggles That Religious People Can Face:
  - 1. Zeal without knowledge
  - 2. Knowledge without zeal
- C. God’s Desire -- That We Learn How To Balance Zeal And Knowledge.

### I. **(Slide #3) Zeal Without Knowledge.**

- A. **(Slide #4)** The Jews For Whom Paul Was Praying Had Misguided Zeal!
  - 1. They knew God!
    - a. They had been taught about Him under the Law of Moses!
    - b. They knew that He promised a Messiah.
  - 2. They did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Promised Messiah.
  - 3. They denied that the Old Law of Moses had been nailed to the Cross of Christ and the New Covenant was now in effect!
  - 4. They were still advocating that justification was available under the Law of Moses.
  - 5. Some Jews were still living by the Law of Moses; others had become Christians BUT they were demanding that rules of the Law of Moses like circumcision were absolutely required for Christians to be in a right relationship with God!

6. Their zeal was evident; it was undeniable; however, they had misguided zeal!
7. Their zeal was evident; however, their understanding was muddled and mistaken.
8. They were devoutly religious; they were still lost! Gal. 5:4 “You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”

B. (►) Two Biblical Examples Of Zeal Not According To Knowledge.

1. (►) Paul.

- a. As the dynamic Jewish firebrand, Saul, he did not accept Jesus as the Promised Messiah.
- b. He was filled with zeal but driven by mistaken beliefs -- confusion in faith:
  1. Paul was “zealous!
    - a. Ac. 22:3 “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and **was zealous toward God** as you all are today.”
    - b. Gal. 1:14 “And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, **being more exceedingly zealous** for the traditions of my fathers.”
    - c. Phil. 3:6 “**concerning zeal, persecuting the church;** concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”
  2. When Stephen was stoned to death:
    - a. “and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.” Ac. 7:58
    - b. Ac. 8:1 “Now Saul was consenting to his death.”
  3. Ac. 8:3 “As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.”
  4. Ac. 9:1,2 “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”
  5. He was on a mission to eradicate Christianity from the face of the Earth!
    - a. Ac. 22:4 “I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,”
    - b. Ac. 26:11 “And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.”

- c. No wonder Paul could identify the Jews problem -- he could tell you all about that!
  - d. And yet, his Jewish kinsmen became he most ardent and violent opponents! In their misguided zeal, they had the same mindset that Saul had previously! In their zeal, Paul's kinsmen were trying to destroy him!
2. (►) Apollos
- a. Ac. 18:25 "This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John."
  - b. He was a Jew who was born in Alexandria, Egypt. 24
    - 1. That is 314 miles from Jerusalem -- keep that in mind as we think about later events!
    - 2. He was a Jew by birth.
    - 3. Alexandria was a great seat of learning; they had the largest library in the world -- he was very intelligent!
    - 4. He may have been greatly influenced by the great intellectual leader, Philo, who was very concerned about education and preaching!
      - a. Philo was a contemporary of Jesus and the Apostles.
      - b. He mainly studied the Old Testament.
      - c. He did not understand that Jesus was a Divine Being; he thought he was a created being. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah.
      - d. Apollos was a disciple of Philo, so you might see Apollos as one who knew the Old Testament Scriptures but did not truly know who Jesus Christ was!
  - c. He was an extremely talented speaker -- he was eloquent! 24
  - d. He had a mighty grasp of the Old Testament Scriptures. 25
  - e. What is interesting -- both he and Paul had been taught wrong about Jesus in their youth!
    - 1. Paul was taught that Jesus was an imposter Messiah!
    - 2. Apollos was taught that Jesus was something between God and man; but he was NOT the promised Messiah of the O.T.
3. Both were dynamic firebrands and preachers; both had intense zeal but were deficient in understanding of Truth.

C. (►) The Same Is True Today:

- 1. Many have great religious zeal yet teach false doctrines about the nature of man, false plans of salvation, false religions, false concepts of worship, false methods of church organization, and false concepts about morality.
- 2. Many have zeal to door knock and to be witnesses for God yet do not know Jesus Christ.

3. Many young men have zeal to door knock and to talk about “God” but do not know the God of the Bible or the Jesus of the Bible.
  4. Many have zeal for daily prayers and to looking toward Jerusalem or Mecca but do not know Jesus or respect His Laws.
  5. Some have so much zeal for their religion that they become violent terrorists against any who oppose their beliefs.
- D. All Of These People Had Or Have Amazing Zeal; However Their Zeal Is Misguided!
- E. Great Truths From These Accounts:
1. Religious zeal that promotes anyone but Jesus Christ as THE SAVIOR is misguided zeal!
    - a. Jn. 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”
    - b. Jn. 11:25 “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’”
  2. It is possible to be on fire with zeal but to be lost!
    - a. This has been seen throughout Biblical history and throughout history since the Bible was written.
    - b. Jesus describes the direction of such people:
      1. Mt. 7:13,14 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup>Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
      2. Jesus describes the roadway to hell as a superhighway with people speeding along hell bound!
  3. Sincerity and zeal coupled with ignorance are dangerous companions!!!
    - a. They eagerly promote error.
    - b. They convince others that they should be heard and followed!
    - c. The message -- sincerity and religious zeal are NOT enough!
  4. If a man does not understand God’s mode of justification, he will very likely promote another mode that he likes or that he has created!

## II. (Slide #5) Knowledge Without Zeal

- A. (Slide #6) This Can Be The Bane Or Curse Of Those Who Are Christians.
1. Lots of Christians have lots of knowledge but little or no zeal!

2. The appearance is that they are either just hypocritical or that they just talk a religion but do not really believe it!
- B. (►) We Have Been Blessed To Be Taught The Truth; We Have Committed Ourselves To Christ; We Love The Truth.
1. We would not tolerate error being taught.
  2. We do not accept the world's misguided teaching about religion; we are insulted by the disrespect for morality in our culture.
- C. (►) HOWEVER, We Often Have Little Zeal To Promote These Truths!
1. Zeal is not just an attribute of religious fanatics; it should be the defining trait of Christians!
  2. Look at Paul: Just as much as he had fought AGAINST Christianity before his conversion; now Paul fought hard, laying his life on the line many times, for the sake of the Gospel while preaching to the Jews and then the Gentiles.
- D. (Slide #7) Balancing Knowledge And Zeal:
1. Christians must have an intense longing for God:
    - a. Ps. 42:1 "A Contemplation of the sons of Korah. As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God."
    - b. There must be an intense love for, desire for, and devotion to God!
    - c. Rom. 12:11 "not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" [NIV "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."]
    - d. I Cor. 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."
  2. Christians must have fervency for God in our families! Josh. 24:15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
  3. Christians must want to show their faith by their lives.
    - a. Mt. 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."
    - b. They want to live a life that shows their gratitude daily!
  4. Christians must be eager to guide the lost to Christ!

- a. Ac. 5:42 “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.”
  - b. Ac. 8:4 “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”
  - c. We should be telling the lost about justification that is only available in Jesus Christ!
  - d. We should overcome ANY hindrance to talk to them and guide them to Christ.
  - e. We should be praying for them.
  - f. Many of you have prepared yourself to teach others; some of you are reaching out to friends, contacts. KEEP IT UP!
5. Christians should be devout in prayer!
- a. Js. 5:16 “Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
  - b. “Fervent” means “powerful” or “strong!”
6. Christians must be zealous in loving their brethren!
- a. I Pet. 4:8 “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for *‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’*”
  - b. They see how their lives are enriched by having a spiritual family that loves the Lord and encourages them to remain faithful to Christ!
7. Christians must have zeal when the world attempts to silence you! Ac. 5:29 “But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’”

### **III. (Slide #8) Those Who Are OUT OF BALANCE (Slide #7) Can Properly Balance Zeal And Knowledge.**

- A. Those Who Have Zeal But Do Not Have Knowledge Can Get A Proper Balance.
- 1. They can learn the Truth and combine their zeal with it!
  - 2. They can repent and love the Truth!
  - 3. Look at Paul.
    - a. The experience on the road must have shaken him to the depths of his spirit!
    - b. It was a life-changing event.
    - c. How he was brought to humility!
    - d. He must have AGONIZED in his mind that he had been so viciously opposing the true Messiah and the Truth.
    - e. How grateful he must have been that he could be saved from his sins. He was immediately baptized into Christ.

- f. How motivated he must have been to want to tell everyone that “Jesus IS The Messiah!”
  - g. He went straight to the Jewish synagogues and taught that Jesus IS the Christ, the Son of God!
  - h. Knowing the Law so well, he could surely show them the prophecies and make the connections with Jesus -- “THIS IS THE MESSIAH!”
  - i. Saul action evinced heart-changing and life-changing penitence.
  - j. His immediate actions show a 180 degree turn -- from opposer of Christ and persecutor of Christians to obedient disciple of Christ and proclaimer of Christ!
  - k. He did not lose his zeal; he just combined his zeal with the Truth he learned and he then had the proper balance of knowledge and zeal.
  - l. And how he showed that balance the rest of his life!
4. Paul prayed for the Roman Jews because they were lost in their condition of having zeal but not according to knowledge!
- C. Those Who Have Knowledge But Do Not Have Zeal Can Get A Proper Balance.
- 1. They can come to understand their mission as a Christian!
  - 2. They can repent!
  - 3. They can cultivate a driving motivation to help the lost find Jesus!
  - 3. They can wake up and get to work!
  - 4. They can learn from Paul -- he had taken up his cross and followed Jesus. He wanted desperately to reach out and get the Jews to accept their Messiah.
  - 5. He wanted everyone to know that justification is ONLY in Christ! He wanted people to know that salvation is only available through the Blood of Jesus Christ -- “Nothing But The Blood!”