

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Jesus' Zeal

(Jerry Fite)

Our English word “zeal” comes from the Greek word, “zealos”. Thayer defines this word as “*excitement of mind, ardor, fervor of spirit*”. Zeal is the arduous spirit energizing one to pursue, embrace or defend anything. God warns us that zeal alone is harmful to our spiritual well-being. If not coupled with knowledge, zeal can cause us to reject God’s commands (*Romans 10:1-3*), promote fanaticism (*Galatians 1:14*), and persecute God’s righteous people (*Acts 22:3-5*).

Zeal is one of those characteristics we must have in order to serve God acceptably. God’s work behind redeeming man was designed to “*purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works*” (*Titus 2:14*). However, as safety controls must be maintained in nuclear power plants, zeal must be properly guided if it is to be useful in our lives. Jesus offers us the perfect example of how to properly channel our zeal.

At an early age, Jesus manifested zeal for spiritual matters. He was found in the temple discussing matters connected with the Scriptures, and His teachers were astonished by His understanding and answers. When his concerned mother expressed her

sorrow over suddenly realizing that Jesus was not with His parents on the trip back home, Jesus respectfully replied, “*How is it that I must be in my Father’s house?*” Or, as some translations render, “*...be about my Father’s business?*”.

Young people, channel your zeal at an early age toward learning, and applying the Scriptures. Be excited about reading and studying the Scriptures. Have a fervor for spiritual matters. Seek God with your whole heart, and determine never to wander away from His commandments (*Psalms 119:10*).

Jesus manifested zeal for maintaining holiness. When some of the Jews turned God’s house into a house of merchandise, Jesus drove them out. He courageously stood His ground for keeping Holy things Holy, because His heart was burning with respect for holiness. While viewing the excitement, Jesus’ disciples remembered the Scripture, “*Zeal for thy house hath eaten me up*” (*John 2:13-17*), *Psalms 69:9*). Do we stand up and defend marriage as a holy institution between a man and a woman, when it is being trashed as archaic or unnecessary and polluted with homosexuality (*Hebrews 13:4*, *Matthew 19:3-9*)?

Do we charge vocal LGBT advocates, quickly becoming “Omni-sexual”- anything goes sexually which deviates from society’s norm, with proud rejection of God as the reason for their sexual views? Paul did (*Romans 1:22-27*).

Jesus also manifested zeal for the day’s opportunities. He said, “*We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work*” (*John 9:4*). Jesus was fervent in filling the day with good works, for He knew that His time on earth would come to an end. Theoretically, we know that our time is running out, but do we have the zeal to use this limited time wisely? What do you fill your day with: good works, or good intentions?

Jesus manifested His zeal by consistently doing the will of God. He said, “*...I do always the things that are pleasing to Him*” (*John 8:29*). Jesus’ zeal was not like an out-of-tuned engine, hitting and missing. His zeal was channeled consistently. He accomplished the work given Him to do (*John 17:4*). May our zeal be manifested at an early age for God’s holiness. May we fill our day with good works, consistently doing the things which please God. Jesus had zeal. Do you?