

THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST.

TOPIC: I AM ZEALOUS.

TEXT: **PROVERBS 23:17 NIV, ROMANS 12:11, 1 KINGS 19:10**

Introduction: *Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. Proverbs 23:17 NIV.*

One who is zealous for God recognizes the personal cost of following Jesus but fully commits to following Him anyway. They are committed to God's way of doing things, not their own, and are eager to embrace all that Christ wants to do in their life, even when that means surrender or sacrifice.

1. The admonition in Proverbs 23:17–18 encourages us not to envy sinners. Though they may appear to prosper for a time, the godly person will not covet their wealth and imitate their lifestyle. Rather, the teacher wants his pupil to be **zealous for Yahweh**. The reason for this advice is that **“there is a future.”** Thus the “hope” of reward for steadfastness in the things of God.

Q: What are the rewards for being steadfast in the things of God?

2. The Greek word ‘Zelos’, to be zealous means to have an “ardour or fervour of spirit.” There is an energy and an enthusiasm about one's faith. The believer is eager to “embrace, pursue, or defend” Jesus Christ in everything they do.

The Bible portrays zeal as an expression of faith more than an emotion. The amazing character and nature of God that creates zeal within those who worship Him. The more you know Him, the more you become zealous for Him.

Q: What is the difference between an emotionally fuelled zeal and one that is an expression of faith?

3. Zeal in the New Testament – Consecration to Christ Romans 12:11

Since we have been justified through grace, by faith in Christ, it is our first duty to surrender ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, that there may be a saving change wrought in us and that we might be made serviceable in every way to our fellow men. We stand in relation not only to Christ, but to one another in Christ, and we are engaged to do all the good we can one to another and to act in conjunction for the common benefit. So the believer is to live a life completely dedicated to Him—in which He has absolute right of way.

Q: How is our zeal demonstrated in dedicating ourselves as a living sacrifice?

4. Zealous Fruit – Galatians 6:10, Proverbs 3:27

Christian zeal is more than being passionate about God. It should manifest itself in concrete ways. Believers should be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love. Members of God's family must treat one another with the kindness, respect, and love that families should show each other, even to the point of giving preference to one another.

Q: Why is it important that our zeal be such that touches our fellow brethren?

5. Zealous for God, Is Being Hungry for God's Presence – John 11:16.

Being zealous is when believers are hungry for God's presence and desire a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ more than anything. God's presence is not only their greatest possession but their greatest reward, and they do not wish to be separated from the love and presence of their God.

Conclusion

As a believer zeal isn't just encouraged, it's expected!

When Christ calls believers to follow Him, He isn't looking for half-hearted or partially committed followers. He seeks to raise up disciples who will fully commit and fully surrender their lives to Him. That means letting go of their way of doing things and allowing God to transform their hearts and minds from the inside out..

Jesus warned that the Christian life isn't easy, and the cost of discipleship shouldn't be taken lightly. As He said to His followers, "if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." (**Matthew 16:24**).

Yet Jesus encourages His followers to, "let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Christians should be passionate about serving the Lord; that fervour should be evident in their attitudes and actions (**Colossians 3:23**).