

Keeping My Zeal

2 Peter 1:5-11

Some Christians live their lives to the fullest, while others _____ aimlessly. Some passionately pursue their _____, while others are lukewarm. How can we keep our passion and zeal for God _____? We love to study the Bible because we know the real _____ of the Bible is God. Peter said, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit _____ from God" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Men didn't _____ up the words of the Bible; rather God's spokesmen, the prophets, were _____ by the Spirit to speak. They said what God _____ for us to know, to believe, and to do. Because the Bible is from God, we can _____ to understand the heart of God and His love for us.

Today we're asking the question, "How can I _____ my zeal for Christ and _____ my passion for God?" I don't want a bored and dull _____. I don't want to _____ what the Lord has done for me. The Lord created me, loved me, protected me, provided for me, taught me, disciplined me, and is preparing a home for me in _____. How could I become apathetic toward one who has heard my _____ and opened doors for me? David expressed my heart, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my _____ pants for you, O God. My soul _____ for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2). God is our hope, our joy, and our Savior. Staying close to Him will _____ our passion alive.

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter 1:5-11.

Have you _____ been thirsty, really thirsty? The kind of thirst that _____ you find some water? Israel knew what it was to have _____ water available. Israel had seasons of rain and seasons that didn't have much rain. Their _____ would flow in the rainy seasons and _____ up at other times. They could collect water in their _____, hoping to have enough water to last until the rains returned. In the seventh century B.C., Israel turned its back on _____ and followed after the vain _____ of nations surrounding them. God said about Israel, "for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the _____ of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). By forsaking God, they also had forsaken the _____ of life. Don't imagine something else can take the _____ of God. Nothing and no one can. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and _____ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." When was the last time that you were thirsty for

righteousness or for God? When did you last feel that being close to Him, worshiping Him, or listening to Him was an immediate _____? It's easy to forget what you have and take God for _____. God _____ when people ignore Him, and forget Him, and forsake Him. Do you imagine that God will _____ to your side when you have neglected Him for many years?

Good relationships demand _____ and _____. Just like a marriage or any relationship, it can grow _____; and so our love for God can grow _____ over time. If we want to strengthen our relationship, then we must take the _____ to make it grow and develop. We must first start paying close _____ to what God says. **Read Hebrews 2:1-3.** If we _____ to listen to God's Word, we'll fail to please Him and risk the salvation of our souls. Some people ignore God until they _____ Him. They focus their minds on the things of this world while they slowly _____ away from God to pursue their _____ interests. They _____ going to worship at church; they stop studying the Scriptures; they stop praying; and they begin talking and acting like the _____. When some disaster then comes along, they feel God is _____. God doesn't forget His people, but His _____ frequently forget Him.

If you really want to have God in your heart, take a long look at what the Lord endured on the _____. The Lord Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will _____ all men to Myself" (John 12:32). The Lord Jesus _____ you beyond measure. He opened His heart to reach out to _____. He bore the cross to die for the _____, not just of the whole world, but also for you. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own _____ toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He didn't rule you out because you were _____. The only people Jesus died for were _____. See the _____ of thorns on His head, see the _____ through His hands and feet, see His _____ bloodied by the scourge, see His _____ pierced by the soldier, and see His _____ offered for you. He suffered the _____ of people mocking Him. He sacrificed Himself, "and with his _____ we are healed." "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us _____" (Isaiah 53:6). If the _____ of what happened on the cross doesn't touch you like it once did, perhaps it's because you've let other things cause your _____ to harden. Worldliness and sin cause people's hearts to grow _____.

Jesus didn't die on the cross to proclaim a _____ and _____ gospel that puts you in the center of the universe. He didn't _____ on the cross to help you become a millionaire, lose weight or overcome your fears and anxieties. He sacrificed Himself to redeem your soul from _____ and to give you _____ life. His blood _____ away your sin and causes you to be _____ again, so you'll be created in His image and become like Him. The Lord is interested in your _____ man; and one day He will _____ your soul on whether you gave of yourself as a humble servant.

In times of great prosperity, people tend to take their minds off God and put them on their own personal _____. **Read what Moses warned Israel as they were about to cross the Jordan and enter the promised land in Deuteronomy 8:11-14.** Don't let your blessings _____ you from remembering the One who gave you those blessings (James 1:17). Apart from God we would have _____. God is the One who gives us the _____ to think, to work, and to make money. **Read what Moses said in Deuteronomy 8:17-18.** The world wants you to be _____ of all of your accomplishments. The Lord wants you to _____ that every blessing you have comes from what God provides in you and for you.

Some people turn away from God because they've _____ some trying experience or circumstance. Rather than pull away from God, we need to _____ to God when we face a struggle or a heartache. We should _____ to God for strength, for help, for encouragement, and for assurance.

We draw close to God by making Him a _____ in our lives every single day. We study the Bible because it _____ God's thinking and His will for our lives. To know God we have to _____ to His words. We pray because we want God to _____ our hearts. God doesn't want us to _____ praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13). If you want to be zealous for God, then make being with God a _____ exercise. You build good relationships; they don't just _____.

To draw close to God, remember what He has _____ for you. **Read what David said in Psalm 103:1-5.** God is ever _____ to you. Consider how God has answered your _____, given you the Scriptures that give us hope and comfort, and strengthened you through the years.

If you want to draw close to God, keep your eyes on _____. **Read Colossians 3:1-4.**

To draw close to God, focus on the _____. **Read Philippians 4:8.** When we concentrate on the negative, we lose _____ of God; but when we concentrate on the positive, we _____ more thankful to God.

If you wish to be close to God, you've got to give Him _____ in your life. You must get the _____ out of your heart and soul. Just as weeds can take over a garden, so spiritual weeds can take over your _____. Weeds _____ plants of the space and the nourishment that they need to grow and produce. Likewise, distractions of life can rob us of our _____ and our _____ for God. The Lord Jesus said, "The seed that fell among the thorns, this stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are _____ by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature" (Luke 8:14). Many Christians _____ to grow in their faith and in their relationship with God because they _____ themselves to things that push God out of their lives. We must _____ not to let the things of this world come between God and us.

Sin destroys our _____ to serve God because it replaces God and enslaves us. Ephesians 4:27 says, “do not give the devil an _____.” If you let sin into your life it will _____ your heart. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the _____ of sin” (John 8:34). To overcome sin, you must put it to _____. Romans 6:11 says, “Even so consider yourselves to be _____ to sin, but _____ to God in Christ Jesus.” You can't cut down a weed and expect to kill it; you must _____ it. If you simply cut it down, you'll see it _____ back. Sin is like that. You can't just _____ on sin and expect that sin to go away. You must _____ it altogether. Unless it's completely stopped, it'll keep growing and crowding out what is good and productive.

You can't grow to be a productive and authentic Christian if you _____ God out by your whims and desires. You must give Him room in your life to _____. Many people let their jobs, and their hobbies, or their recreation come _____ God and themselves. None of these things is _____ in and of themselves; but if you let something, anything, take you away from your God, you can lose your _____. Jesus said, “But _____ the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

All this matters because it _____ our relationship and our zeal for God. When our relationship is _____, then our hearts want to serve God; but when our relationship is _____, we let other things dominate our lives. If you _____ to be zealous for God, then set your heart upon the Lord Jesus and upon all the blessings He has in store for you in eternity

Is there anything in your life that's _____ you from being close to God? Some people never pick up a _____, never utter a _____, and never go to _____. Is it any wonder that they feel _____ from God? They've _____ the Lord out of their lives; and people grieve God when they shut Him out. He hasn't _____ loving or caring for us, but it tears at God's heart to be abandoned by His people. If you're letting _____ have a place in your heart, then it's time to put an end to that sin. You can't love sin and love God at the same _____ (James 4:4).

To be rid of sin, you must _____. Repentance is an act of the heart that says, “I will no longer do what _____ God, but what will _____ Him.” In repentance, we put a _____ to sin, but we must also be forgiven. The Lord forgives us when by faith and repentance we're willing to _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be _____. In baptism, we're _____ with Christ, “in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6). Baptism is that time that God _____ us from sin. Don't let your love for Christ grow _____. Don't grow _____ of your faith and lose heart. Renew your faith. Restore your heart. Revive your spirit. Demonstrate your faith and love. Listen to God, love God, pray to God, grow a desire for God, and tell everyone about His goodness and kindness in Christ Jesus. Get involved!