

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

B. The Men Who Handle the Collection, [2 Corinthians 8:16-24](#)

1. They care for the church—earnestly care (v.16-17).
2. They have a reputation for the gospel, a testimony for witnessing (v.18).
3. They are representatives chosen by the church in order to avoid charges of misconduct against the minister (v.19-21).
4. They are diligent in many things, but especially in collections (v.22).
5. They are partners of the minister (v.23).
6. They are to be loved by the church (v.24).

I. THE PASSION OF TITUS—[2 Corinthians 8:16-17](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“But thanks be to God who **puts** the same **earnestness** on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

¹⁷For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.”

Paul rejoiced and thanked the Lord for what He was doing in the life of Titus. God “**put**” the same desire in Titus as in Paul. This word “**put**” is from the word *didomi* {*did'-o-mee*} which means “**to give, to bestow a gift, to furnish or supply necessary things.**” The Spirit of God changes our desires and passions. As we surrender to the Holy Spirit and let Him work in our hearts, then the Lord has the liberty to change us and make us more like Him. The change that takes place in us helps to empower and motivate us to do the will of God in our life. A Christian is not going to be obedient and surrendered to the Lord unless he wants to be this way. If the desire is not there, then obedience to God’s leading will be waning in us.

What did the Lord furnish or give to Titus? It was “**earnest care**” for the Corinthians. The words “**earnest care**” are from the word *spoude* {*spooday*} which means “**haste, diligence, carefulness, or earnestness in accomplishing.**” Titus had a passion to be a blessing to the Corinthians and also the believers in Jerusalem. Titus, who knew them so well and loved them so dearly, was also wholeheartedly committed to the relief effort for the Jerusalem saints. That God had so united the hearts of Paul and Titus, further

confirmed that the collection was His will. Nor could the anti-Paul faction accuse Titus of having a Jewish bias, since he was a Gentile.

Titus had the same attitude as Paul, for the Lord had knitted their hearts together. This is what He does with Christians. He knits the hearts of believers together in unity to do the will of God. We are like different pieces of a puzzle that fit together to form a beautiful picture. Paul spoke of this in his letter to Ephesus.

Ephesians 2:21 (NASB)

²¹ “In whom the whole building, **being fitted together**, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.”

Ephesians 4:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “From whom the whole body, **being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies**, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

The Lord makes the body of Christ fit together perfectly. Each believer does his own special work or ministry, which in turn, helps others to grow in the Lord. The result is the entire body is healthy, growing spiritually, and full of love.

God changes our hearts and works in our lives as we surrender to Him. He knits the hearts of believers together in a cause that will bring honor and glory to Him or will meet the needs of others. For example, He knits the hearts of people with a pastor. He knits the hearts of a husband and a wife together to serve Him and to love each other. This is why it is so important to be yielded to the Spirit of God, so the knot will not be destroyed and the unity of the church or the home are not damaged.

2 Corinthians 8:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ “But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

¹⁷ For he not only **accepted** our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.”

We continue to see the passion of Titus in the fact that he accepted Paul’s appeal. This word “**accepted**” is an interesting word. It is derived from the word *dechomai* {*dekh’-om-ahee*} which means “**to take with the hand; to embrace or make something your own.**” This word was used of a family that would adopt a child into their family to rear and educate. Titus embraced the burden of Paul and the burden and the needs of the Jerusalem believers as his own burden. The burden fired his passion to do something about the need. The same pattern works for us. When you get concerned about a need, and embrace it as your own, then you are motivated to get involved to meet the need. The burden moves you to action. It does no one any good to be stirred about a problem or cause, but not moved to do anything about it.

Titus accepted the exhortation of Paul. His forwardness or his diligence and zeal caused him to go to Corinth on his own accord and endeavor to collect the gift of the Corinthian Christians and take it to Jerusalem. His voluntary participation, along with Paul, was further evidence of the unanimity between the two men.

The zealousness of Titus is so refreshing. Zeal is one of the great needs in the church today. Many Christians are like spiritual zombies, walking in deadness. They have no passion, excitement, or enthusiasm for the Lord and His work. Trying to get Christians involved in the ministry of the church is like pulling teeth. Beloved, it takes people to teach the classes, sing the songs, play the instruments, watch the nursery, clean the buildings, do the ushering, invite people and bring them to church if they need a ride. Sitting in the pew does not necessarily mean you are serving the Lord. God wants us to be zealous in our love and service to Him. The Bible provides a number of specific thoughts about the subject of our enthusiasm or zeal.

Bible Insights on Enthusiasm or Zeal

1. The Dedication or Devotion of Zeal

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ “**Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.**”

Zeal gives 100%.

Colossians 3:23 (NASB)

²³ “**Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.**”

Zeal is willing to make extra sacrifices to achieve a goal.

Romans 9:3 (NASB)

³ “**For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.**”

1 Corinthians 9:22 (NASB)

²² “**To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.**”

As you look at your life what are you?

- *A wing or a weight?*
- *A power or a problem?*
- *A promoter or a provoker?*
- *A giver or a getter?*
- *A doer or a deadhead?*
- *A booster or a buckler?*

- *A supporter or a sponger?*
- *A soldier or a slacker?*
- *A worker or a worrier?*
- *A helper or a hinderer?*

2. The Daring and Determination of Zeal

Acts 18:25 (NASB)

²⁵“This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John.”

Zeal emboldens us in our task.

Joshua 24:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, **we will serve the LORD.**”

Zeal makes up its mind.

3. The Deliberations and Disquietude of Zeal

A. Godly zeal is concerned about the *Christian growth* of others.

Colossians 4:12-13 (NASB)

¹²“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, **that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.**

¹³For I testify for him that he has **a deep concern for you** and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.”

2 Peter 1:13 (NASB)

¹³“I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly dwelling*, **to stir you up by way of reminder.**”

I am reminded about the life of missionary Charles Cowman. This missionary to Japan in the early 1900's had a goal to visit every home in Japan and present the Gospel to those who would listen and leave the Gospel in printed form if they would not give him an ear. He gave a plan on how the 58 million people of Japan occupying over 10.3 million homes could be visited in five years. The mountain areas would be difficult, but he was determined. It was called the *Great Village Campaign* and it started with \$5.

He started with the 3 million people of Tokyo, taking the Gospel to over a half a million homes and then he worked in the provinces and towns. Multitudes were saved in their homes from 1914 to 1918. The zeal of the Lord consumed Charles. In August of 1918, the task had finally taken its toll on Charles and he left Japan as an invalid. His heart was worn out. When he died in 1924, there were about 460 churches started in Japan by the men Charles trained and 80 churches in Korea. The zeal of the Lord and his burden for souls fueled his energy for serving God and winning the lost. Some may claim it was stupid to do this to his body. Listen, there is nothing stupid in trying to reach people for Christ. I would rather burn the candle at both ends for the Lord than for Satan or my selfish desires. What are you doing with your life?

B. Godly zeal is not concerned about the *Clock* and time investment in a project. It carries a sacrificial attitude of willingness.

1 Thessalonians 2:9 (NASB)

⁹“For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, **how working night and day** so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.”

C. Godly zeal is concerned about *Completion* of the task.

John 4:34 (NASB)

³⁴“Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and **to accomplish His work.**”

Balanced zeal can help you keep your priorities in perspective and help you finish the job at hand.

John 9:4 (NASB)

⁴“We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.”

The zealous person counters procrastination with a sense of urgency. Someone put it this way, “Wake up, sing up, preach up, pray up, pay up, stay up, and never give up, let up, back up or shut up, until the cause of Christ in the church and the world is built up.”

D. Godly zeal is concerned about *Change in Character*.

2 Corinthians 7:11 (NASB)

¹¹“For behold what earnestness this very thing, **this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves**, what indignation, what fear, what longing, **what zeal**, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.”

Taking the line of least resistance makes rivers and men crooked.

4. The Discernment of Zeal

Zeal comprehends the fact that present opportunities may be gone tomorrow.

John 4:35 (NASB)

³⁵ “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.”

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NASB)

² “For He says, “AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.” Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION”—

Mordecai Ham emerged as an evangelist from Kentucky at the turn of the twentieth century. He had a background in business and the study of law. From the very beginning his approach was zealous and blunt. Rather than sit and talk with Christians at revival sites, Ham insisted on being taken to the worst sinners in the community.

On one occasion an unsaved man hid in a corn field, but Ham tracked him down. The man asked him what his intentions were, and the evangelist said he was going to pray for God to kill him. When the man protested, Ham told him he shouldn't be bothered, since he didn't believe in God, anyway. But if there was a God, then death would be appropriate for a man who poisoned his family's spiritual prospects. The lost man begged him not to pray for his death, so Ham relented and prayed for his salvation. At the final meeting, Ham baptized the man and his family. Ham believed the key to evangelism was a passion for souls and an urgency in reaching the lost. Before you criticize his harsh methods, what have you done to reach someone for Christ?

5. The Domination of Zeal

The zeal of the Lord dominates the heart of the righteous and moves them to deal with wickedness. It consumes and harnesses the energy of the person. Moses was moved with anger at the idolatry of Israel ([Exodus 32](#)) and Phineas was enraged at the immorality of the people ([Numbers 25](#)). Jesus drove the money changers out of the Temple because of their corruption.

Psalms 119:139 (NASB)

¹³⁹ “My zeal has consumed me, Because my adversaries have forgotten Your words.”

Psalms 69:9 (NASB)

⁹ “For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.”

One day a little girl saw a sign in a church meeting hall and was crying. It read “*The zeal of Thy house hath consumed me.*” A deacon asked why the little girl was crying. She said, “I’m afraid of the zeal.” He answered, “Don’t worry little girl. There is no zeal in this place.” Is there zeal in your life? If the people have no zeal for the Lord, then the church has no zeal for the Lord.

Your enthusiasm or zeal has a powerful influence on other people.

2 Corinthians 9:2 (NASB)

²“For I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and **your zeal has stirred up most of them.**”

2 Kings 10:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“He said, “Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD.” So he made him ride in his chariot.”

Zeal is contagious.

General Westmoreland was once visiting a platoon of paratroopers in Vietnam. During the conversation, the general asked this question, “How do you like jumping out of planes?” The first man said, “I love it, sir!” The next man said, “It’s a fantastic experience! I fail to imagine not doing it!” The general asked a third soldier and this man said, “I’m scared to death, sir, and don’t much like it.” The general asked him, “Why do you jump then?” The third man said, “Because I love being around guys who enjoy doing it!” Enthusiasm and zeal encourage others to do that which is difficult. They give people confidence. Use the influence of your zeal and enthusiasm for God’s glory.

6. The Destruction of Zeal

Zeal can be lost if you are not careful.

Revelation 2:4 (NASB)

⁴“But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.”

Have you lost your love for the Lord? Does it still blaze within you?

7. The Dictates or Demands about Zeal

A. Be Zealous in Getting Right with God

Revelation 3:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

The word “zealous” means “to be hot.” God wants us to be on fire for Him.

B. Be Zealous in Staying Right With God

Proverbs 23:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“Do not let your heart envy sinners, **But *live* in the fear of the LORD always.**”

C. Be Zealous in Living for God and Others

Titus 2:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds.**”

Beloved, enthusiasm and zeal for Christ will help you to live above the boards.