

ENTHUSIASM vs. APATHY

THE OVERFLOW OF A SPIRIT ENERGIZED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF ENTHUSIASM

Enthusiasm stems from two Greek words, en meaning “in” and theos “God.” To be enthusiastic is to be energized and inspired by God. A Biblical counterpart to enthusiasm is fervent. To be fervent in spirit is to “boil with heat, to be hot; as in boiling with genuine love for God and others.”

Another Biblical synonym for enthusiasm is zeal, zelos “excitement of mind, ardor, or fervor of spirit.” Zeal indicates ardor in pursuing, embracing, or defending God and His truth. charah or earnest “to be hot, to act furiously, or to burn with energy.”

BIBLICAL COMMANDS TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC

Every believer is instructed to be enthusiastic in the basic matters of Christian living. “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Romans 12:9-11).

Scripture identifies specific areas in which to be enthusiastic, and then adds the instruction: “But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you” (Galatians 4:18).

WHAT ARE WE TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT?

☞☞ Be enthusiastic about God.

Paul was “zealous towards God” even before his conversion (See Acts 22:3). However, his was a “zeal without knowledge.” He was “zealous of the religious traditions of his forefathers” (Galatians 1:14), but when he became a believer, he transferred that same zeal to advancing the kingdom of God.

☞☞ Be enthusiastic about loving others.

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8). The Corinthian believers exercised fervent love toward Paul. [Titus] “told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.” (II Corinthians 7:7).

Fervent love is only possible if we first purify our souls by obeying God’s truth. Otherwise our affection will be mixed with wrong motives and desires: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Peter 1:22).

☞☞ Be enthusiastic about prayer.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16). One of Paul’s co-laborers joined him in having this mind of prayer for other believers: “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis” (Colossians 4:12-13).

☞☞ Be enthusiastic about good works that glorify God.

All believers are to be enthusiastic about doing sacrificial work that benefits others. These works must be done without any motive of personal reward or glory in a way that enables others to get the credit and God to get the glory. Jesus Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Based on this, we are able to “provoke... unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

The Stephanas family also demonstrated enthusiasm in the work of the Lord. Scripture states; “That they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints” (I Corinthians 16:15).

⚡⚡ **Be Enthusiastic About Repenting.**

The same zeal we are to have in serving God and others, we are to have in maintaining a clear conscience towards God and man. The Laodicean believers, for whom Epaphras earnestly prayed, lacked enthusiasm.

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth . . . As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:15-19).

⚡⚡ **Be Enthusiastic About Trials and Reproaches.**

Jesus taught us to “rejoice and be exceeding glad” when all men speak evil of us. Paul took “pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses” (II Corinthians 12:10).

HOW ENTHUSIASTIC ARE YOU?

- ⚡⚡ Do you give a warm, cheerful smile to everyone or only to your close friends?
- ⚡⚡ Do you get more excited about sports than about prayer and the things of God?
- ⚡⚡ Are you more fervent in reading a novel than in studying the Scriptures?
- ⚡⚡ When conversing, do you talk more about other people than about the Lord?
- ⚡⚡ Do you delight in talking with your friends more than you do with the Lord?
- ⚡⚡ Do you rejoice when people falsely accuse you because of your Godly standards?