Are You Excited about the Trip?

Colossians 3:23, 24

Introduction:

1. Often I am asked the question, “Do I have to attend every service, visit, give of my means, teach someone, bring someone to Christ.”
   1. Of course the answer is “NO”. You do not have to worship, visit, give, teach, be baptized, confess Christ, repent, believe or anything else except die and face the Lord in judgment.
   2. “Oh, but I want to go to heaven.”
   3. That changes the answer but with that attitude, chances are still slim.
   4. When religion is “How little can I do to keep from going to hell?  How cheap can I get eternal fire insurance?”, then it is not the doctrine of Christ.
   5. Nowhere do you find an acceptable Christian in the Bible with this attitude.
   6. One man prayed, “God forgive us, in an hour like this, because we have been dry Christians, preaching a dynamite gospel, and living firecracker lives.”
2. There is an opposite attitude that is acceptable – it is called zeal, enthusiasm.
   1. It has always been the will of God that His people feel deeply and act lively in His service. Ecclesiastes 9:10; Galatians 4:18; Romans 12:11; Colossians 3:23,24.
   2. Every Christian should have this zeal, enthusiasm, deep desire, fervor for the Lord and His work.
   3. An old man in the community never attended church.  The building caught on fire one night.  The preacher said, “This is the first time I’ve ever seen you at church.”  The man replied, “And this is the first time I’ve ever seen this church on fire.”
   4. Some say, “You shouldn’t get so excited about zeal because it can carry you just as fast in the wrong direction as in the right direction.
3. ZEAL MUST BE DIRECTED.
   1. Zeal can be and has been pointed in the wrong direction.
      1. Osama bin Laden.
      2. Saul of Tarsus. Philippians 3:6; Acts 8:3; Galatians 1:13,14
      3. Israel. Romans 10:1-3
   2. It is good not just to be zealous but zealously affected in a good thing, Galatians 4:18
   3. Zeal should be guided by knowledge.
      1. Knowledge is like the steering mechanism on a car and zeal is like the spark plugs – you must have both for the car to operate properly.
      2. A car wrecked when I was small; the tie-rod broke on it.
      3. But I’ve seen a lot since then where the spark plugs were fouled up; if they would run at all they sputtered and missed and knocked and jumped and didn’t do the job they were designed to do.
      4. In the Lord’s church, I’ve seen a few members whose tie-rods have broken but I’ve observed more that had spark plug trouble.
4. WHAT ZEAL WILL DO FOR US IN THE LORD’S WORK..
   1. We will walk by faith and not by fear. Numbers 13:26-33; Ephesians 3:20
   2. It will instill in us a sense of urgency, compelling us to take advantage of every opportunity. John 9:4; Ephesians 5:15,16
   3. It is contagious. Acts 8:4; 2 Corinthians 9:2
   4. It will weaken and diminish and finally die out unless we work at keeping it.
      1. We are warned not to be weary. 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9
      2. Peter wrote to stir up Christians. 2 Peter 1:12,13; 2 Peter 3:1
      3. Christians are to edify, encourage, motivate each other. Romans 14:19; Hebrews 10:24
5. HOW ZEAL IS BUILT AND MAINTAINED.
   1. Interest. 1 Corinthians 9:22
      1. Social.
         1. People are attracted to Christ by social contact with Christians. Matthew 5:16
         2. People want help in a family situation. Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:3-5
      2. Physical James 1:27
      3. Spiritual.
         1. Anticipation of heaven. John 14:1-4
         2. Fear of hell. Revelation 14:11
      4. These things within themselves will not produce godly zeal, but they may attract so that a person may be led to the next step. Man sold neighbor a mule – “treat it gentle” – wouldn’t work – farmer hit it in the head with a 2 x 4 – “got to get his attention first.”
      5. A salesman saw a boy trying to sell his dog.  He and the dog look pitiful.  He coached, “You’ve got to see it big!  Dress up.  Put a good price on the dog.”  Later he saw a sign in the yard, “DOG FOR SALE – $5,000.00”  When he came back, there was a SOLD sign.  The salesman knocked on the door and asked, “How did you sell your dog for $5,000.00?”  The boy said, “It was easy.  I traded him for two $2,500.00 cats.”
   2. Knowledge.
      1. Of God’s work. Genesis 1:1; Psalm 19:1  You act like you own the world – I don’t but my Father does. John 3:16; Romans 5:8,9
      2. God’s word. 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 20:32
      3. Of the work of the congregation.
         1. Responsibility of leadership and membership.
         2. You will have to be here to know what is going on.
         3. Do you know the work we are doing and what we are planning to do?
         4. There are three groups of people in any congregation:
            1. People who make things happen.
            2. People who watch things happen.
            3. People who don’t know anything is happening.
         5. In a meeting in Bluffton, Indiana, we visited three days telling members that a meeting was in progress.
         6. A girl asked a man to vote for a candidate.  “Are you related to him?” “No, I don’t even know him.  They needed someone to help out and I agreed to pass out a few circulars.”
   3. Trust in God. Colossians 3:23,34
      1. Conviction. 2 Timothy 1 :12; Hebrews 11:6
         1. More than belief.  The great Blondin walked across Niagara Falls on a tightrope.  He pushed a wheelbarrow across.  He asked, “Do you believe that I can carry a man across?”  Many held up their hands.  When he invited someone, only his manager volunteered.
         2. The key to enthusiasm:  IASM:  I Am Sold Myself.
      2. Commitment.
         1. Difference between the two spies and the ten spies. Numbers 13:30,31
         2. Joshua. Joshua 24:15
         3. Israel under Nehemiah. Nehemiah 4:6
         4. Isaiah.  Isaiah 6:8
         5. Eunuch. Acts 8:35-39
      3. Compulsion – “We have something others must have.”
         1. Paul felt that he must serve the Lord. 1 Corinthians 9:16
         2. Christ’s love forced him. 2 Corinthians 5:14
         3. I received a letter with the question, “Is it right to go to church if you are made too?” - yes, the love of Christ constrains (compels, forces) us.
         4. The early disciples acted with this zeal. Acts 4:18-20; Acts 5:27-32,40-42

Conclusion:

1. I’m asking everyone to get concerned and excited about the Lord’s work.
   1. It is the greatest and most important thing. Matthew 16:24-26
   2. Without this concern, you only have the dry hull of religion and it will always be a drudgery, a chore.
2. Deepen your interest in God’s work, God’s word, and the plans of this congregation.
3. Get involved in some work that you can do and your outlook will change from “they do this” and “they do that” to “Why don’t you become a Christian and help us accomplish great things for the Lord.  We are interested in what we can do to glorify God.  We are interested in everyone hearing the gospel.  We are interested in helping the helpless.  We are encouraging each other on the way to heaven.”
4. If you have failed to commit yourself to the Lord’s work by becoming His child or if you have let that commitment and zeal die, let that zeal be rekindled and do His will. Revelation 3:19
5. In the early days of communism, one leader wanted to admit all who accepted the theory and purposes of the movement.  Lenin insisted that only those who were so devoted as to do the most menial tasks he received.  “Fewer but better” was his motto.  He said, “Give me 100 fanatics rather than 1,000 indifferent followers.”