

Fervent In Spirit

by Gene Taylor

As Christians we have work to do. We were created in Christ for good works (Eph. 2:10) and to be zealous for them (Titus 2:14). Albert Barnes said, “An idle man and a Christian are names which do not harmonize.”

The above text points out two basic attitudes the Christian can have in relation to the work of the Lord. One can be either “lagging in diligence” or “fervent in spirit.” Of course, if one is going to please the Lord the latter is preferred.

“Lagging in Diligence”

The King James Version translates this phrase as “slothful in business.” To be slothful is to be lazy or indolent. William Barclay stated, “There is a certain intensity in the Christian life. There is no room for lethargy in it.” (*The Daily Study Bible Series, Romans*, p. 178).

God's people in the Old Testament were warned against having such an attitude. Amos 6:1 pronounced woe upon those who were “at ease in Zion.” Jeremiah 48:10 says, “A curse on him who is lax in doing the Lord's work!” (NIV).

Diligence is required of Christians, God's people today. They are to give diligence to grow in Christ (2 Pet. 1:5); abound in diligence (2 Cor. 8:7); and be diligent and not become sluggish (Heb. 6: 9-12).

Diligence is a product of commitment. The Corinthians' commitment to the Lord was demonstrated by doing what needed to be done in reference to the sinner they had in their midst (1 Cor. 5: 9-13). 2 Corinthians 7: 11 says, “For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

“Fervent in Spirit”

The word translated “fervent in spirit” means to boil with heat, be hot. It is used of boiling anger, love, and zeal for what is good or bad. As used in our text, it means to have a burning zeal to do the will of God.

An example of this attitude is Jesus Christ. John 2:17, in speaking of Him, says, “Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for you house has eaten Me up.'” Apollos is also an example of zeal. Acts 18:24-25 states, “Now a certain Jew named Apollos...came to Ephesus...and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord...” Both Jesus and Apollos were successful in accomplishing their God-given tasks.

Fervor and enthusiasm are the keys to success in the Lord's work. The church at Laodicea was chastened because of their lukewarmness (Rev. 3:14-16). Barclay says, “The one man whom the Risen Christ could not stand twas the man who was neither hot nor cold” (Ibid.). He added, The Christian may

burn out, by he cannot rust out.”

Sadly, though, this spirit is lacking in some who claim to be God's people. These are those who put off, sidestep, maneuver out of, or procrastinate concerning that which needs to be done in the kingdom of the Lord. It seems impossible to move some “Christians” into action. The fire and enthusiasm of the first century church is missing among them. They have restored the truth by seem to have forgotten the spirit.

Conclusion

Ephesians 6:6 counsels us to be “doing the will of God from the heart.” May none of us drag our feet but instead give ourselves enthusiastically to doing the work of the Lord. Such a life of service will grant us the best life here and in the here after.

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