



Our Transformed Life

Living the Vision of Romans 12

Serve the Lord

Romans 12:11 // February 21, 2021

Overview:

Sometimes it is the little short verses that pack big punches! Romans 12:11 is one of those kinds of verses. Let's look at it in three parts.

First, Paul tells us "*Do not be slothful in zeal*". Don't be lazy. Don't hesitate to be enthusiastic. Do not lack diligence. Never be lacking in zeal. In other words: There is work to do! When we accept Jesus and become a Christian, we are invited directly into the mission. The Christian life comes with a level of urgency because we do not know the day or the hour when Jesus will return again. Therefore, we must not flag in zeal. What does this mean for us? It means, "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction". We must be disciplined in our scripture reading and memorizing, and prayer; be active in community, sabbath keeping, fasting, and serving. As we stay connected to Jesus, we will be zealous to work for Him!

Second, Paul reminds us to "*be fervent in spirit*". There is a lot to do, but there is also a lot to feel. There is a sense of passion that comes along with this second part of the verse. We can easily work, work, work and forget all about the emotions of ourselves and those around us. The spirit is in view, not just the body. They go hand-in-hand when it comes to serving Jesus.

Which brings us to the third part of the verse: "*Serve the Lord*". This is why we should be zealous and why we should be fervent in spirit – because we are serving Jesus. We are serving the one who first served us by laying His life down so that we might be called children of God. Jesus doesn't invite us into anything that He has not done Himself. Our work and our passion come from Jesus because of what He has done for us.

It is hard not to be slothful, to be fervent, and serve the Lord all the time. We know we will mess up. That's what grace is for. But I want to encourage you to think of this reality: Many of us can fill in the last part of this verse with different things that we serve. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve work. Serve academics. Serve sports. Serve social media. Serve politics. Serve people-pleasing. We are zealous and fervent for many things; what would it take for you to be able to fill in the last of this verse with "the Lord" with your life?

Discussion Guide

1. The first part of Romans 12:11 encourages us to “not be slothful in zeal”. Don’t be lazy. Be diligent. There is work to do for the Lord. When you think of working for Jesus, what kind of “work” comes to mind? Is the work you think of only happening in the context of the church community? Why or why not?
2. Describe a time when you were zealous for the Lord. What did it look like? How did you live and behave?
3. We can be diligent (zealous) if we’re disciplined. What role have spiritual disciplines played in your relationship with Jesus? If they haven’t played a role, what benefits do you see from doing things like reading and memorizing scripture, prayer, worship, sabbath keeping, fasting, etc.?
4. Paul tells us to be fervent in spirit. It’s not just about doing, it’s also about feeling. Do you consider yourself more of a doer or a feeler? What would it mean to balance those things out in your life when it comes to your relationship with Jesus?
5. In the sermon, we talked about slowing down, feeling, and being present with those around us. Johnny offered an example of a Five-Step Process from the book “Contemplative Youth Ministry”. Take some time and talk through the Five-Step Process. If we each practiced this process, what would it mean for your work for Christ?
 - SEEING with the eyes of Christ.
 - HEARING what others are really saying.
 - Being MOVED TO COMPASSION and empathy.
 - ACTING WITH KINDNESS
 - Having true and genuine DELIGHT
6. Paul reminds us that the reason we do any of this is to “serve the Lord”.
 - a. Give an example of how someone can serve Jesus with the wrong intentions.
 - b. Now give an example of what the proper intentions should be.
 - c. In the grand scheme of things, does it matter what their intentions are?
7. Being zealous, fervent, and serving the Lord as a first priority can be hard. We will mess up and there is grace. But we are zealous and fervent for a lot of other things in our lives. Take a moment and identify the other things or people that you serve in front of Jesus. End in prayer and repent of those things and ask for the Holy Spirit guide you in being zealous and fervent as you serve the Lord.