

EXCEL IN EARNESTNESS

Leko Dube

2 CORINTHIANS 8:7 (NIV)

But since you excel in everything in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

What does earnestness mean?

The Collins dictionary says it's to be '*serious and sincere, often excessively so.*'

An attitude characterised by seriousness and commitment.

Some synonyms: *seriousness, intentness, enthusiastic, dedicated, eager, and passionate.*

Why complete earnestness?

Matthew 6:33 says; '*Seek first the Kingdom of God.*'

Luke 9:23; '*If anyone would come after Me he must deny himself and take up the cross daily and follow Me.*'

Jeremiah 29:13; '*You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.*'

What could cause us to lose our determination, enthusiasm for the things of God?

Discouragement

Doubt

Difficult moments

WHAT AREAS REQUIRE COMPLETE EARNESTNESS IN OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS?

In seeking God:

Psalm 63:1; 2 Chronicles 15:15; Hosea 5:15

In prayer:

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. (Acts 12:5, NIV)

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. (1 Thessalonians 3:10, NIV)

James 5:17-18

In trusting God:

Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 26:3-4

In serving God:

Matthew 6:24; Joshua 24:15

In evangelism:

1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:2-9

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE COMPLETE EARNESTNESS?

We keep our eyes on the _____

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14, NIVUK)

We keep on _____

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3, NIVUK)

Perseverance – Don't let what's going on around you sabotage what God's doing within you.

Fix your eyes on Jesus our example.

Jesus showed His earnestness.

Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. (Matthew 26:39, NIVUK)

Even at this very difficult time Christ put the will of God first.

Prayer – earnestly praying prayers of faith.

Church commitment – making His House our priority.

Bible reading – for the wisdom and strength we need to persevere in our walk with the Lord.

The Christian walk is not a sprint but a marathon. In order to complete the race we need to avoid distraction and fix our eyes on the prize laid before us through an attitude of seriousness in the things of God and complete earnestness.