



WEEK 4 STUDY GUIDE

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JULY 25-29, 2022



Monday July 25, 2022

Read: Romans 12:1-2

Scripture Verse: *“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:11*

Today's Thought:

Today we look deeper at the sixth of ten maxims for Christian living as presented by Paul in his letter to the Roman church. A maxim is a "wise saying" to be remembered for ages. These "wise sayings" will bring wisdom, protection, and peace to our lives if we choose to live by them faithfully. Thus far, Paul has urged us to love sincerely, hate what is evil, and cling to what is good. We should be devoted to others in brotherly love and honor others above ourselves.

Paul adds to the list of his sayings for Christian living, "never be lacking in zeal." What does it mean for us to live in such a way? As we walk on this spiritual journey, we must never be lazy in our effort when it comes to serving the Lord. But here's where it gets tricky. Paul is saying that as we grow spiritually mature, we should progress from loving relationships within the body of Christ to showing genuine love for those out in the space of our everyday lives, those outside the church walls. He takes it even one step further, instructing us to love even those who are our enemies!

Paul admonishes us as his readers to maintain our eagerness because we work for the Lord, not men. In serving the Lord, our love can never become hypocritical; it must remain humble and never proud, especially when we are outside the church walls. And be aware that when we choose to serve Christ, it usually brings satanic opposition and days of discouragement. However, when life gets hard, as true believers, we cannot allow our zeal, that eagerness to serve, to grow cold. Never waver and always stay the course!

- What is a maxim? Where else in scripture do find such helpful sayings?
- What are the first five "maxims" or sayings mentioned by Paul? Why are they important for us to remember?
- What does it mean to never lack zeal? Zeal for what?

- How does the first saying Paul gives us relate to today's?
- What is your next step to prevent losing your "zeal" for the Lord?

Further Reading: Philippians 2

Tuesday July 26, 2022

Read: Romans 12:11-12

Scripture Verse: *“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:11*

Today’s Thought:

As we discover Paul’s objectives for Christian living, it becomes vehemently clear that a climate of love is the absolute foundation on which the church must build. If we do not show care or an eagerness to reach out and touch one another’s lives, we would seem to miss the instructional intent of knowing God’s “good, pleasing, and perfect will.” We must never forget that these commands relate not only to our relationships with other Christ-followers but also to the unsaved.

Another critical aspect of Paul’s series of exhortations concerning our personal attitudes as believers is that as they show up in our daily lives, they tend to attract others, hopefully, those who have yet to follow Christ. The key to verse eleven’s two objectives is found in the closing phrase, “serving the Lord.” In the first command, “never to lack zeal,” when it comes to serving the Lord, we can say that we are never to “shrink from, nor hesitate in, nor become lazy.” We are always to display diligence when serving the Lord. Notice that service, when mentioned in the Bible, commonly refers to something done by an enslaved person or considered a servant’s work. Service was also seen as tasks performed by lesser persons for those who controlled their existence. However, relative to God, service looked to Temple worship and its rituals, while relative to humans, it pertained to forms of bondage. For Paul, the slave service one owed God in temple worship was to be displayed in a believer’s service to his neighbor, which acts as a service to Christ. I Corinthians 9:19 puts it this way, *“I am free. I don’t belong to anyone. But I make myself a slave to everyone. I do it to win as many as I can to Christ.”* For me, this becomes the essence of what Paul means when he instructs us never to let the spiritual fire that burns within our hearts to serve God and others ever go out. If we remain fervent in renewing our minds in God’s Word, that fire will never become extinguished. Go! Make disciples!

- Why do you think love has to be the absolute foundation for the church?
- What do we miss out on if we lose our “zeal or eagerness” to reach

out and serve others?

- What groups are to be included in our zeal to serve and love others?
- What does Paul refer to when he uses the phrase, “serving the Lord?”
- Define Paul’s use of the word “service.” How does I Cor. 9:19 bring clarity to the term?
- What will keep the fire in our hearts burning to serve?

Further Reading: I Corinthians 9:19–27

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

Read: Romans 12:11-12

Scripture Verse: *"...but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." Romans 12:11b*

Today's Thought:

People today are passionate about many things. One of those passions is sports. Every fall and spring, our passion for our favorite football and baseball teams begins to boil. While working on my master's degree in Sports Management, I took a course or two on sports psychology. One of the underlying topics I found interesting was understanding people's passion for sports. In understanding people's love for sports, a model was established to help describe the two types of passion people fall under when it comes to their team. According to the dualistic model of passion (DMP), there are two categories of passion one can fall under, harmonious or obsessive passion. When one has a passion for something, a strong inclination toward an activity or object, it can be so strong as to define that person. Studies show that passionate attraction to activities can become a part of our identity because of the importance and value they are given (i.e., Packers or Bears fans). The danger of such passion is that it can become internalized and express itself in one of two ways. People exhibiting harmonious passion due to an autonomous internalization are typically able to engage in the activity passionately but can still differentiate between that passion and their identity. They can maintain control over it.

In contrast, those who fall in the category of obsessive passion become a product of a controlled internalization. When engaging in the activity, the OP person's love, and excitement for it become uncontrollable, making it a part of their identity seeking extrinsic benefits that can boost their self-esteem or bring rewards. In other words, a person with obsessive passion is not in complete control of the activity; the activity controls them.

As the study of this dualistic model of passion continues, it seems safe to suggest, based on the research, that the harmonious and obsessive passion for sport should result in a different affective, cognitive, and behavioral set of consequences. As I read and understand it, those who fall into the category of harmonious passion are more conducive to healthy and positive outcomes than those who fall into the obsessive passion group. I'm sure Paul hadn't read such research on the word

'fervor' before laying out his ten principles to the Roman church. Hopefully, it will help give us a picture of understanding the passion he was directing us to have when it comes to serving the Lord. Paul has already said not to be lazy or to lose our eagerness for serving, and now he adds a seventh saying concerning our personal attitude toward serving. When he directs us to "keep your spiritual fervor," he means for us to be fervent or boiling—keeping our fervor is moving toward a boiling point like water. When you put a pot of water on the stove, it gradually gets warmer and warmer until it begins to a boil. In these two commands, Paul brings balance between the negative and the positive. The negative command is to never lack in zeal, while he complements it with a positive command, keep your spiritual fervor, each describing how we should serve the Lord. Whatever we are called to do for the Lord, we are to be about it with enthusiasm and diligence.

- As a sports fan which model do you fall into harmonious or obsessive?
- What becomes the danger of falling into the obsessive passion group?
- Which model would best fit Paul's description of serving the Lord?
- In work or sports obsessive passion seems detrimental but could both models be healthy and useful when applied spiritually?
- What is Paul's bottom line in serving the Lord?

Further Reading: 1 Peter 1:6–9

Thursday July 28, 2022

Read: Romans 12:11-12

Scripture Verse: *"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12*

Today's Thought:

Paul has been leading us through a set of ten exhortations or sayings to train us on how we should serve the Lord. Thus far, we have discovered the first seven. Today's text found in Romans 12:12 presents us with the final three maxims: "to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer." As a side note, these three sayings in verse twelve can be understood as individual proverbs or seen as additional descriptors for how believers should serve the Lord and each other with an overriding emphasis on love.

As Christ-followers, we are to be always joyful in hope. Our hope in Christ is the foundation for why we rejoice; after all, He is our blessed hope. That blessed hope is the promise Christ made to return someday to take us to be where He is, in paradise. Jesus' soon return offers us hope worthy of joy! Further, beyond our hope and joy, Paul challenges us to remain patient in affliction. As we await Christ's return, we will face distress in many forms. The pain and despair we meet may take form emotionally, physically, socially, or even economically. Regardless of the affliction we face, Paul tells us to be patient. The Greek word he uses for patient is 'hypomeno,' which means to endure patiently, to persevere. Our job as believers in the blessed hope is to remain steadfast when the afflictions come upon us. Although the stresses of life will visit each of us, we remain hopeful with joy because we know that our God is greater than he that is in this world!

- What brings you the greatest joy?
- What promise of Christ brings us hope that results in our joy?
- What does it mean to be patient in affliction?
- Why is it important for us to remain patient when distress comes?
- What helps us through these difficult times?
- How are we as believers able to remain joyful in affliction?

Further Reading: Romans 5:2-5

Friday July 29, 2022

Read: Romans 12:11-12

Scripture Verse: *“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12*

Today’s Thought:

*“Make me an Intercessor,
One who can really pray,
One of the Lord’s Remembrancers
By night as well as day.*

*Make me an Intercessor,
In Spirit-touch with Thee,
And give the heavenly vision
Praying through to victory.*

*Make me an Intercessor,
Teach me how to prevail,
To stand my ground and still pray on,
Though pow’rs of hell assail.*

*Make me an Intercessor,
Sharing Thy death and life,
In prayer claiming for others,
Victory in the strife.*

*Make me an Intercessor,
Willing for deeper death,
Emptied, broken, then made anew,
And filled with Living Breath.*

*Make me an Intercessor,
Reveal this mighty thing,
The wondrous possibility
Of paying back my King.*

*Make me an Intercessor,
Hidden-unknown—set apart,
Thought little of by those around,
But satisfying thine heart.” —Selected*

At the end of verse twelve, Paul ends his teaching on the ten maxims of Christian living by admonishing us to be faithful in our use of the powerful tool we call prayer. Not only are we to be joyful in hope and patient in affliction, but we must continue to be in prayer to God for wisdom, guidance, and strength. John reminds us in Revelation 8:3-4 why we must remain faithful in our prayers to the Father, "Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand." Every time we pray, our prayers of thanksgiving, along with our petitions and requests, rise like the smoke of incense to the golden altar where they rest before God in his throne room, where He hears them all. With the knowledge that all our prayers never fall on deaf ears, it is wise for us to follow Paul's charge to always remain faithful in prayer. God's Word emphasizes that we are never to stop praying.

As we close out our study of Romans 12:11-12, let us remember that if we will renew our minds with these ten principles and live them out before others, we should be easily recognized for our genuine love for one another. The ultimate test of that love manifested by Christ through us is discovered by our relationships with those who are our enemies. What will make this extraordinary love so astounding will not be in our actions but in our resilience to direct that love toward those who are not like us. And it can only happen through continued prayer.

- Why is prayer such a powerful tool?
- Why is it important to always pray according to John in Rev. 8:3-4?
- How does it change your perspective on prayer knowing that God stores them all and hears each one?
- How will others recognize the ten principles at work in our lives? What is the foundation that holds up all ten principles?
- What becomes the ultimate test that the principles of Christian living are at work in us?

Further Reading: Colossians 4:2-6

NOTES



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