


NAMPA BIBLE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 1 January, 2008

A New Year's Resolution—By Josh Norris

One of the most interesting phenomenon of our culture is seen each year, on January 1st, as millions of people commit themselves to one or more New Year's Resolutions. While I don't typically endorse waiting until a predetermined date to correct character flaws, I do think the concept of deep personal change is a great one. This year I'm going to challenge myself, and you, to a New Year's Resolution of a very specific variety. Have you ever wondered what drives those "Super Christians", who seemingly spend every waking moment talking about God, praying to God and evangelizing for God? I think it can typically be summed up in one little word: Zeal.

The biblical concept of zeal has, at its heart, the idea of *intense striving with a single-minded focus on achieving the goal at hand*. The idea conveyed by passages such as Philippians 3:6 is that zeal is the word you use to describe someone who is just short of a lunatic for God. In fact, zeal is often used to describe God's passion for His own glory!

This topic matters to us as disciples of Christ because zeal is an indicator of our regeneration, an outward show of our inner heart, and an outward flow of love for God. It's a desire to make sure everyone knows He is their King and that He is deserving of all glory and praise. Often times our zeal is squashed by fact that our culture encourages acceptance and is repulsed by those who are outspoken about their faith. This fact has caused most of us to keep our mouths shut instead of speaking up and expecting to be slandered as the Apostle Peter says we will be. On the other hand, it's important to recognize that being boisterous and shouting about God from the rooftops does not mean you are zealous. Zeal is a heart attitude which naturally shows itself in our actions. This doesn't mean that if you are lacking in zeal that you don't love God, but it likely means something isn't quite the way it should be.

It is worth noting that it's also possible to be zealous for the wrong things. In Romans 10 Paul, who had himself previously been zealous for persecuting the Church, condemned the Jews for having zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

Jewish zealots of Christ's day were either zealous for a false picture of God or for desiring the overthrow of the Roman government. Simply having zeal is not enough. It must be directed at God and done so with truth backing it up. Righteous zeal is, instead, seen in Christ, who said "Zeal for your house will consume me" and then demonstrated His zeal by His obedient death on the cross (Jn 2:17 & Phil 2:8).

On the other end of the spectrum are those who are Believers but are not zealous. This, I believe, is where most of us fall. We attend church, we dabble with reading our Bible, we pray a bit, but none of it is done with zeal. The Bible is full of exhortations to those who lack zeal. We are exhorted to be zealous for, among other things, good deeds (Titus 2:14), salvation of others (Ro 10:1), God's glory (Num 25:11, John 2:15-17), the faith (Jude 1:3), God's work (I Cor 15:58), good things (Gal 4:18), spiritual gifts & edification (I Cor 14), righteousness & God's kingdom (Matt 6:33), His people (Isaiah 26:11), and the welfare of others (Col 4:14).

Zeal can be fostered and encouraged by practical and achievable means. First, we must stop compartmentalizing our lives. This means, we must be the same person in front of the world as we are in front of the congregation. Second, we must devote ourselves to a life of learning about our God. This means, we must have consistent time spent reading, studying and meditating on the Bible. Third, we must pray for zeal. Prayer is God's means for accomplishing much in our lives, and we should use it as such. We should be praying that He would give us an ever increasing passion for His Kingdom. Finally, we must determine where we personally come up short in regards to zeal and make a plan to change.

So that's it. The challenge is to make your New Year's Resolution to become zealous for the Lord. If you think you're already there then make your resolution to help others grow in their zeal for Him. If we can all become modern day zealots for Christ, then we will make a serious impact on our community for His glory.

Current Calendar Events....

AWANA - 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Lakeview Bible Church

Home Groups - The ideal place for families to get together, to grow closer as brothers and sisters in Christ, and to study God’s Word and how it applies to our lives. The goal is to get everyone in the church involved in this exciting new ministry! Please call Josh Norris (463-4755) or see the Home Groups table in the foyer for details.

Parents of Youth meeting on January 17, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Sharad & Evy Yadav (18477 Buckeye Avenue – 466-8460). The meeting is for parents of high schoolers to discuss the student ministry agenda for the year.

Youth Group Winter Retreat – The Youth Group will be having a Winter Retreat the weekend of January 18th. They will be departing Friday evening at 5:00 p.m. sharp from the Book’s residence (16802 N. Windsor Lane – Nampa). Expectations should include a fun time of fellowship, leadership, encouragement and admonishment, and the rolling up of sleeves to serve each other (enjoyable and fun too). If planning to attend, please also anticipate a projected cost per student of between \$10 - \$20. This will serve to cover food and other costs. Additional details of the retreat are materializing and will be provided promptly when they are available. A flyer / registration is coming soon. Please call Aaron and Cecelia Book (371-3033 or 283-7510) for further information if needed.

- Do you have ideas for additional newsletter segments?

- Would you like to be involved in writing for, or assembling, the newsletter?

- Email webmaster@nampabible.org or talk to Josh Norris to get involved.

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Verse to Ponder....

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Quote to live by...

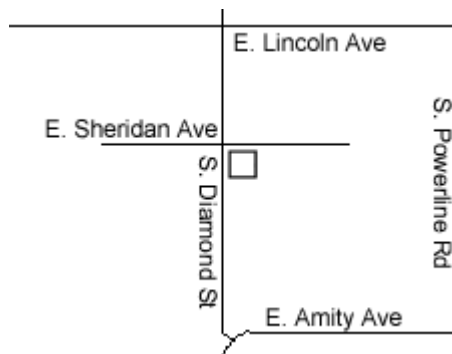
"Christ is not valued at all unless He is valued above all." - **Augustine**

Pray For...

- A new year filled with zeal and increasing love for our great God.
- A growing love of the lost and a desire to see them repenting and worshipping God.

Did You Know....

- We’re moving again! Directions to the new location can be found at www.nampabible.org/moving



- Past and current newsletters can be found at www.nampabible.org/newsletr