

This Week's Main Idea . . .

Every Follower of Christ Can Learn to Cultivate the Trait of **Enthusiasm** Into Their Daily Life.

Before continuing, this would be a good time to stop and pray and ask God to help each person in group to really catch hold of the principles in Romans 12:11 on how to cultivate enthusiasm in their lives.

As a group, turn to Romans 12:11 and read it together.

¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Romans 12:11 (NIV)

This Week's Applications . . .

In Romans 12:11, Paul Gives Us **Three Ways to Cultivate the Trait of Enthusiasm** Into Our Lives.

The 1st Way to Cultivate Enthusiasm is to . . .

1. Don't Allow Yourself to be Slowed Down!

"Never be lacking in zeal ..."

Romans 12:11 (NIV)

1. Notice the word "lacking" (NIV) in verse 11. This word literally means to be lazy and slothful. In your opinion, in what ways can a person be "lazy" in their relationship with Christ.

2. What specifically does Paul tell us not be lacking (lazy) in?

3. Over the years, competitive swimming attire has changed drastically. (Other than marketing) What is the reasoning for the skin-tight "speedo" swimsuits nowadays?

4. In the first part of Romans 12:11, Paul tells us to "Never be lacking in zeal ...". The word "zeal" is the Greek word "spoude" from which we get the word "speed".

What do you think?

5. In this week's message, Pastor Jay stated that ... "*each of us are responsible for the speed at which we pursue Christ.*" Do you agree or disagree? Why?

6. The "zeal" (spoude - speed) that Paul is talking about in Romans 12:11 has to do with our passionate pursuit of Christ. According to Paul's own words in Philippians 3:12-14, at what speed did he pursue Christ?

7. What are some of the things that slow us down in our pursuit of Christ? What are some things that slow you down?

An extra thought . . .

8. From Paul's words in Galatians 5:25, how do we know the speed that God wants us to pursue Him?

The 2nd Way to Cultivate Enthusiasm is to . . .

2. Keep the Fire Burning!

"but keep your spiritual fervor . . ."

Romans 12:11 (NIV)

1. According to the 2nd phrase of verse 11, what does Paul tell us that we are responsible to do?

Not only are we responsible for the speed at which we pursue Christ, we are also responsible for our own spiritual climate or temperature.

2. Look up Revelation 3:15-16 and note the three different spiritual temperatures that Jesus recognizes: _____ .

3. According to the previous passage, what two temperatures does Christ prefer a person to have?

4. Explain why "hot" or "cold" is preferred over "lukewarm".

5. The word "fervor" in Romans 12:11 literally means to be "boiling hot". From your perspective, how can a person maintain a "boiling hot" temperature in their relationship with Christ?

6. How does Jesus' answer to the religious expert in Matthew 22:34-40 relate to "keeping the fire burning" in a person's heart?

7. From your personal experience, what are some ways that you would encourage another follower of Christ to "keep their fire burning"?

8. What does Paul tell us not to do in 1Thessalonians 5:19?

9. What are some ways that we tend to "put out the Spirit's fire" in our own hearts?

3. Completely Sell Out.

"... serving the Lord."

Romans 12:11 (NIV)

1. When you hear the word "serve" or "serving", what mental images come to mind? (Be honest).

2. In the following passages, how do the writers describe themselves?

- Romans 1:1 - Paul, a _____ of Christ Jesus..."
- James 1:1 - James, a _____ of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ ..."
- 2Peter 1:1 - Simon Peter, a _____ and apostle of Jesus Christ . . ."

In each instance, the writer refers to himself as a "servant" of Jesus Christ. The word that each of them use is the same word that Paul uses in Romans 12:11; the Greek word "doulos" which means to be a "bond-servant" of Jesus Christ. For more information on what a bond servant is, read the following paragraph.

The word "bond-servant" (*doulos*) in the Greek means far more than just a servant. It means a slave totally **possessed** by the master. It means a *bond-servant* bound by law to a master. A look at the slave market of James's day shows more clearly what James meant when he said he was a "slave of Jesus Christ."

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what James meant (James 1:1). James was **purchased** and **possessed** by Christ, the Son of the living God. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his rebellious and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him; therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.

Source: Practical Word Studies in The New Testament.

3. According to 1Corinthians 6:19-20, to Whom do we belong? Why?

4. According to 1Peter 1:18-19, what price did Christ pay for our redemption?

5. Modern-Day Bond Servants realize that they have been **purchased** by Jesus Christ. What are some practical ways that we can remind ourselves of this truth?

6. In Ephesians 1:13-14 Paul tells us that when we believe we are given the "deposit" of the Holy Spirit. In verse 14 of this text, what word/phrase does Paul use to describe those who have been given this deposit of the Holy Spirit?

"those who are G_____ P_____ -- to the praise of his glory."

Not only are we purchased by Christ, but as a bond servant, we realize that we are possessed by Christ. We are his possessions! We are his vessels, set aside to do his holy work.

7. From Paul's words in Acts 20:24, describe how he realized that he was purchased and possessed by Christ.

8. As his chosen vessel, what are some ways that you can serve Christ this following week?

9. From memory, fill in the blanks:

Three Ways to Cultivate Enthusiasm

1. Don't Allow Yourself to be a S_____.
2. Keep the F_____ B_____.
3. Completely S_____ O_____.

This Week's Response . . .

¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

As you close the group this week, spend a few minutes in prayer along the following lines:

1. Ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you are slowing down your pursuit of Christ.
2. Commit yourself to doing those things that keep your fire burning.
3. Acknowledge to God that He purchased you with His blood and you are now his possession to be used in any way He sees fit.