

# ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

By Keith Greer

*“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” {Romans 10:1-3}* Unfortunately, this is a common problem within the religious world; many people possess a great deal of religious zeal, but they lack proper Bible knowledge. We see evidence of this problem when the following situations occur.

**Serving the wrong God.** *“Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.’” {Acts 17:22,23}* Muslim people serve the wrong God—Allah. The Roman Catholic Church pays homage to the pope. Others allow their money, jobs, or relationships to become their gods. Mankind must serve only the God of heaven. *{Acts 17:24,25; Ephesians 4:6}* Yes, these folks are full of zeal, commitment, and dedication to the wrong thing.

**Offering God unauthorized acts of worship.** *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” {Matthew 15:8,9}* No matter how sincerely, zealously, and diligently one offers service to the Lord, if He didn't authorize it in His word, He will not accept it. No amount of sincerity a person possesses as he plays a piano during worship to God will make it right. *{Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:15}* In the Old Testament, we read of two priests who learned the hard way that details matter. *{Leviticus 10:1,2}* We must act in accordance with authority from God. *{Colossians 3:17}*

People I love and care for, even members of my personal family, have left the Lord to follow the teaching and directions of men in their service unto God. Yet, they tell me all about their love for God and having more zeal and commitment now than they had before. All this may be true yet if they are worshipping and teaching things God has not authorized in His word it's all in vain! Yes, I've tried to reason with them but they tell me “I have not left the Lord.” My reply is very simple, “has the Lord left you because of what you are now doing? God's instructions must be respected if one is truly seeking to glorify and honor Him!

**Trying to serve God without the gospel.** *“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” {Romans 10:16,17}* One cannot truly serve God unless he accepts and obeys the gospel of Christ. The gospel is God's power for saving sinful people. *{Romans 1:16}* How can we truly serve God in an acceptable manner while rejecting His divine message? The gospel contains what is necessary to please God and obey Him and one cannot serve Him properly without following its instructions.

**Following our own righteousness.** *“My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness.” {Psalm 119:172}* God respects only those who work

righteousness. {Acts 10:34,35}. We must go to His word to find the definition of what can rightly be called righteousness. Many today seek to follow Christ by creating their own agendas, terms, and conditions of righteousness. Sadly, they're on a dead end street!

**Seeking salvation apart from the church.** *“For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”* {Ephesians 5:23} Christ saves only one body because He built only one church {Matthew 16:18, Acts 20:28}. He will deliver that church back to His Father. {1 Corinthians 15:24} Some believe the church is unimportant. The Bible says otherwise.

Dear reader, zeal and a fervent spirit are absolutely essential in serving our Lord. We must be on fire every day in our service to Him. Yet, for our zeal to be beneficial, it must be accompanied by proper knowledge. Do you possess both knowledge and zeal? \*\*\*