

Zeal and Prudence

by John Newton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of balancing zeal and prudence, and seeking Heavenly wisdom from God to guide our actions.

Scripture: Psalm 32:8, Proverbs 3:5, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 2 Timothy 4:7, James 1:5

Topics: "Faith And Perseverance", "Godly Wisdom"

Description

John Newton reflects on the passing of Mrs. L, a faithful Christian who found victory in her trials through great faith. He encourages the congregation to follow the examples of those who have persevered in faith and patience. Newton acknowledges the challenges of combining zeal with prudence, emphasizing the need for Heavenly wisdom and dependence on the Lord in all actions. He reminds believers that despite their weaknesses and mistakes, God's grace and guidance are always available for those who humbly seek Him.

Transcript

Dear Sir,

No very considerable alteration has taken place since I wrote, except the death of Mrs. L, who was removed to a better world in September last. The latter part of her course was very painful; but the Lord made her more than conqueror, and she had good cause to apply the apostle's words, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. She repeated that passage in her last illness, and chose it for her funeral-text. She was a Christian indeed. Her faith was great, and so were her trials. Now she is above them all, now she is before the throne. The good Lord help us to be followers of those who through faith and patience have attained to the hope set before them.

The number of professors still increases with us, and a greater number of persons affords a greater variety of cases, and gives greater scope to observe the workings of the heart and Satan. For seven years I had to say that I had not seen a person of whom I had conceived a good hope go back, but I have met with a few disappointments since. However, upon the whole, I trust the Lord is still with us. The enemy tries to disturb and defile us, and if the Lord did not keep the city, the poor watchman would wake in vain. But the eye that never slumbereth nor sleepeth has been upon us for good; and though we have cause of humiliation and complaint, we have likewise much cause of thankfulness. My health is still preserved; and I hope that the Lord does not suffer my desires of personal communion with Him, and of usefulness in the ministry, to decline. He supplies me with fresh strength and matter in my public work; I hear now and then

of one brought to inquire the way: and His presence is at times made known to many in the ordinances.

To combine zeal with prudence is indeed difficult. There is often too much self in our zeal, and too much of the fear of man in our prudence. However, what we cannot attain by any skill or resolution of our own, we may hope in measure to receive from Him who giveth liberally to those who seek Him, and desire to serve Him. Prudence is a word much abused but there is a Heavenly wisdom, which the Lord has promised to give to those who humbly wait upon Him for it. It does not consist in forming a bundle of rules and maxims, but in a spiritual taste and discernment, derived from an experimental knowledge of the truth, and of the heart of man, as described in the word of God; and its exercise consists much in a simple dependence upon the Lord, to guide and prompt us in every action. We seldom act wrong, when we truly depend upon Him, and can cease from leaning to our own understanding. When the heart is thus in a right tune and frame, and His word dwells richly in us, there is a kind of immediate perception of what is proper for us to do in present circumstances, without much painful inquiry; a light shines before us upon the path of duty; and if He permits us in such a spirit to make some mistakes, He will likewise teach us to profit by them; and our reflections upon what was wrong one day, will make us to act more wisely the next. At the best, we must always expect to meet with new proofs of our own weakness and insufficiency; otherwise how should we be kept humble, or know how to prize the liberty He allows us of coming to the throne of grace, for fresh forgiveness and direction every day? But if He enables us to walk before Him with a single eye, He will graciously accept our desire of serving Him better if we could, and His blessing will make our feeble endeavours in some degree successful, at the same time that we see defects and evils attending our best services, sufficient to make us ashamed of them.

I am &c.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-newton/zeal-and-prudence/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net