

Living
Zealously

Deepen Your Christian Life

From the late 1500s to the early 1700s, Puritan ministers wrote thousands of Christian books that contain massive amounts of biblical, doctrinal, experiential, and practical instruction to energize and deepen your Christian life. During that period, thousands of volumes coming off English presses consisted of Puritan sermon material popularized in book form. Unfortunately, many believers today find it difficult to read the antiquarian Puritan language and, when they attempt to do so, find themselves more frustrated than energized.

This new series, *Deepen Your Christian Life*, presents in contemporary language the major teachings that several Puritans wrote on subjects that are seldom addressed adequately, if at all, today. Finally, you too will be able to enjoy the Puritans and experience, by the Spirit's grace, that they really do deepen your Christian life.

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Joel R. Beeke and James La Belle (2010)

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Joel R. Beeke and James La Belle (2012)

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Joel R. Beeke (forthcoming)

Living Zealously

with Study Questions

Joel R. Beeke and James A. La Belle

Foreword by Derek W. Thomas



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Living Zealously

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To

Joey Pipa

zealous puritan reformer and servant leader,
fellow seminary president and conference speaker,
loyal friend and brother in Christ for decades,
with whom I share so much in the gospel race

and

the dear flock of the

**Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation
in Grand Rapids, Michigan,**

in commemoration of having had the privilege of
serving you as a pastor for twenty-five years.

— JRB



To

my dear children,

River, Schylie, Forrest, Terra, Sandy, Rocky, & Chantry,

the delight of a father's eyes,
the love of a father's heart,
the burden of a father's fervent prayers.

In a day when the zeal of the church has grown cold,
may God grant you the zeal of your gracious Savior
to overcome every sin,
pursue every virtue,
and take heaven by storm!

— JAL

Foreword

“Zeal is a subject, like many others in religion, most sadly misunderstood. Many would be ashamed to be thought ‘zealous’ Christians. Many are ready to say of zealous people what Festus said of Paul: ‘They are beside themselves—they are mad’ (Acts 26:24).” Thus wrote the nineteenth century Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, J. C. Ryle in a chapter entitled, “Zeal.”¹ Several pages later, he made this observation: “It may be very true that wise young believers are very rare. But it is no less true that zealous old believers are very rare also.”² That brings to me to this current volume on *Living Zealously* by Joel R. Beeke and James A. La Belle.

What Ryle observed a century ago is of even greater import in our own time: people are deeply suspicious of zeal (except, perhaps, in sports or entertainment). Think of the term “zealot” and what comes to mind? Fanaticism. Hatred. Bigotry. Add the descriptive “religious” to zeal and you have a verbal incendiary device. Whatever else it may mean, in the modern mind, such a thing is offensive. Thus, we encounter folk of choleric temperament, certain and robust, pushy and egoistic, determined to achieve their goal at whatever cost to those around them; intimidating, often *doing* and *speaking* in ways that appear to us excessively judgmental, narrow-minded, and offensive. Worse, a terrorist! Is this not how the world views zealous people, especially religiously zealous people? And the world is correct to be suspicious, at least, in some measure. Witness Paul’s (or Saul’s) own confession of his zeal in persecuting

1. J. C. Ryle, *Practical Religion* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 129.

2. Ryle, *Practical Religion*, 147.

the church (Phil. 3:6) and our suspicions are confirmed. He was out to kill people—zealously.

But “zeal” need not be such; channeled in the right direction, with accompanying grace, zeal is a fruit of the Spirit’s sanctifying work. It is an expression of devotion, single-minded determination to please God and fellow human beings. Thus Paul again, commending Corinthian Christian repentance (2 Cor. 7:11), or Roman Christian industry (Rom. 12:11), advances zeal as laudable and commendatory. Here, zeal is humble, reverent, God-focused, aware of others but resolute to serve God with one’s entire self. Listen to Ryle again:

A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies—whether he is rich, or whether he is poor—whether he pleases men, or whether he gives offence—whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish—whether he gets honour, or whether he gets shame—for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is, to please God, and to advance God’s glory.³

Such a thing, of course, will never appeal to the world, nor, sadly, to lukewarm Christians. But it is what Jesus expects of us and what the gospel encourages. It is this kind of zeal, one that is focused on giving God glory whatever the cost to oneself, that Beeke and La Belle, glean- ing from the riches of the Puritans, commend in this book. It is *godly* zeal. It is Christ-centered, gospel-infused zeal. Would you not have such a thing characterize your love for Christ? Then read on....

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3. Ryle, *Practical Religion*, 130.

Biographical Introduction

This book draws from Puritan writers on the subject of zeal—the inflaming of our heart to pant after God’s glory and to pursue His will with all our might. Puritans such as William Ames, Oliver Bowles, John Evans, Richard Greenham, Christopher Love, John Reynolds, and Samuel Ward¹ thoroughly addressed this theme, so seldom addressed today. Their work is featured in this book. Here is a brief introduction to these pastor-theologians.

William Ames (1576–1633)

William Ames was born in 1576 in Ipswich, Suffolk. Both his parents died when he was young. His uncle raised him in a family deeply committed to Puritan ideals. Ames obtained his bachelor of arts (1598) and master of arts (1601) degrees from Christ’s College, Cambridge University. While completing his degrees, he experienced a personal conversion after realizing that a person may be moral without being godly. After graduation he was elected fellow² at the college and ordained into ministry in the Church of England. Ames had a profound spiritual and academic influence at the college for several years.

1. The Ames, Greenham, and Love sections of this introduction are adapted from Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans, with a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 39–51, 290–96, 396–403.

2. In English universities, a fellow was a graduate of a particular college, elected as an incorporated member of the college, with appropriate rank and privileges. Many fellows had teaching and tutoring responsibilities.

King James I and some of the Anglican bishops made life increasingly difficult for the Puritans. In 1609 Ames resigned from his Cambridge fellowship, and soon found himself banned from preaching by the bishop of London. The next year he sought greater freedom in the Netherlands, where he remained for the rest of his life.

From 1611 to 1619 he served as a chaplain to the English military forces in The Hague. He simultaneously labored as the pastor of a small congregation. His writings against the Arminian Remonstrants gave him the title “the Augustine of Holland.” This led to his role as a non-voting advisor to the presiding officer of the Synod of Dort, where an international group of Reformed theologians issued the famous Five Points affirming divine sovereignty in salvation.

The powers of England forced Ames out of his chaplaincy and closed the door for him to teach at Leiden University, so he tutored university students in his study for three years to support his family. His lectures to students later developed into his *Marrow of Theology*. In 1622 Franeker University appointed him as professor of theology. There Ames again turned his home into a tutoring center for theological and moral formation. Students from all over Europe came to study under him. However, opposition from several professors, together with declining health, led him to move once again.

He went to Rotterdam in the summer of 1633 to serve with Hugh Peter as the pastor of English refugees and to start a new college. But that fall the Maas River flooded his house, which negatively impacted his health, leading to his death from pneumonia at age fifty-seven. His books, such as the theological masterpiece, *Marrow*, and his ethical work, *Conscience*, profoundly shaped the Reformed movement in Europe, Britain, and New England for more than a century.

Oliver Bowles (c. 1577–c. 1644)

Oliver Bowles was born around 1577 in Sawtry, Huntingdonshire. He taught at Queens College, Cambridge, from 1599 to 1606, where he tutored such leading Puritans as John Preston, who regarded him as “a

holy and learned man.” He then served many years as a pastor at Sutton in Bedfordshire.

Bowles was an elder member of the Westminster Assembly but died before it finished its work. He preached before Parliament on a fast day commemorating the opening of the assembly on the topic of zeal, from which this book draws. He faithfully attended the proceedings of the assembly, but we have no records of his playing a major role in its deliberations.

After Bowles died, his son published his only book, *De Pastore Evangelico Tractatus* (“A Treatise on the Evangelical Pastor”). This four-hundred-page Latin treatise expands on almost every pastoral duty listed in the Westminster Directory for Public Worship, providing a practical Puritan description of the office of a shepherd. In this book Bowles frequently quoted the Reformers and leaders of the early church, reflecting the historical roots of Puritanism.³

John Evans (c. 1680–1730)

John Evans was born around 1680 in Wrexham, northern Wales, the son of multiple generations of ministers. His father was ejected from his ministry by the Act of Uniformity but continued to serve a congregation in Wrexham. John studied for the ministry in private schools, reading through, it is said, all five massive volumes of Matthew Poole’s Latin *Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque Sacrae Scripturae*.

Evans was ordained to the ministry in 1702 in Wrexham, where he served until 1704. Daniel Williams then invited him to serve with him in London, and in 1716 he succeeded Williams. Both the universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen awarded him a doctorate in divinity. He was a leader among the Dissenters and a favorite choice to preach at their public meetings. He also lectured for several years at Salters’ Hall.

Matthew Henry assisted at Evans’s ordination. After Henry’s death, Evans completed the notes on Romans included in Henry’s famous

3. Philip G. Ryken, “Oliver Bowles and the Westminster View of Gospel Ministry,” in *The Westminster Confession into the Twenty-First Century, Volume 2* (Ross-shire, U.K.: Christian Focus Publications, 2004), 410–14.

commentary. Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge considered Evans's *Practical Discourses Concerning the Christian Temper* to be one of the best treatises on practical Christianity. He planned to write a comprehensive history of nonconformity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but ill health ended his life before he could.

He died in his fifty-first year from dropsy and other medical problems, which were aggravated by the stress of financial difficulties. His library of ten thousand volumes was sold at auction to provide for the needs of his widow and children.

Richard Greenham (c. 1542–1594)

Richard Greenham was a pioneer in Puritan pastoral ministry. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, then earned a master's degree in 1567, and became a fellow at the school. In 1570 he began serving as pastor in a small agricultural village, Dry Dayton, five miles from Cambridge. The people there had little interest in the things of God.

Greenham devoted himself to the ministry, preaching twice on Sundays and rising at 4:00 a.m. to preach on four weekdays. His preaching was so earnest that he often drenched himself in sweat. He sought to build a foundation of knowledge in his people by catechizing them on Thursdays and Sunday afternoons, using his adaptation of the Anglican catechism with many questions and short answers. He also called people to keep the Sabbath holy.

His fame grew as a wise spiritual counselor who broke new ground in Puritan "casuistry" or application of the Bible to specific practical questions. He trained several men for the ministry in his own home, including Arthur Hildersam and Henry Smith. He also organized local charitable projects to provide food for the poor.

When Greenham left Dry Dayton in 1591, he grieved that he did not see more fruit on his ministry of more than two decades there. He went to London and stayed there to serve people in preaching and visitation. In 1593 the plague erupted. Greenham died a year later, perhaps

not from the plague but rather from a combination of other medical problems. His *Works* were published in 1599 and read by many.

Christopher Love (1618–1651)

Christopher Love was born in Cardiff, Wales, in 1618, and God converted him while he was in his teens. He graduated from New Inn Hall, Oxford, with a bachelor of arts degree in 1639. His studies for a master's degree were interrupted by persecution against the Puritans. He refused to subscribe to Archbishop Laud's rules in 1640, and was imprisoned in 1641. From prison he preached through the bars to large crowds of people. In 1642 he served as chaplain to the Parliamentary regiment under John Venn.

Love was ordained as a Presbyterian preacher in 1645 in London. He was a member of the Westminster Assembly but did not participate much in it. In 1652 Oliver Cromwell's forces arrested him for his alleged participation in a plot to restore Charles II to the throne of England. Despite the appeals of his wife and several ministers, he was sentenced to death and beheaded. In his prayer prior to his death, he cried out, "O that London might be a faithful city to Thee!" His last words were, "Blessed be God for Jesus Christ."

Thomas Manton preached Love's funeral sermon to a large crowd of mourners. His wife wrote a memoir of him, and fifteen volumes of his sermons were published posthumously.

John Reynolds (1667–1727)

John Reynolds was born in 1667, in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire. His father, a minister, medical doctor, and friend of Richard Baxter, was ejected from his ministry in 1661. Reynolds received ordination as a dissenting minister in 1699, serving as a family chaplain from 1699 to 1706. Then he worked as a co-pastor with James Forbes at Gloucester.

In 1708 he was given charge of a dissenting church and school in Shrewsbury. He also lectured in Dudley, where in 1715 a mob of rioters shouted threats at "the little Presbyterian parson." Sickness forced him

to leave Shrewsbury in 1718, and in 1721 he moved to Walsall to work as an assistant pastor until he died in 1727.

In addition to his book on zeal, Reynolds published a catechism for adults and a sermon lamenting the death of Matthew Henry. He also contributed to a book that defended the doctrine of the Trinity.

Samuel Ward (1577–1640)

Samuel Ward was born in 1577, in Suffolk, where his father served as pastor. He received his bachelor of arts degree from St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1597, and his master's degree in 1600. He lectured at Haverhill, where the Lord used him in the conversion of Samuel Fairclough. Ward had preached about the necessity of repentance and restitution, and Fairclough was pierced to the heart because of his recent theft of fruit from a local orchard. He could find no peace for his corrupt heart until he obtained the forgiveness of the orchard owner, and, through Ward's counsel, the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ.

In 1603 Ward was called to serve as the preacher in the wealthy town of Ipswich, which was a great honor for a twenty-six-year-old man. He ministered there for three decades, and his preaching had a magnetic influence.

Ward's nonconformity brought him under legal prosecution in 1622. He came under censure in 1635 and was imprisoned. He went to Holland and served as a pastor briefly with William Bridge. By 1638 he returned to Ipswich, where he died in 1640. He was so respected that the town continued to pay his stipend to his widow and son.

He published several works over his lifetime, including *A Coal from the Altar to Kindle the Holy Fire of Zeal*, which went through four editions from 1615–1622, and appeared again in a collection of sermons printed in 1628 and 1636, and was reprinted in 1862, edited by J. C. Ryle.

Contemporary Style

We have footnoted direct quotations from these seven authors. Much of the other material in the book summarizes their thoughts in a contemporary form. We have also used other Puritan authors to augment

our theme of living zealously; they are footnoted in full. Modern spelling and punctuation are used throughout, except in book titles. Study questions are offered at the end of each chapter to facilitate group study.

Acknowledgments

Our heartfelt gratitude is again extended first and foremost to our great triune God, who is zealous for His glory and His people's salvation. We would also like to thank our dear wives, Mary Beeke and Chantry La Belle, for their amazing loyalty to us, and to our patient and loving children (Calvin, Esther, and Lydia Beeke; River, Schylie, Forrest, Terra, Sandy, Rocky, and Chantry La Belle). Many thanks to Derek W. Thomas for his helpful foreword to this volume. Thanks, too, to Phyllis Ten Elshof, Rev. Ray Lanning, and Rev. Paul Smalley for their helpful editing and proofing assistance, and to Gary and Linda den Hollander, our excellent proofreading/typesetting team, as well as Amy Zevenbergen for the cover design.

If this book helps to enable God's dear children to be more zealous for His glory, the salvation of the lost, and the maturity of the saints, our labor will be well rewarded.

—Joel R. Beeke and James A. La Belle

Abbreviations

- Ames William Ames, “Of Zeale,” in *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof* (n.p., 1639), 56–60 [book 3, ch. 6].
- Bowles Oliver Bowles, *Zeale for Gods House quickned: or, A sermon preached before assembly of Lord, Commons, and Divines, at their solemn fast Iuly 7, 1643* (London: by Richard Bishop for Samuel Gellibrand, 1643).
- Evans John Evans, “Christian Zeal,” Sermon XVIII, in *Practical Discourses Concerning the Christian Temper* (London: for C. and R. Ware, T. Longman, and J. Johnson, 1773).
- Greenham Richard Greenham, “Of Zeal,” a sermon from “Seven Godlie and Frvitfvll Sermons Vpon Svndry Portions of Holy Scripture,” in *The Workes of the Reverend and faithfvll servant of Iesus Christ, M. Richard Greenham, Minister and Preacher of the word of God* (London: Imprinted by Felix Kingston for Ralph Iacson, 1599), 113–20.
- Love Christopher Love, *The Zealous Christian: Taking Heaven by Holy Violence In Wrestling and Holding Communion with God in Importunate Prayer* (repr., Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002).
- Reynolds John Reynolds, *Zeal a Virtue: or, A Discourse Concerning Sacred Zeal* (London: Printed for John Clark, 1716).
- Ward Samuel Ward, “A Coal from the Altar to Kindle the Holy Fire of Zeal,” in *Sermons and Treatises* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 69–91.

Setting the Stage: An Appeal for Zeal

How long shall we lie still under our formal complaints of the *decay* of Christian piety? How long shall we idly see the *retirement* of warm religion from the hearts and bosoms of its professors? Do we look into the *churches* of the Lord Jesus, or into our own *souls* and observe the deadness and dispiritedness that is there to all the parts of real godliness; and are we content, that so it should be? Are we willing to yield to all the lukewarmness and degeneracy that has overspread us? Shall we take no methods to recover and revive?

So begins John Reynolds's *Zeal a Virtue, or a Discourse Concerning Sacred Zeal*, published in 1716. Reynolds continues, "[Even] the truly pious are dull and heavy in their religion, [and] march on wearily in their appointed race, as if either their Lord had lost His glory or His promise to them; or they [have lost] their faith and hope in Him."¹

Do these words stab our hearts? Who among us cannot see the difference between the early church and our churches, between the apostles and ourselves, between the Reformers and Puritans of several hundred years ago and those of us who claim to be their heirs today? A fire burned in their hearts, but are we aflame at all? They seemed driven by a holy passion and resolve, but little seems to motivate us. They were at war with their sin and pursued holiness as if empowered by heavenly strength, but we are too much at peace with our sins and content to do little more than the minimum that God requires of us. Why is there such a difference between them and us?

1. Reynolds, 1-2.

The Call for Christian Zeal

God has not changed since the time of the Reformers and Puritans. The power of God unto salvation has not changed, the call to holiness has not changed, the threat of the enemy has not changed, but something has indeed changed. Furthermore, something is missing both in the church and in the hearts of the majority of Christians. That something is *zeal*. We lack zeal for God's honor and glory (1 Cor. 10:31), zeal for God's house and God's Word (Pss. 69:9; 119:139), zeal for the advance of Christ's kingdom (1 Cor. 9:19–23), zeal for repentance and good works (Rev. 3:19; Titus 2:14), zeal to “cut off” the offending hand and “pluck out” the offending eye (Mark 9:43–48), zeal for that “holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14), zeal that overcomes all obstacles and perseveres to the end (1 Cor. 9:24–27).

Christian zeal is the divine flame that brings our affections to a boil for God's cause. It enlivens and compels us, stirs and empowers us, and directs and governs us as it sets our affections ablaze for the glory of God and the good of His church. Zeal is “an earnest desire of and concern for all things pertaining to the glory of God and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus among men.”²

Think about it. If all Christians by God's grace are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and if all Christians have the seed of regeneration alive within them, then what is it but zeal that causes one believer to differ from another in passion, desire, affection, devotion, sacrifice, and fervor? It is true that not all believers have the same capacity. All have not received the same measure or degree of grace and faith (Rom. 12:3, 6; 14:1); the Spirit does not work to the same degree in all (1 Cor. 12:11). Zeal is what makes us, who are otherwise essentially the same, differ in the outworking and fruitfulness of our common salvation. Samuel Ward wrote, “What makes one Christian differ from another in grace, as stars do in glory, but zeal? All believers have a like precious faith; all true Christians have all graces in their seeds; but the degrees of them are no way better discerned than by zeal.”³ Do we not appreciate and love the Christian whose life so sweetly, harmoniously, and passionately

2. Reynolds, 18.

3. Ward, 78.

displays sacred zeal? And are we not troubled by the Christian whose life displays carelessness and indifference toward the things of God, who cares not whether he grows in grace or puts off sin, but is satisfied with a mediocre, half-baked discipleship?

We should examine ourselves to determine the quality, measure, and temperature of our own sacred zeal. It would be foolish to assume, as did the Laodiceans, that we are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” when, upon a searching examination, we might prove to be “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). Furthermore, if sacred zeal is what sets a Christian ablaze for the glory of God and assists us in subduing sin, then we should be diligent to consider what this zeal is and by what means we might secure and sustain it.

We will examine Christian zeal so that we might understand it and, by God’s grace, be possessed by it. The Puritans wrote and preached much upon this matter, encouraging the saints to “be zealous...and repent” (Rev. 3:19), to put on “zeal as a cloak” (Isa. 59:17), to be consumed with zeal for the Lord’s house (Ps. 69:9; John 2:17), and to be “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). We will draw from their writings and sermons to provide instruction for our own day.

Christian Zeal and Its Critics

We live in a day when the visible church is sick with spiritual lethargy, dullness, and presumption; a day when few understand or display Christian zeal; a day when many are ablaze with blind and false zeal; and a day when what passes for Christian fruitfulness is really little more than foliage. One wonders whether the axe is even now laid at the root of the tree of the modern church because of its lack of zeal. How much longer will the Lord of the vineyard wait for our fruit before He calls the dresser of the vineyard to reach for the axe and says, “Cut it down” (Matt. 3:7–10; 21:18–19; Luke 13:6–9)?

May God see fit in His mercy to use this book as a means to awaken His church from her slumber and fill her members with a Christian zeal, so that the world will once again be compelled to say of them that “they

[have] been with Jesus,” and will have no other charge to lay against them than that they “have turned the world upside down” (Acts 4:13; 17:6)!

Some critics have objected to sacred zeal, calling it a rash and heady temper that hurts more than it helps, and a harsh and fiery spirit that blindly burns up everything in its path. It is strange, however, that those who argue against sacred zeal are themselves zealous, maybe not about those things for which they despise zeal in others, but for those things that they themselves love. Their zeal could be for a political persuasion, a favorite sports team, the reputation of being a winner, making money, or being the best dressed. Whatever it is, it is safe to say that we are *all* zealous about something (and in most cases, about many things) when we love it enough to make considerable, if not foolish, sacrifices pursuing it. So zeal itself is not truly being opposed, is it? We all understand what zeal is, and, in one way or another, practice it toward what we most love or want.

While it is true that we are all zealous *for* what we most love and want, it is just as true that we are all zealous *against* what we most hate and reject. For example, if we love one political party, we tend to hate the other. If the party that we hate wins an election, is not our zeal set ablaze against those who support that party, so that we decry their policies, slander their candidates, and mock their promises? You see, zeal operates both *for* what we love and *against* what we hate. We are all enflamed by some kind of zeal and therefore should not oppose it in others. For the most part, we do make allowances for others’ zeal and passion. We respect their positions and simply agree to disagree. Having said that, why are so many people opposed to Christian zeal? Should there not be zeal in Christianity?

Given that the Christian religion is the means by which we worship God, enjoy reconciliation and communion with Him, and receive His blessings, should not we be truly zealous in our Christianity? It has been said, “In other objects fear excess; here no ecstasy is high enough.”⁴ We acknowledge, of course, that false zeal can easily take things too far, and does so whenever it exceeds the boundaries of God’s Word. False zeal

4. Ward, 77.

can be wrong in significantly different ways: in some cases, it can be violent or hateful; in other cases it can be sincere, albeit misguided, such as in those instances when a person in the name of the sanctity of human life bombs abortion clinics or murders doctors who perform abortions.

But why should we condemn someone aflame with true Bible-based zeal by calling him a fanatic or a radical who “takes things too far”? Or, when someone questions us about an inconsistency between what we preach and what we practice, why must we offer a litany of excuses about why it is better to walk a more moderate path and not go overboard with religion? Sadly, many Christians wonder if the sacred zeal that consumed Christians in the past is necessary today and will even argue for moderation as the wiser and more practical course in religion.

How can this tide be turned? How can the pretense of moderation behind which so much sinful compromise hides be purged? How can the hearts of today’s slumbering and drifting Christians be enlivened with true zeal for God? How can the flame of zeal in the hearts of God’s people be fanned until they are ablaze with love for God and His house?

How can we expose and cut off blind and rash zeal, while, by grace, stirring up in God’s people a directed, resolute, and purposed Christian zeal *against* all things sinful and *for* all things holy? On the one hand, we must clear Christian zeal of false charges, while on the other, we must lift up Christian zeal in all its glory and beauty. Once we see the virtue of true Christian zeal and feel its heat and know its blessings, who among us would not plead with God to give us this zeal and set us ablaze for His cause?

In this book, we will do our best to help you understand what Christian zeal is, and encourage you to be consumed with it for the glory of God, His church, and His Word, as were David and Christ (Pss. 69:9; 119:139; John 2:17). In chapter 1 we will speak of the nature and marks of Christian zeal, in contrast to a false and blind zeal. Many people are perishing today because of blind zeal, even in their religion. Having cleared the way for true zeal, we will move on in chapter 2 to explain the necessity of true Christian zeal and urge you to begin asking God for it. Chapter 3 will lay out the rule by which godly zeal is governed in its course, and answer objections against zeal. Chapter 4 will encourage

you to maintain a consistent zeal by describing several ways in which a Christian zeal expresses itself. In chapter 5 we will further pursue that same theme, adding some of the fruits and benefits of Christian zeal in several spheres of life. Finally, so that you might truly, practically, and sincerely enjoy sacred zeal, chapter 6 will show the means by which you may obtain and maintain it.