

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

S. R. Eph 1:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Oscar Wilde, the poet and Playwright published anonymously in 1899 a work titled "The Importance of Being Earnest"
- B. This lesson is not about that piece of literature but about importance of a Christian being earnest.
 1. "Earnest" is defined as, "Diligence, having haste, intently, and more abundantly" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).
 2. In some instances in Scripture this word refers to what we would refer to as a "down payment" (2Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14; at other times it translates a word which means haste; diligence; perseverance or a burning desire
- C. Truly there are a great number of things in which a Christian must be earnest regarding the above definition.
- D. Consider now the great importance of being earnest.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **CONTINUE (EARNESTLY NKJV) IN PRAYER:** Col 4:2
 - A. Paul commands, "Continue" [to be earnest towards, to persevere, be constantly diligent, - Strong's]
 - B. Early disciples continued steadfastly in prayer Acts 2:42 "Stedfastly" from same word as is sometime translated "earnest"
 - C. Do you earnestly, diligently, and intently pray to God?
 1. You should, because it is commanded 1Thess 5:17
 2. "The effectual, fervent (energetic not listless, indifferent, cold, lifeless, as if no vitality in it) prayer of a righteous man avails much" Jas. 5:16.
 - D. There is great importance found in being earnest in prayer to God.
- II. **EARNEST IN OUR CARE FOR OTHERS** 2Cor 8:16
 - A. Titus was earnest in his care (Word here involves "speed, haste forwardness or diligence: - Strong's)
 - B. Sometimes we see a lack of care for one another among brethren.
 - C. God cares for us 1Pet 5:7
 1. Cared enough to give His son to die for us Jhn 3:16
 2. Love one another as Christ loved us Jhn 13:34
 - D. Have the same care for one another 1Cor. 12:25,26.
 - E. We must be earnest, more abundant, in our care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and show that care by our actions.
- III. **EARNEST IN DEFENDING THE TRUTH** Jude 3.
 - A. To struggle, literally (to compete for a prize), figuratively (to contend with an adversary – Strong's)
 - B. Barnes' Notes: "This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means to contend upon--i. e. for or about anything; and would be applicable to the earnest effort put forth in those (Grecian jlh) games to obtain the prize. The reference here, of course, is only to contention by argument, by reasoning, by holding fast the principles of religion, and maintaining them against all opposers."

- C. One does not need to look far to see that the truth of God's Word needs to be defined, taught and contended (debate) for
- D. "Untaught and unstable people" are perverting gospel 2Pet. 3:16).
- E. Christians must have great haste as we diligently defend the faith. 2Tim 4:2

F. Souls are at stake! Are you earnest in defending the faith?

IV. EARNEST IN OUR DESIRE FOR HEAVEN

 2Cor. 5:2

- A. "Intensely crave possession" – Strong's
- B. As a Christian one should "groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven"
- C. Paul personally had "a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" Phil 1:23
- D. It is far too easy to become content with this world and not earnestly desire a Heavenly home.
- E. As a child of God we should be intently longing for a better place, understanding "this world is not my home, I'm just a passing through." Heb 11:8-10
- F. Do you earnestly desire a Heavenly home?

V. EARNEST IN OUR OBEDIENCE

 Heb. 2:1-3

- A. "We must give the more earnest (superabundantly more abundant, exceedingly –Strong's) Heed (apply oneself to) to the things which we have heard
- B. As we find God's commandments revealed to us in His Word we must, with diligence and haste, take heed and obey.
- C. Great reward in earnestly obeying from the heart Rom 6:17
- D. Jesus is "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" Heb. 5:9
- E. Have the "earnest desire" of the church at Corinth to obey the commandments of God 2Cor 7:7

CONCLUSION:

- A. There is a great deal involved in being "earnest". We must apply ourselves diligently; intensely desire heaven; struggle to defend the Truth; show our care for each other speedily; and persevere in prayer
- B. There is great importance in being earnest. Do we see that there is more to being a Christian than just idling through life, it takes work, diligent work
- C. Are there some ways you could more earnestly serve God?

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