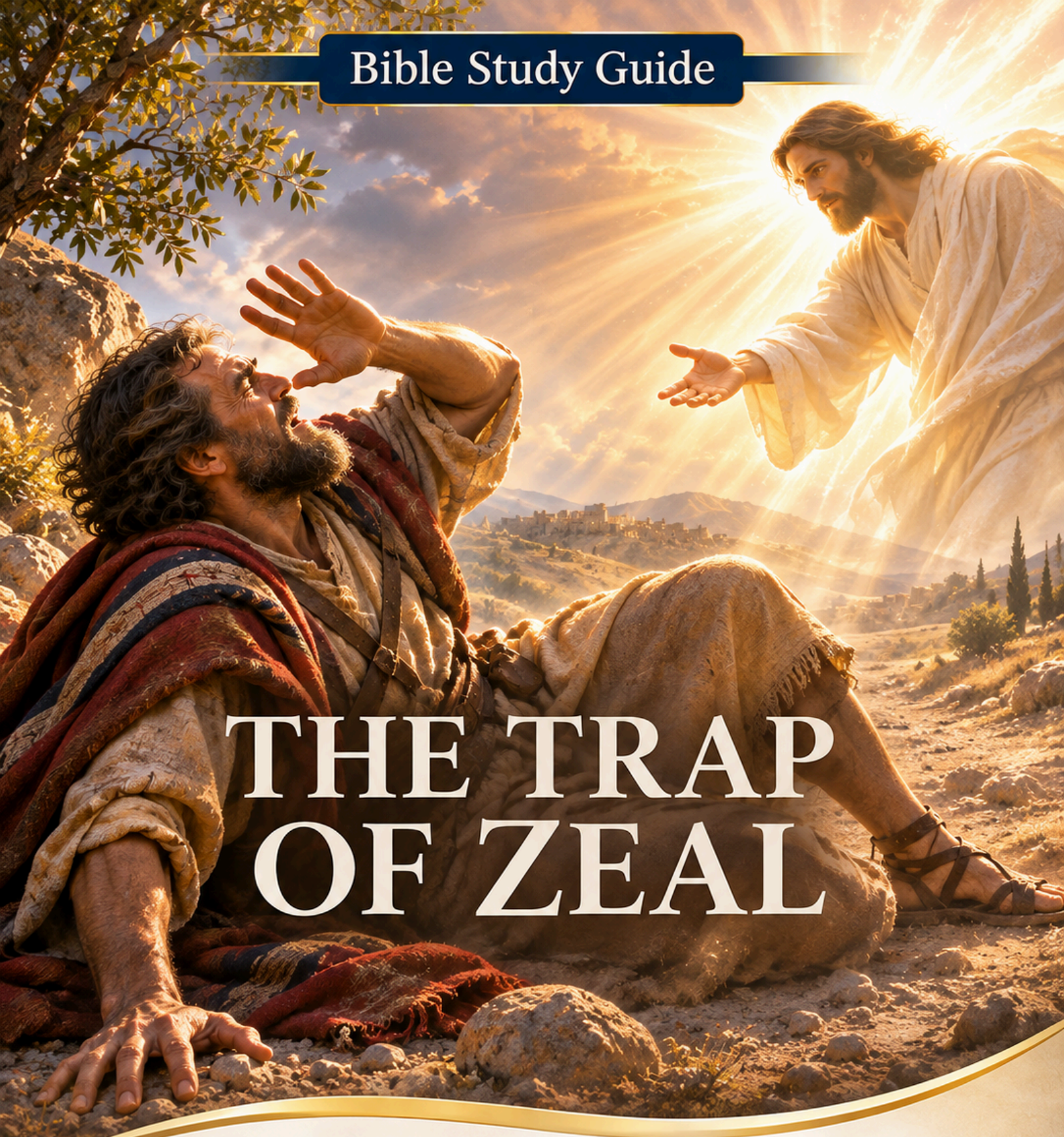
Bible Study Guide



THE TRAP OF ZEAL

A Bible Study on Religious Zeal, Humility, and the Spirit of Christ

Introduction

A sword can be sharp enough to cut, yet a surgeon uses a blade for a very different purpose from a soldier in battle. Words can also wound or help restore. Religious zeal is not in itself proof of a Christlike spirit. James warns that bitter envy and strife can be concealed beneath a profession of truth, while heavenly wisdom is pure, gentle, and full of mercy.

Fill in the blanks from the KJV text, then read the brief explanation.

Bible Study Questions

1 **What hidden attitudes does James warn against in those claiming truth?** (James 3:14)

"But if ye have _____ in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth."

Zeal becomes dangerous when rivalry or hostility governs the heart. Truth must be lived in its own spirit.

2 **Where do our words reveal their source?** (Luke 6:45)

"for of the abundance of the _____ his mouth speaketh."

Speech exposes what has been cherished within the heart.

3 **What were the scribes and Pharisees eager to make?** (Matthew 23:15)

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one _____, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

Religious activity and numerical success do not necessarily produce the character of Christ in those we influence.

4 **What does Paul urge believers to examine?** (2 Corinthians 13:5)

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the _____; prove your own selves."

A profession of faith calls for honest examination in the light of Christ.

5 **What warning does Jesus give about judging others?** (Matthew 7:1)

"Judge not, that ye be not _____."

Discernment must not become a self-righteous, condemning spirit.

6 **What do foolish and unlearned questions tend to produce?** (2 Timothy 2:23)

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender _____."

Some controversies absorb energy while generating conflict rather than spiritual growth. Christ calls us to discern what builds up.

7 **What manner should characterize the servant of the Lord?** (2 Timothy 2:24)

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be _____ unto all men, apt to teach, patient,"

The way truth is taught should reflect the character of Christ.

8 **What does the proverb describe as a source of health?** (Proverbs 12:18)

"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the _____ is health."

Wise speech seeks healing instead of wounding others. The tongue can become an instrument of either harm or grace.

9 **What can turn away wrath?** (Proverbs 15:1)

"A soft _____ turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

A gentle response can prevent conflict from becoming a contest of pride.

10 **What should be evident to all people according to Paul?** (Philippians 4:5)

"Let your _____ be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

Christian self-control and gentleness are especially important when dealing with disagreement or extremism.

11 **What does Paul say about those who strive for mastery?** (1 Corinthians 9:25)

"And every man that striveth for the mastery is _____ in all things."

Self-control is part of a disciplined Christian life empowered by grace.

12 **In what spirit should spiritual believers restore someone overtaken in a fault?** (Galatians 6:1)

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of _____; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

The purpose of correction is restoration. Awareness of our own vulnerability keeps us from pride.

13 **How should God's forgiven people treat one another?** (Ephesians 4:32)

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, _____ one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Receiving mercy changes how we respond to others' mistakes.

14 **How should we treat our enemies?** (Matthew 5:44)

"_____ your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

Christ's disciples seek the good of those who oppose them rather than returning injury for injury.

15 **What quality fills wisdom that comes from above?** (James 3:17)

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of _____ and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Heavenly wisdom combines purity with gentleness and mercy. Its fruit reveals its source.

16 **In what spirit should we speak truth?** (Ephesians 4:15)

"But speaking the truth in _____, may grow up into him in all things,"

Truth and love are not competitors; maturity in Christ requires both.

17 **How should we overcome evil?** (Romans 12:21)

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with _____."

Christ's way of victory is not retaliation, but faithfulness and love.

Appeal

Will you allow Christ to examine not only what you defend, but the motives and methods with which you defend it? Choose the spirit of restoration.

Commitment

I choose to speak truth in love, reject bitter contention, and seek the restoration of others in the meekness of Jesus.

_____

Signature

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