

Match Rockets (Zeal For God) (Serving God)

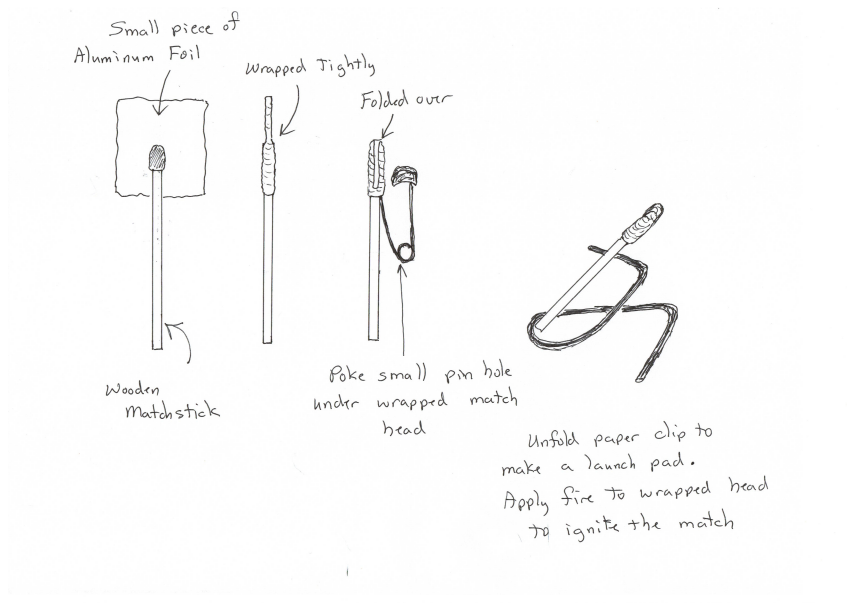
Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Romans 12:11

The Basic Bible Truth

An infinite God has shown Himself to us in a finite number of pages. That itself is an incredible accomplishment. God has chosen to define His character to us in little bits and pieces. A diamond cutter reveals the beauty of a diamond by cutting facets upon its face to allow the light to refract through the gem. As we continue to discover who God is, each little step we take is another facet of the diamond, revealing a truly majestic portrait. One of those character traits that comes up quite often in Scripture is that of zeal, probably the most often overlooked character trait of God. We are to imitate God in all aspects of our lives. Zeal needs to be a premiere attribute. Always.

The Object

Wooden Matches
Small Pieces Of Aluminum Foil
Pin
Paperclip
Small Propane Torch Or Candle Lighter



Play with this a little before you try this in public to ensure that the match head is wrapped tightly enough and that the weight of the foil is sufficient to contain the pressure of the ignition of the match. Also, aim them carefully. They fly pretty quickly.

The Lesson

The zeal of God is mentioned often in the Bible. It is a very important aspect of His character. The zeal of God is awesome to behold. An example is found in Job 38:7. God was talking to Job, upbraiding him for his behavior, and reminding him about creation. He concluded with the phrase *while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy*. The picture that comes to mind is of overwhelming scope. Imagine the entire population of Heaven gathered together. Billions and billions of the heavenly host are looking on. Jesus Himself steps out into the nothingness. With the enthusiastic and passionate zeal of God Almighty, He declares “Let there be light.” As He speaks the words, light comes into being, (and probably all the laws of physics and time as well). In His zeal, He acknowledges the awesome, perfect, amazing thing He has done and says “It is good!” All of heaven recognizes it too, and a deafening cheer goes up to God for the wonderful things He has done in that moment. The universe that we live in is not merely an average creation prepared by a mediocre God. It is an absolutely astonishing creation completed by an enthusiastic, passionate God intent on doing His very best, if that is even appropriate to say.

As I aim and light one of these matchsticks, what I want you to notice is how the match reacts to the heat applied to the head. It explodes with everything it has and rockets off into the horizon. Well, maybe not quite that far, but it does move quickly. That is a fairly good definition of zeal, to give 100% immediately and without reserve and question. Or to respond to everything with all of the enthusiasm we have.

As we walk this earth, our goal is to become as much like God in our character as possible. The question then becomes, where is our zeal? Are we as enthusiastic about everyday life and the issues of other people as we should be? Do we do our very best—always? It is true, it can be difficult to bring our “A” game to the table every time. But we must try. And with God’s help, it is very possible.

One moment in Jesus’ life stands out. It was when Lazarus had died of an illness and Jesus waited a few days before going to see his friends. He walked onto the scene, Lazarus had been in the grave a few days and His friends, Mary and Martha were mourning their loss. Understand, these were some of His closest friends when He was conducting His ministry. He would often retire to their house and spend time there. When Jesus saw it all, His emotions welled up inside Him and the Scripture says *He wept*. That phrase does not say that a tear trickled down His cheek. It says that He cried crocodile tears and sobbed heavily. Why would the Creator of the Universe, the One who is about to raise Lazarus from the dead, weep like that?

The answer lies in an understanding of the concept of zeal. These were His friends. God loves us so deeply, that when we hurt, He hurts. Zeal works that way. His intensity and passion towards His friends triggered an emotional episode that is both awe inspiring and touching at the same time. Is God that interested in your life and mine? A very simple answer—YES! Shouldn’t we do the same for others?

