The Feel for Zeal - Part II
by Justin Street

Scripture Reference - Romans 12:9-13: Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

A sketch in two parts, for four non-gender-specific characters. Now in Part II, they all exhibit their character names.

CHARACTERS (PART II):
BURNOUT - defeated and tired, shows signs of a cold
FEAR - a nervous wreck, second-guessing everything
RESENTMENT - suspicious
PEACE - enthused, but cheerfully calm

If possible, the text “A little further into the future…” appears on a screen. BURNOUT, FEAR, and RESENTMENT enter from SL. BURNOUT looks ragged and defeated, FEAR is overflowing with nervous anxiety, and RESENTMENT is looking reproachfully at the other two. Though they enter together, they move to different portion of the stage to get away from each other. BURNOUT sits in a chair that’s on stage, laid out from exhaustion. Keeping with the feel of Part I, their despair is also over-the-top.

FEAR
I just don’t understand why you ordered coconut bars, when I specifically said no tree nuts.

RESENTMENT
But it’s not actually a tree nut!

FEAR
Excuse me, but it’s a coco-what?

RESENTMENT
I know what it’s called, but it’s not a…

FEAR
And do they grow in the ground, or on a vine?

RESENTMENT
No, on a tree, but they’re not…

FEAR
Then that is the precise definition of a tree nut!

RESENTMENT
This is your problem! You’re so stuck on every single detail, we never get anything done if everything has to be perfect!

FEAR
But I have to do it right! It’s my zeal - it makes me want to get it right!

to BURNOUT
Back me up on this.

BURNOUT
Can you please keep me out of this? I can’t possibly add another thing to my plate.

RESENTMENT
Some leader you’ve turned out to be. We trusted you, you know.

BURNOUT
Look, do you know how busy I am? Do you know how hard it is, to just keep going, every day? Do you know how much I’m trying to do?

FEAR
You?!?! I’m trying to manage every single minute detail, and I appear to be the only one who cares enough, who has the zeal enough to get it right.

RESENTMENT
Managing every detail?

FEAR
Yes.

RESENTMENT
Even small ones? Like, micro details.

FEAR
Yes!

RESENTMENT
You could almost say you were micro-managing things.

FEAR
Yes. Wait - no! That’s not...

BURNOUT
Could you please just do this somewhere else? I can’t take on another project.

RESENTMENT
We’re not a project - we’re people!

BURNOUT
not convinced
Yea, okay.

They begin to argue over each other “This is why we can’t get anything done!” “You’re the worst!” “I should’ve never trusted you!” etc.

PEACE enters from SL.

PEACE
Hiya.
They all stop arguing and glare at PEACE.

RESENTMENT
And where have you been?

PEACE
Me? Oh, I was just at…

FEAR
We need all hands on deck here!

BURNOUT
Don’t you understand what we’re trying to do here?

PEACE
Well, actually, now that you mention…

RESENTMENT
You only care about yourself. You were probably off being selfish.

BURNOUT
Yea, you’re looking all refreshed and happy. Where’d you come from, the spa?

PEACE
The nursing home, actually.

RESENTMENT
You went without us?

PEACE
Well, I did mention that I was going. Like I said, I though it was a good idea.

BURNOUT
Well, what happened?

FEAR
Did they need anything?

RESENTMENT
Did you save them?

PEACE
What? No. We just, hung out. The folks there are really cool, actually.

BURNOUT
Wait. You just - hung out? Like, sat around?

FEAR
Did you organize any activities?

PEACE
Nope. I didn’t need to. They have a rec room, where they have board games and puzzles and stuff. Sometimes they have activities already planned.
FEAR

(gasps) So what do you do?

PEACE

Like I said. We just hung out. Talked a bit. Listened. They’re really nice.

BURNOUT

But it’s like, really really hard, right?

PEACE

Not really.

FEAR

What about your precious homework? I thought you didn’t have enough time.

PEACE

Oh, I made extra time for this by taking a break from songsters.

*BURNOUT, FEAR, and RESENTMENT gasp in terror “Whaaaat?!?!?”*

RESENTMENT

hisses Judassssssss.

PEACE

Ok, so can we talk about this for a minute? What’s going on with you?

BURNOUT

It’s the zeal. We have to keep the zeal.

FEAR

Remember the Youth Councils.

RESENTMENT

This is what zeal looks like, don’t you see?

PEACE

Let me tell you what I see. You three are a mess. You’re burned out, you’re a nervous wreck, and you look like you don’t even want to be in the same room with them. I think we may have missed the boat on something, because this isn’t what zeal is supposed to look like.

RESENTMENT

Well, what’s it supposed to look like?

PEACE

Remember the scripture verse?

FEAR

quickly, as if being tested Romans 12:9-13!
Very good. Do you remember what it says.

Never be lacking in zeal!

Ok, but let's start from the beginning. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Does it feel like you wanted to go do all these things out of sincere love?

I don't know. It seemed right at the time.

Sure. But was your zeal out of devotion to love well, or out of the need to do well?

You were being kinda showy about it.

And next it says “Honor one another above yourselves.”

Ah.

And yes, it says “Never be lacking in zeal,

BURNOUT, FEAR, and RESENTMENT start to gesture like they’re going to speak

buuuuuut keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Spiritual fervor - your spirit. You spirits sound like they’re ground into dust.

But it's so hard. What if we mess it up?

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Joyful in hope. Practice hospitality.

Our zeal should be for the things of God, and yes, that should spill out into what we do - but the zeal isn’t for what we do. We’re called to spiritual fervor, to love the Lord, and love our neighbors.
Do you think you could introduce us to your new nursing home friends next time you go?

PEACE
Sure. But I can do it right now too. Here, let’s take a selfie and I’ll send it to the group.

pulls out phone

The group pulls in around PEACE for a selfie.

FEAR
What do you mean?

PEACE
Well, they’re elderly - so… they’re all on Facebook.

BURNOUT/FEAR/RESENMENT
Ohhhhh.

PEACE
Everybody say zeal.

ALL
Zeal!

Lights out.