

**Memory Verse:**

***"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."***

***Zeal*** – enthusiastic and diligent devotion in pursuit of a cause, ideal, or goal. ***Fervor***.

***Fervor*** – intensity of emotion.

I've decided. Eagles fans are nuts. Absolutely nuts. Just listen to sports talk radio for a few minutes during the playoffs or regular season and you get the picture. For better or worse, Eagles fans are known all over the country for their fervor and zeal for their team (and their *lack* of fervor and zeal for opposing teams – especially the Cowboys!). I don't know this firsthand, but I believe it's really not in anyone's best interest to go to the Vet wearing the opposing teams jersey. (In fact, the Surgeon General actually has issued a warning in regards to that!). I think the new edition of Webster's Dictionary has the above definitions worded as follows:

***Zeal*** – enthusiastic and diligent devotion in pursuit of *The Philadelphia Eagles'* ideals and goals. ***Fervor***.

***Fervor*** – intensity of emotion felt by *Philadelphia Eagles Fans*.

Now, don't get me wrong. This is not a bad thing. This could probably be said about any sports team and its fans (GO BEARS!). Let's be honest, we all get fanatical about our sports teams. Sometimes our fanaticism leads to good clean fun. Other times however, it leads to violence (just watch a city after its team wins a championship – Chicago rioted numerous times after the **SIX** (is that a lot? ☺) Championships the Bulls won. If you are a sports fan, you know what I am talking about here (After all you stood up and screamed at the TV a total of 17 times during the last game)...and I am sure you know where I am going with this "devotional..."

✧ What "cause, ideal or goal" are you most "enthusiastically devoted" to? (Whether its sports or any number of other things).

✧ What makes you so zealous about this team or other thing? What is it about it that makes you so devoted to it?

✧ How does your zeal and fervor for a sports team or something else compare with your fervor and zeal for God. Look at the definitions again, do they describe your feelings about God. Do you show and feel more emotion towards God? (Be honest with yourself. If you are like me you probably don't like your answer.)

Most likely you realize along with me that we should be radically zealous and diligently devoted with much greater intensity of emotion when it comes God so much than our favorite sports team. However, you probably struggle with this as much as I do.

✧ Brainstorm some things about God that give us reason to be "fanatically devoted" to Him.

✧ What do you think someone who is fanatically devoted to God looks like today? Do you have a favorite example of this type of person from the Bible? What characterized their lives? What can you learn from them?

*Prayer: God make Jericho Valley Church a church that is characterized by radical devotion to the cause of Christ. Make me into someone who is zealous and fervent in my love for you and your cause.*