

STUDY NUMBER TWELVE - 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Are You Plugged In?

Key Verse 5:24: "Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it."

TEXT:

v.23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely (through and through); and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

v.24 Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it.

v.25 Brethren, be praying also for us.

v.26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

v.27 I am binding you with an oath by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brethren.

v.28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

INTRODUCTION:

(Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life
by Barbara Johnson)

The other day I ran across an old recording by the late Victor Buono, which included the following prayer by the tortured dieter:

Lord, my soul is ripped with riot,
Incited by my wicked diet.
"We are what we eat," said a wise old man.
Lord, if that's true, I'm a garbage can.
I want to rise on Judgment Day, that's plain,
But at my present weight I'll need a crane.
So grant me strength that I may not fall
Into the clutches of cholesterol.
May my flesh with carrot curls be sated,
That my soul may be polyunsaturated.
And show me the light that I may bear witness
To the President's Council on Physical Fitness.
And oleo margarine I'll never mutter
For the road to hell is spread with butter.
And cream is cursed, and cake is awful,
And Satan is hiding in every waffle.
Mephistopheles lurks in provolone,
The devil is in each slice of bologna.
Beelzebub is a chocolate drop
And Lucifer is a lollypop.
Give me this day, my daily slice
But cut it thin and toast it twice.
I beg upon my dimpled knees,
Deliver me from Ju Jubees
And when my days of trial are done
And my war with malted milks is won
Let me stand with the saints in heaven
In a shining robe, size thirty-seven!
I can do it, Lord, if You'll show to me
The virtues of lettuce and celery
If You'll teach me the evil of mayonnaise
The sinfulness of hollandaise
And pasta Milanese
And potatoes a la Lyonnaise,
And crisp fried chicken from the South.
Lord, if You love me, SHUT MY MOUTH!

pp. 127-28

ONE MORE TIME

A pastor, already having preached about an hour, noticed one of his members sleeping. Embarrassed, he motioned for an usher. The usher located the sleeping man and, taking a long stick, gently tapped him. The man snored on. The usher tapped him again, but a little firmer. The man continued to enjoy slumber.

By this time the usher's face was red with embarrassment and it was then that he soundly whacked the gentleman's head. The man slumped from the pew and onto the floor. Thinking he had really injured the man, the usher knelt at his side only to hear him mutter, "Hit me again. I can still hear him."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

MEMORABLE OCCASION

Widower to elderly girlfriend: "I seem to be getting a little forgetful. Did I ask you to marry me last night?"

Elderly girlfriend: "Well, someone did, but I've forgotten who it was!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

The Chicago Tribune of April 30, 1967, devoted a section to "The Phenomenon of Nature, Tornadoes." It reported:

They are the most destructive winds that sweep across the earth. Winds in the funnel have been reportedly estimated at 300-500 miles an hour. Tornadoes with their enormous power have lifted trains from tracks, doubled brick and steel structures and driven straw several inches into trees. They have lifted a house and set it down on another.

Christians can learn a real lesson from this. A straw under any other conditions can never be driven into a tree because it is much weaker than the tree. However, if it is engulfed and completely controlled by the tornado, the power of the tornado becomes that of the straw. The same is true of the believer when he has yielded to the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

2 Samuel 22:33

It is God who arms me with strength
and makes my way perfect.

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Zechariah 4:6

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

Acts 1:8

but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

The power is certainly available to us. It is just a question as to whether or not we are plugged into that power.

Perhaps you are a Christian and plugged into that power, but you have grieved the Holy Spirit by sin or quenched the Holy Spirit by failure to submit to His plan, and that has thrown the switch.

Hendricksen says:

In this passage the author points to the source of power for the believer. It is as if he wished to say, "In your strength you cannot fulfill the precepts which I have just issued."

v.23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely (through and through); and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul is going to PRAYER again, even as we were with him in prayer in chapters 1 and 3.

He began the letter with prayer:

1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3

We are always giving thanks to God for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and your labor of love and your perseverance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the presence of our God and Father;

In the middle of the letter he stops for prayer:

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Now may our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness in the presence of our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

He now concludes the letter with a prayer.

We will note here in this passage that he prays for
2 THINGS:

1. "MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU ENTIRELY (THROUGH AND THROUGH),"
2. "MAY YOUR SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED COMPLETE, WITHOUT BLAME AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

"NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU ENTIRELY (THROUGH AND THROUGH)."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

To encourage his readers Paul highlighted God's ability to produce peace. This is true in the gospel, it is true in relationship with each other, and His peace is an adequate resource for the future.

Ellicott says:

He on whom all depends, in contrast to them and the efforts they might be unable to make, the God of whom peace is a characterizing attribute.

Hogg and Vine say:

It was probably suggested to the apostle's mind in contrast with the disorders against which he had just warned them. Other titles of God similarly constructed are "the God of glory," "the God of patience," "the God of hope," "the God of all comfort," "the God of love," "the God of all grace." That is to say, God is the source of all these blessings.

Lange, in his commentary, says:

Without peace no sanctification [God is first the God of peace, before He be the God of sanctification.], without sanctification, there is no peace.
p. 101

Colossians 1:20

and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Romans 5:1

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Isaiah 32:17

The fruit of righteousness will be peace;
the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace
him whose mind is steadfast,
because he trusts in you.

Philippians 4:6, 7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with
thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God,
which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in
Christ Jesus.

Romans 16:20

And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under you feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Isaiah 57:20, 21

But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
which cannot rest,
whose waves cast up mire and mud.
"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

(Beyond the Mirror: Reflections on Death and Life
by Henri J. M. Nouwen)

I was surprised by my reaction. At so many moments in the past, I had experienced
immense interior anguish and turmoil. I had lived through agonizing feelings of rejection
and abandonment, and had known paralyzing fear and panic--often triggered by small
matters. I had been afraid of people and unknown forces. I knew myself as a very tense,
nervous, and anxious person. Yet now, in the face of death, I felt only peace, joy, and an
all-pervading sense of security.
p. 32

Here in these verses we are talking about God's part in the whole thing. What is God
going to do?

"NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU ENTIRELY
(THROUGH AND THROUGH)."

The word "HIMSELF" is emphasized in the Greek text.

It is God "HIMSELF" who is going to:

"SANCTIFY YOU ENTIRELY (THROUGH AND THROUGH)."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God himself is sanctifying them to himself in every area.

This is cultivated by communion with our Lord.

Lenski points out:

No nook or corner of your life is to be left where the peace of God does not penetrate. It is to reign undisturbed in every province of your being, not just a partial Christianity. This is all the way.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness in the presence of our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

In essence he is praying here for his #1 concern, and that is to "complete what is lacking in their faith."

A holiness of life would be completing what was lacking in their faith. There would be growth and truth.

Paul fully realized that these dear Christian people in Thessalonica would not fully be consecrated through and through until they stood in the presence of the Lord Jesus "when these vile bodies are transformed into glorious bodies which are like unto His."

Horne observes:

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." The apostle realizes that it is only through the power of God that His readers may be enabled to obey the injunctions just enjoined.

Hendricksen says:

This "through and through" is a rare word occurring only here in the New Testament. It is a plural adjective so that the literal meaning of the word in connection with nouns which it modifies is "you whole," that is, "the whole of each of you," "every part of each of you."

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Corinthians 6:17, 18

Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

1 Peter 1:16, 17

because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth;

1 John 3:3

And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

The 2ND PRAYER REQUEST in the 23rd verse is seen in the last phrase:

"AND MAY YOUR SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED COMPLETE,
WITHOUT BLAME AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Walvoord says:

The word "whole" here refers to the parts of our natural life: our spirit, our soul, and our body. Each of these 3 parts should be preserved wholly to God and be used by God. That means that everything we are belongs to the Lord: our physical bodies, our spiritual or intellectual life, and our psychological or natural life.

Barnhouse says:

Paul concludes the section with his 3-fold benediction concerning the 3 parts of man's being. He says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." There are those who suggest that man has only a duality to his makeup--body and soul. This text clearly indicates soul, spirit and body. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that "the word of God which is the sharp sword of the Spirit is capable of dividing between the soul and spirit," indicating a decided difference between these 2 facets of man's tri-part being. Paul prays that each of these "be preserved blameless." In verse 24 he comes back full circle to the faithfulness of the great God who elected them (cf. 1:4), called them and will keep them.

Ryrie says:

The word wholly is found only here in the New Testament and is made up of 2 words, "complete" and "end." Thus the ideas of wholeness and completion are included. This is entire sanctification, and it is the work of God. It is further explained by the prayer that the whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless. Some take this verse to prove the 3-fold nature of man (called trichotomy), but it is not best taken as a proof text for this. Paul is not analyzing man here (such an analysis would have to include "heart" and "mind") but he is praying for complete sanctification in aim and in extent, and it is the faithfulness of God which assures the answer to the prayer.
pp. 82-83

Ogilvie says:

Our spirit, pneuma, is the most sublime and distinctive part of our creative nature. Unlike all other creatures, we have been given the capacity to know, communicate with and receive the Spirit of God. This is basic in Paul's thought throughout his writings. The blemished spirit of man, distorted by the fall can be healed and recreated as a result of reconciliation through faith in Christ. Our spirit can be the post-resurrection home of the living Christ, the Holy Spirit.

The "soul," according to Paul, is the self-conscious seed of personality including intellect, emotion and will. He uses the Greek word psuche for our thinking, feeling, deciding capacities. The word is used extensively throughout the New Testament: 48 times as soul, 40 times as life, 3 times as mind and once as heart. I am convinced that Paul used it in this Thessalonian passage very much as the Deuteronomy passage uses heart for thought, emotions and will. The inclusion of both spirit and soul was a careless, redundant coupling of synonyms. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to claim the capacity to know and receive God's Spirit, as well become responsible in exercising their full intellectual, emotional and volitional potential as an expression of their faith.

The third part of the trichotomy of the substantive elements of our nature is the body, soma. Paul was concerned about the physical health and purity of the body. Our spirits and souls dwell in our bodies; and the Holy Spirit dwells in our spirits and utilizes our souls to inspire our thoughts, engender our emotions and guide our wills. For Paul, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He called for reverence and care of the body as holy, sacred, set apart to glorify God. "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price [Calvary]; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

pp. 112-13

J. Vernon McGee says:

Man is a triune being: body, soul (mind) and spirit. "Sanctify you wholly," not perfectly, but we are to reach a place of maturation. We should not continue to be babes in Christ, we should be growing to maturity.

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

As the Puritans claimed, "The man who feels not his need to be righteous is the man who needs it most desperately."

p. 60

Sometimes as I sit at my desk, I get very discouraged about what I don't know. The process of mourning about ignorance is not unlike what should be happening in my spiritual life. In sensing my need of God and staying continually aware of it, I draw closer to Him. When I do, I get upset about my sin. The light of His presence shows up the gravy stains in my life. But because I know God forgives my sin, I'm comforted. I know I am a forgiven sinner.

When we're worried about our sin, we don't honor God by thinking bad thoughts about it. We need to go to Him and simply experience His grace and comfort. That is blessedness.

That is why H. G. Stafford wrote:

My sin--oh, the bliss of this glorious tho't,
My sin--not in part, but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

p. 47

Fred Smith told about a couple who took in a messed-up young girl. She lived with them for a year and went through all kinds of problems. Every evening after supper they did something that ultimately made a difference in the girl's life. They had her repeat, "God does not love me because I am good. He loves me because I am precious, and I am precious because Christ died for me."

p. 48

"AND MAY YOUR SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED COMPLETE."

2 Corinthians 4:16

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

GETTING OLD GRACEFULLY

I have to admit to aging, because:

Now that I know my way around, I don't feel like going!

My forehead is getting higher and my energy lower.

My wife powders and I puff!

It takes me longer to rest than it does to get tired.

I'm at the stage where my passion has turned to
pensions.

I can still hear temptation whispering, "Why not? Why
not?"

But my body shouts back, "Why bother! Why bother!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

LEAVE ME . . . HOME

You know you're getting old when you don't care where your wife goes as long as you
don't have to go with her.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

EXHAUSTED

Bob Hope once said, "Today my heart beat 103,369 times, my blood traveled 168 million
miles, I breathed 23,400 times,

I inhaled 438 cubic feet of air, I ate 3 pounds of food, drank 2.9 pounds of liquid, I
perspired 1.43 pints, I gave off 85.3 degrees of heat, I generated 450 tons of energy,
I spoke 4,800 words, I moved 750 major muscles, my nails grew .00056 inches, my hair
grew .01717 inches, and I exercised 7 million brain cells. No wonder I'm tired."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

IT GOT UP AND WENT

How do I know my youth is all spent?
 My get-up-and-go has got-up and went.
 My joints are still and filled with pain.
 The pills that I take they give me no gain.
 I rub in the ointment like fury I do,
 Each pain when it leaves, comes back with two.
 But in spite of it all I am able to grin
 When I think of the places my get-up has been.
 Old age is golden I have heard it said,
 But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed--
 My "ears" on the dresser, my "teeth" in a cup,
 My "eyes" on the table until I wake up.
 Ere sleep comes each night I say to myself,
 "Anything else I should put on the shelf?"
 Yet I am happy to know as I close the door.
 My friends are the same as in days of yore.
 Since I have retired from life's competition
 Each day is filled with complete repetition.
 I get up every morning and dust off my wits
 Go pick up the paper and read the "o-bits."
 If my name isn't there I know I'm not dead;
 I get a good breakfast and go back to bed.
 The reason I know my youth is all spent--
 My get-up-and-go has got up and went.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

THE GOWN WITH THE SPLIT DOWN THE BACK

I was sittin' here mindin' my business,
 Kinda lettin' my mind go slack,
 When in comes a nurse with a bright, sunny smile.
 And a gown that was split down the back.

 "Take a shower," she said, "and get ready,
 And then jump into this sack."
 What she was really talkin' about
 Was the gown with the split down the back.

 "They're coming to do some tests," she said.
 They're gonna stretch me out on a rack,
 With nothin' twixt me and the cold, cruel world,
 But a gown that's split down the back!

It comes only to the knees in front,
In the sides there is also a lack,
But by far the greatest shortcoming
Is that bloomin' split down the back.

Whoever designed this garment,
 For humor had a great knack.
 But I fail to see anything funny
 'Bout a gown that's split down the back.

I hear them coming to get me,
 The wheels going clickety-clack.
 I'll ride through the halls on a table,
 In a gown with a split down the back!

When I get to Heaven it won't matter
 If my robe is white, red, or black,
 The only thing I will ask is, "Please,
 give me one without a split down the back."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(We Live Too Short and Die Too Long by Walter M. Bortz, II)

I saw vivid proof of this concept when I was a guest on The Donahue Show. My presence was strictly ancillary to the main business of the program, which was to highlight the lives of four centenarians, one of whom was having her 100th birthday on that day. The show was rollicking. The audience was bubbling, and Phil was in great high humor. Midway in the show, a salty old gal, 103 years young, from Rochester, New York, asked Phil if he had heard the joke about . . .
 Phil said, "Oh-oh. What am I into now?"

The joke went on:

A genteel old man was sitting reading a newspaper on a very crowded bus. His eye was caught by the bright dress of the pretty girl standing in front of him. Chivalrously he offered, 'I know I'm an old man, but I would be pleased if you would take my seat.'
 She politely demurred. The bus went its awkward jerky way until it stopped abruptly, and most of the standees were hurled into a mess.
 As they disentangled, the man offered again, "Well if you won't take my seat, why don't you just sit on my lap to decongest the crowding?"
 She smiled and perched herself on his lap. The bus bumped its way along its route. After a minute more or so, the man tapped the young lady on the shoulder and said, "Young lady, I think you had better stand up again because I am not as old as I thought I was."

pp. 89-90

(A Pretty Good Person: What It Takes to Live with Courage, Gratitude and Integrity by Lewis B. Smedes)

We often need this kind of courage as we get older, when our spicy juices turn to a sluggish syrup; when we feel in every joint a rusty resistance to healthy intentions; when our sexual drive is more memory than temptation; and we notice too often that too many of our old friends have died. It takes courage to celebrate life while numbering our days.
p. 31

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, speaking of the Spirit, says:

It is the highest and most unique part that enables us to commune with God. The soul is conscious of himself, the seat of personality. The body is the physical part through which the inner person expresses himself.

"AND MAY YOUR SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED COMPLETE, WITHOUT BLAME AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul was saying then that he desired that the Thessalonians would be kept blameless by God in their relationships with Him, in their inner personal lives and in their social contacts with other people.

The word "BLAMELESS" means "no legitimate grounds for accusation."

1 Thessalonians 2:10

You are witnesses, and [so is] God, as to how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we proved ourselves among you who are believing;

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, let us reason together,"
 says the Lord.
 "Though your sins are like scarlet,
 they shall be as white as snow;
 though they are red as crimson,
 they shall be like wool.

Ephesians 5:26, 27

that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Jude 24, 25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Philippians 2:12, 13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Romans 3:23, 24

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Paul now makes another reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus even as he has in every other chapter in this epistle.

Harold J. Ockenga, in commenting on this verse, points out:

Sanctification is a work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness.

Because of the admonitions in the 4th chapter this was a very deep concern of the apostle Paul that these Thessalonians would walk in a holy way.

If we were to summarize Paul's prayer we would just say that it is a prayer for BLAMELESS PRESERVATION.

Horne says:

The thought concerns preservation in the day of judgment itself, not unto that day. Then we shall be guarded by God himself. "Be preserved" is a passive voice, throwing the emphasis upon the fact that He is the One who shall do the keeping. God not only preserves us blameless until the parousia but He shall also do such in that day.

Ogilvie says:

Wholeness then, is the maximum development of our lives, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, volitionally, physically and relationally. It encompasses our relationships with God, self, others, and our life in the world. One last thing needs to be said: Nothing debilitates wholeness more than the emphasis on one of these aspects of our nature to the neglect of the rest. We all know people who are intent on one or more to the exclusion of the others. The Lord wants us to live fully in all dimensions without imbalance or distortion.

LOOK CLOSE

Warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted,
uphold the weak, be patient with all. --1 Thess. 5:14

Imagine what the game of bowling would be like if you couldn't see the pins you were trying to hit. In 1933, Bill Knox did just that--and bowled a perfect game.

In Philadelphia's Olney Alleys, Bill had a screen placed just above the foul line to obscure his view of the lane. His purpose was to demonstrate the technique of spot bowling, which involves throwing the ball at a selected floor mark on the near end of the lane. Like many bowlers, Bill knew that you can do better if you aim at a mark close to you that's in line with the pins. He proved his point with a perfect 300 game of 12 strikes in a row.

Spot bowling illustrates part of a wise approach to life. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the return of Christ, he reminded them that the ultimate goal of their salvation was to "be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:23). Paul taught them to focus their eyes on near actions that were in line with that goal. He urged them to comfort one another, help the weak, warn the wayward, pray without ceasing, and rejoice always. Then he added that we must do this in the power of Christ who is working in us (vv. 23-24).

Lord, help us to see what we can do today that will keep us focused on Your eternal goal for us. --M.R.D.II

Which admonitions in 1 Thessalonians 5 do I have difficulty obeying? Why? Am I trying to live in my own strength or am I depending on Christ?

WE KEEP ETERNITY'S GOAL IN SIGHT
BY WALKING DAILY IN THE LIGHT.

(From Our Daily Bread, August 4)

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved
blameless unto the coming of our Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

The National Safety Council reports that most accidents on the job happen for the following reasons: (1) Handling and lifting objects; (2) Falling--like tipping over in a chair or slipping on spilled coffee; (3) Getting hit by a falling object--often when protective equipment is not worn; (4) Being injured by machinery--usually due to a safety guard not in its proper place; (5) Stepping on or bumping into something.

The Christian life also involves many dangers. As a matter of fact, there's a striking parallel between the points listed above and the causes for spiritual accidents. For example, we hurt ourselves by trying to lift loads of responsibility in our own strength. Then too, we often fall into sin over little things. And all of us get hit daily by Satan's propaganda through the media. Then there are those occasions when we must go into high-risk situations where great spiritual peril exists. And finally, we get bruised from bumping into adverse circumstances because we don't follow God's way.

Today's Scripture tells us how to avoid becoming a spiritual casualty. We must do good (v. 15), rejoice in our faith (v. 16), pray about everything (v. 17), thank God in all circumstances (v. 18), let His Spirit control us (v. 19), take His Word to heart (v. 20), and steer clear of all forms of evil (v. 22). No wonder Paul could pray that our "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord." He himself had tested the effectiveness of these protective measures.

--D.J.D.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

--Newton

THOT: Exercising your faith is the best protection against being tripped up by your faults.

(From Our Daily Bread, April 4)

Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

TO KNOW GOD IS ENOUGH

When Elisabeth Elliot received news that her missionary husband had been martyred by the Auca Indians in Ecuador, she was shaken but not to the point of despair. She had appropriated the truths of the Bible and was walking in daily fellowship with the Lord. She also believed that her Heavenly Father had permitted this seeming tragedy for some good purpose. The confidence she had in the all-wise God enabled her to write a letter to a friend, saying, "Only in acceptance lies peace--not in forgetting nor in resignation nor in busyness. His will is good and acceptable and perfect."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

GOD'S QUIETING PEACE

Several years ago a submarine was being tested and had to remain submerged for many hours. When it returned to the harbor, the captain was asked, "How did the terrible storm last night affect you?" The officer looked at him in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!" The sub had been so far beneath the surface that it had reached the area known to sailors as "the cushion of the sea." Although the ocean may be whipped into huge waves by high winds, the waters below are never stirred. A. T. Pierson said, "The peace of God is that eternal calm which lies far too deep in the praying, trusting soul to be reached by any external disturbances."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Let us take a brief moment to reflect on the present condition of our SPIRIT, SOUL and BODY:

1. The SPIRIT points us toward God. God communicates to us through our spirit.

Ephesians 2:1, 2

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

2. Our SOUL refers to ourself. Our soul is the expression of the spirit.

Luke 1:46

And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,

Whereas the Spirit points upward toward God, and the soul points inward to the self,

3. the BODY points outward to the world.

Romans 12:1, 2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

This glorious transformation that has been spoken of in this 23rd verse will be consummated at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, [if He should appear], we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

v.24 Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it.

Whereas we have the WISH in verse 23,

we have the WARRANTY in verse 24.

That which is described in verse 23 is totally impossible to be accomplished from a human perspective, but from God's point of view, He is not only the One who is calling us, but He is the One who is also going to do it.

This is the KEY VERSE to our study for we see here the secret to living the victorious Christian life.

God is not only calling us to a holiness of life but He has made possible for us to have the Savior resident within our lives and also the power of the Spirit to live a life of holiness which is acceptable in His sight.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The same God who calls a Christian will perform this by the Holy Spirit who indwells him. God is faithful to bring to completion the work He has begun in believers. God does not save a person by grace and then leave him alone to work out his Christian growth by works. As God calls and justifies by grace He sanctifies by grace too.

The word "FAITHFUL" is in the emphatic position in the Greek text and we can say, "Yes, God is faithful."

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie,
nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.
Does he speak and then not act?
Does he promise and not fulfill?

Psalms 117:1, 2

Praise the Lord, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.
For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
Praise the Lord.

Lamentations 3:22, 23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

J. Vernon McGee says:

You can depend upon God.

Horne says of this verse:

The absolute use of "DO" is very striking and sets in bold relief the doing which accompanies His calling. God, in addition to being a Caller, is also a Doer. He who initially calls us into His kingdom will perform through all of us His holy will. He will bring to completion that which he has begun.

Walvoord says:

No one can sanctify himself. God has to set us apart as holy to himself, and the great truth here is: "Faithful is He who is going to do this."

Barnes says:

That is, your sanctification after all depends on Him and as He has begun a work of grace in your hearts, you may depend on His faithfulness to complete it.

Ockenga says:

The encouragement to such sanctification is given in the words "Faithful is He who calleth you, who will also do it." God puts the standard before us and the desire in us and provides the means for us to achieve it. He will not mock us, disappoint us or frustrate us. God now calls us to sanctify ourselves by consecration, confession and commitment that we may be holy both now and when He comes. God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill us, enable us and to perform this work in us. "Therefore, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God that works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Lenski says:

"Faithful" equals we may trust him. That is why he is here named "he who calls you," for why this call if he is not faithful, if we cannot depend upon him to do this, i.e., to sanctify and preserve.
p. 368

Stedman says:

Finally Paul ends his letter with a benediction of peace. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will do it. God is able to minister to the whole person--spirit, soul and body,--and He will. Full provision has already been made. Let us utilize it. Rest on his faithfulness, choose to obey and He will give you power to perform. But He will not give you power to perform until you make the choice to obey.

Ogilvie says:

Faithfulness describes the Lord's consistency, integrity and punctuality in intervening in our lives to bring growth in our total nature through all of life's ups and downs.

"FAITHFUL IS THE ONE WHO IS CALLING YOU."

John 11:28

And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here, and is calling for you."

The question is: Calling us to what?

1. He is calling us to a RELATIONSHIP:

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

2. He is calling us to SUFFER:

1 Peter 2:21

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Isaiah 48:10, 11

See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this.
How can I let myself be defamed?
I will not yield my glory to another.

3. We are called to SACRIFICE:

Luke 9:23

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Romans 12:1, 2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

4. He is calling us to SERVE:

2 Corinthians 4:5

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

5. He is calling us to SANCTIFICATION:

1 Peter 1:15, 16

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

6. He is calling us to GLORIFICATION:

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Because the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the call of the trumpet sounded by God's command; and the dead in Christ shall be raised first.

Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Maybe you can sense that He is calling you just now. Would you respond with the words of Charlotte Elliott:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee;
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot;
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am though tossed about,
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears, within, without;
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea all I need in Thee to find;
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe;
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come.

"FAITHFUL IS THE ONE WHO IS CALLING YOU, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT."

The 2 KEY WORDS in the verse are the words:

1. "CALLING"
2. "DOING."

John 11:43

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

When our text says, "WHO ALSO WILL DO IT," we ask the question:

DO WHAT?

Psalm 138:8

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your love, O Lord, endures forever--
do not abandon the works of your hands.

1.First, HE WILL WASH OUT MY RECORD LIKE THE WAVES UPON THE SAND:

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

John 8:10, 11

And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"

And she said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more."

2.Secondly, HE WILL SET ME FREE:

John 8:32

and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Galatians 5:1

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

3.The third thing is, HE PROVIDES STRENGTH FOR VICTORY:

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Isaiah 40:31

but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

Colossians 1:11

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

4.HE WILL COME AND LIVE IN ME:

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

5.HE WILL SUSTAIN ME IN SUFFERING:

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

6.HE WILL MAKE ME MORE AND MORE LIKE CHRIST:

Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:12, 13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

HABITS--GOOD AND BAD

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Proverbs 16:25

The dictionary defines a habit as "an established course, of action or behavior." All habits begin with a single act, but usually we don't expect them to become a permanent part of our character.

Across the lawn at the rear of our house is a diagonal path extending from the garden gate to the sidewalk. The only deviation in it is the bend around the flowerbed. This strip of ground has been packed down by hundreds of repeated footsteps, and not a spear of grass grows on it. It's the record of a **habit**. The trail is a shortcut worn down by our grandchildren going from home to school and back again. Years ago one of them saw the advantage of this step-saving way, and it became a regular route day after day. Others followed the example, and now everyone **habitually** takes the same shortcut.

In this case, of course, using the garden path is a harmless habit. But bad practices are formed in the same way. For instance, the poor alcoholic can remember when he took his first step on the evil road which led him ever downward. There was a time when he could have said, "NO!" But his continual yielding to temptation not only formed a path but a rut that daily became deeper and deeper. This is true of every habit. It seems so innocent at the beginning, but if it is the wrong thing to do, it will bind us and drag us down.

How important to establish good patterns of life such as prayer and Bible reading. **This will keep us out of sin's rut.** Don't forget, the **first step** is the important one. You can't repeat what you haven't done before. --M.R.D.

Bad habits start with just one deed
So innocent and small;
But if God's Word you daily heed,
'Twill spare you from them all.

--D.J.D.

THOT: The best way to BREAK a habit is to DROP it! -Grant

(From Our Daily Bread, September 5)

"FOR THIS I HAVE JESUS"

In an evangelistic meeting in Ireland the speaker was explaining what it means to abide in Christ and to trust Him completely in every trial. Concluding his message, he repeated several times, "It means that in every circumstance you can keep on saying, 'For this I have Jesus.'" The meeting was then opened for testimonies. The young lady who had been at the piano stood up and said, "I have to leave shortly so I'd like to be the first to testify. Just a few minutes ago I was handed this telegram. It reads, 'Mother is very ill; take train home immediately.' When I saw those words, I knew that tonight's message was meant just for me. My heart looked up and said, 'For this I have Jesus.' Instantly a peace and strength flooded my soul." After pausing a moment, she continued, "I have never traveled very far alone, but for this I have Jesus. And for all the strain and suspense that goes with the thought of Mother's severe illness, I praise God that for this too I have Jesus."

Three or four weeks later the evangelist received a letter from the same woman. It read, "Thank you again for the message you gave that day. Life has become an uninterrupted psalm of victory, for I have come to realize that no matter what life brings, for this I have Jesus."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Since it is the divine plan for Him not only to call you but also to do it, will you let Him?

For Jacob, he wrestled at Pennial; and for Jacob, it was a crisis with Benjamin. When he let go, God began to work.

Would you not surrender, submit, and give it all to Jesus? Your work, your marriage, your kids--just let go of the whole package and turn it over to Him.

The question that we are asking in this final study in making our SPIRITUAL CHECKUP is:

ARE YOU PLUGGED IN?

Is the power of God flowing freely through your life?

Does the Holy Spirit have control of you?

Does He find a clean, clear channel through which He can operate?

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Here then is the secret to the believer's source of power. That is, to recognize the fact that God does not expect us to live an effective Christian life, but that He is faithful, and He is willing to live that supernatural life through us to bring glory and praise to Himself.

The big question that faces us is: Are we willing to be hooked up to that supernatural power that is available to us in order that this life might be effectively displayed in our human bodies?

2 Corinthians 2:14-17

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

Colossians 2:9, 10

For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

When Grover Cleveland neared the end of his life, he lamented, "I have tried so hard to do the right." We may sometimes share Cleveland's thoughts; but as we think about what Jesus had to say about righteousness, we have to conclude that we will never be able to add up the figures or get the ball over the plate. But if we sense that bankruptcy, we are in good shape. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." We can settle matters with God through Jesus Christ.

The law should drive us back to grace; the goals should drive us back to God. And knowing the goals, we see our need of grace; and understanding grace, we discover what it means to hunger and thirst for the kind of righteousness that God gives those who trust Him. That righteousness is not just conforming our behavior to the letter, but conforming our hearts to the Spirit.

pp. 128-29

(Cages of Pain by Gordon Aeschliman)

We need to know that whereas our culture and church have often left us in that lonely place of failure, of having disappointed them and failed to meet their standards of performance, God looks on us with pleasure. God loves our deeds-from-the-heart and, yes, is showing off pictures of you to the angels on a galaxy-wide TV screen. You never made it on 700 Club--so what?

p. 74

The hymn writer was right when she wrote the words:

"Channels Only"

How I praise Thee, precious Savior,
That Thy love laid hold of me;
Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me
That I might Thy channel be.

Empty that Thou shouldst fill me,
A clean vessel in Thy hand;
With no power but as Thou givest,
Graciously with each command.

Witnessing Thy power to save me,
Setting free from self and sin;
Thou who boughtest to possess me,
In Thy fulness, Lord, come in.

Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit,
 Hearts that full surrender know;
 That the streams of living water
 From our inner man may flow.

Channels only, blessed Master,
 But with all Thy wondrous power,
 Flowing through us Thy canst use us
 Everyday and every hour.

v.25 Brethren, be praying also for us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

In these final verses we have 3 more exhortations and the benediction.

There were 19 COMMANDS in our previous study and now in verses 25, 26, and 27 we have COMMANDS 20, 21, AND 22.

The first word in the emphatic position is the word "BRETHREN." The word occurs in:

verse 25,

verse 26,

and verse 27.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The word occurs 15 times in the epistle.

Here Paul is making a request of them. He is asking them to pray for him.

He begins the letter by telling them that he is praying for them, and now in conclusion, he is asking them to return the favor by praying for him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary reminds us:

This request is in the present tense and could be translated "keep on praying for us."

2 Corinthians 3:5

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

Barclay observes:

But there is one very lovely saying here: "Brothers," said Paul, "pray for us." Surely it is a wonderful thing that the greatest saint of them all should feel that he was strengthened by the prayer of the humblest Christian.

Once his friends came to congratulate a great statesman who had been elected to the highest office which this country could offer him. His answer was, "Don't give me your congratulations, but give me your prayers."

For Paul, prayer was a golden chain in which he prayed for others and others prayed for him.

Ockenga says:

The ministry of the church is dependant upon prayer. Paul had very definite needs: physically, he was in constant danger; and he suffered persecution, beatings, shipwreck, robbery, imprisonment and illness. Mentally, he had times of depression and discouragement because of the difficulties which he faced in his preaching and because of the hostility of his fellow countrymen who tried to pervert his teaching. Spiritually, he faced the attacks of the devil.

The needs of ministers are no different today. Spiritually, they need to be supported by prayer so that they may have adequate devotion, enlightenment, empowerment and efficiency in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray that they are soul-winners, witnesses, reformers and teachers. Physically, they need strength to meet incessant demands which are made upon them. And mentally they need to be kept alert to the new currents of thought and to interpret Christianity in the face of these intellectual movements.

Barnes says:

He was a man of like passions as others, pliable to the same temptations, engaged in an arduous work, often called to meet with opposition and exposed to peril and want, he peculiarly needed the prayers of the people of God. A minister, surrounded as he is by temptations, is in great danger if he has not the prayers of his people. Without those prayers he will be likely to accomplish little in the cause of his Master. His own devotions in the sanctuary will be formal and frigid and the word which he preaches will be likely to come from a cold and heavy heart and to fall also on cold and heavy hearts. There is no way in which a people can better advance the cause of piety in their own hearts than by praying much for their minister.

Walvoord says:

Verse 25 is a very understandable exhortation. Paul writes, "Brethren, pray for us. We need prayer." It takes prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit to accomplish any true work for God.

Horne says:

It is an impressive feature indeed to note that the greatest saint of them all felt it necessary to be strengthened by the continued prayers of these lowly Christians.

Hogg and Vine point out:

Paul and his co-workers, their spiritual vigor, gifts and experience notwithstanding, shared the common need of the sanctifying and preserving power of God, and hence, were not independent of the prayers of the saints.

Ellicott points out:

The prayer was doubtless intended to include reference both to his own personal state and to the general success of his apostolic work.

Lange says:

In the church militant, one member should help another and may well seek that other's help.

SHUT IN BUT NOT SHUT OUT

Brethren, pray for us.

--1 Thessalonians 5:25

One of the greatest ministries a Christian can have is that of praying for the needs of others. That's why a person who is forced to rest after an accident or illness never needs to feel useless or uninvolved in the Lord's work. A unique opportunity of Christian service becomes open to him or her --to uphold family, friends, church, pastor, and missionaries in prayer.

In his book Keep On Keeping On, Harold L. Fickett, Jr. told about his call on a woman who had suffered a severe heart attack. Confined to her home, she was very discouraged. She complained to Pastor Fickett about her uselessness. Oh, how she wanted to do some meaningful work for the Lord! Fickett told her kindly that in her new situation she could minister with power. "You have time on your hands," he said. "You have no place to go. You can use your time in praying for God's servants all over the world. Begin by remembering me as your pastor before the throne of God, and then pray for all of the Christian workers you know." The woman followed her pastor's advice, and she found joy and a new sense of purpose in life.

Prayer for others, especially God's servants, is a much-needed ministry, and it's something every Christian can do. There's no reason a shut-in has to feel shut out from the Lord's work. --R.W.D.

There's a holy, high vocation
Needing workers everywhere;
It's the highest form of service.
It's the ministry of prayer.

--Woodworth

THE BEST WAY TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE FOR GOD
IS TO INTERCEDE WITH GOD FOR PEOPLE.

(From Our Daily Bread, June 4)

v.26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

Whereas COMMAND #20 in verse 25 was:

"Brethren, be praying also for us,"

now COMMAND #21 in verse 26 is:

"GREET ALL THE BRETHREN WITH A HOLY KISS."

"A KISS" in Paul's time was an expression of respect and affection. It was a token of homage and submission.

I think this can be seen in the KISS OF JUDAS at the betrayal of Christ.

I will always remember my sons during their growing up days, saying that, "This verse meant that brothers should shake hands and pat each other on the back."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

It is an outward physical expression of true Christian love. It is holy, not passionate or fleshly. In our Western culture, an embrace, a pat on the back, a handshake is acceptable.

Phillips paraphrases it by saying:

"Give a handshake all 'round among the brotherhood."

Hendricksen points out:

It was holy because it was a symbol of spiritual oneness in Christ. It was, moreover, a seal of Christian affection, the feeling which members of one and the same spiritual household cherish for one another.

pp. 142-43

Horne says:

The sense is: "Convey my greetings to all with a kiss that is holy," as a token of

friendship and brotherly love. The modern counterpart would be the handshake.

J. Vernon McGee says:

This is a commandment too, just make sure it is a holy kiss. In our culture and with our customs, a warm handshake will do.

v.27 I am binding you with an oath by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brethren.

This is COMMAND #22, the final command in this 5th chapter.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The words "I am binding you with an oath" are suggesting God would discipline them if they disobeyed.

There are 2 POSSIBILITIES as to why he feels it necessary to make this kind of statement:

1. There might be problems in the Thessalonian church that we are not aware of.
2. Paul might be speaking from the point of view that he is aware of divine inspiration in this writing.

Maybe both of these things are possible.

Hendricksen suggests:

This solemn charge or adjuration is not surprising. The contents of the epistle is important, both with respect to teaching and with respect to admonition. It is very well possible that some of the disorderly persons, upon hearing that a letter from the missionaries had arrived and suspecting that it contained some admonitions intended especially for them, might wish to be absent when it was read aloud to the congregation. So Paul stresses the fact that by all means every person in the church must hear the letter! The adjuration implies a threat of divine punishment if this be not done. Yet, the charge contains no bitterness, note the term of endearment: brothers.

p. 144

Lenski says:

We naturally wonder why Paul should use this strong final adjuration. In the first place, it demands that the letter be read to the congregation, for this is what "all the brethren" means. It was not to pass from hand to hand so that it would not reach some. That too is why the passive is used. In the second place, this letter was not carried to Thessalonica by Silvanus and Timothy but by an ordinary messenger and would be handed to some Christian, perhaps not even to an elder in Thessalonica.

Hogg and Vine point out:

This word for "I bind you by an oath" only occurs here in the New Testament.

They also make the following comment on the phrase "TO ALL THE BRETHREN":

"To all," that is to say, without distinction, limitation or exception. There is no secret code in Christianity, no esoteric mystery for the initiated few. All God's spiritual gifts are intended for all God's children. The apostle had a message from God to deliver to all the saints and each individual believer was personally and directly responsible to God for his own hearing and understanding of that message and for his own obedience to it.

Barnes points out:

Injunctions of this kind occurring in the epistles look as if the apostles regarded themselves as under the influence of inspiration and as having authority to give infallible instructions to the churches.

(Charismatic Chaos by John F. MacArthur, Jr.)

The canon is not still open. God's Word, made of the Old and New Testaments, is one unique miracle. It came together over a period of fifteen hundred years. More than forty men of God, prophets and apostles, wrote God's words--every jot and tittle--without error and in perfect harmony. No hymn is worthy to be compared to Scripture. No modern prophecy or word of wisdom is even in the same realm with God's eternal Word. Heaven and earth will pass away; God's Word will abide (Matt. 5:18).
p. 54

Sun Myung Moon, self-styled messiah from Korea, claims he is a divine messenger from God. Moon says he has the ultimate truth--not from Scripture, not from literature, and not from any person's brain. According to Moon, if his "truth" contradicts the Bible (and it does), then the Bible is wrong.
p. 81

v.28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Paul ends the letter as he began.

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

It is "THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" which is so important; and it is the grace which is manifested through His death, burial and resurrection which makes us a new creation in the Savior.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary calls verse 28 the BENEDICTION:

Paul's concern was that his readers experience and enjoy this grace. All that one has in Christ is due to His grace.

Walvoord says:

As Paul wrote this to the Thessalonian Christians, so may the grace of God, His favor, His enablement, be made real in all our lives.

(Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses by James W. Moore)

Have you heard about the minister who dreamed that he had died and was trying to get into heaven? When he approached the gates, Saint Peter told him he needed 100 points to get in.

Proudly the minister said, "Well, I was a minister for 43 years."

"That's fine," said Peter. "That's worth one point."

"One point? Is that all?" cried the minister. "Just one point for 43 years of service?"

"Yes, that's correct," answered Peter.

"Well, I visited shut-ins."

"One point."

"I worked with young people."

"One point."

"I developed a number of fine Scout programs."

"One more point. That makes four points. You need 96 more."

"Oh, no!" said the minister, in a panic. "I feel so helpless, so inadequate. Except for the grace of God, I don't have a chance!"

Saint Peter smiled and said, "Grace of God--96 points! Come on in!"

p. 20

(Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life
by Barbara Johnson)

JUSTICE IS WHEN WE GET WHAT WE DESERVE.
MERCY IS WHEN WE DON'T GET WHAT WE DESERVE.
BUT GRACE IS WHEN WE GET WHAT WE DON'T DESERVE.
p. 194

A TIME TO FORGET

The great preacher of the 19th century Henry Ward Beecher said: "We have passed through one more year. One more long stage in the journey of life, with its ascents and descents and dust and mud and rocks and thorns and burdens that wear the shoulders, is done. The old year is dead. Roll it away. Let it go. God, in His providence, has brought us out of it. It is gone; or rather its evil is gone; its good remains. The evil has perished, and the good survives. And now we stand on the beginning of the next, the new. By (God's) grace we have been what we have been; and by His grace we shall have our experience in days to come."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Have you experienced the peace that "the God of peace" wants to give you?

LESSON #2: Salvation, sanctification and glorification are all God's responsibility.

LESSON #3: Surrender, submission and obedience allow God to work unhindered in producing holiness in our lives.

LESSON #4: We are going to be presented without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON #5: God is faithful and will fulfill His promises.

LESSON #6: You can depend upon God.

LESSON #7: He is calling you to a relationship, to suffer, to sacrifice, to serve, to sanctification and ultimate glorification.

LESSON #8: When He comes into our lives He washes out our record, sets us free, gives us strength for victory, lives in us, sustains us in suffering and makes us more like Christ.

LESSON #9: Paul recognized the power and potential of prayer in God's program.

We have now reached the end of our journey through the epistle of 1 Thessalonians. During our study we have been making a SPIRITUAL CHECKUP.

We have raised the questions:

1. Did You Make the Right Start?
2. Are You a Phony?
3. Has Satan Hindered You?
4. Are You discouraged by the Problems?
5. Are You an Encouragement to Others in Your Walk with the Lord?
6. How Is Your Prayer Life?
7. Have You Gotten Dirty?
8. Is Your Life a Witness?
9. Are You Afraid of Death?
10. Is the Future Foggy?
11. Have You Tried This?
12. Are You Plugged In?

Perhaps you have been made aware of your need for salvation. In this SPIRITUAL CHECKUP you realize you have never come into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. May I urge you at this time to respond to Jesus Christ by faith.

Perhaps in the SPIRITUAL CHECKUP you realize the desperate need for sanctification, for growth and holiness and a holy walk. Would you now allow the Spirit of God to search your heart and make decisions of commitment with regard to the things the Lord has been saying to you in this series of studies?

Know and recognize that it is Satan's desire:

with regard to SALVATION to keep you out of the family,

with regard to SANCTIFICATION to keep you CHILDISH and CARNAL.

It is God's desire with regard to salvation for you to be in His family.

His desire for you with regard to sanctification is that you might be maturing in Christ and that fruit is being produced through you.

ENTERING THE DESIRED HAVEN

A beautiful girl lay dying of an incurable disease. Although a Christian, she was filled with fear. When her pastor arrived, she cried in anxiety, "Oh, Pastor, I am desperately afraid of what's ahead. I feel as if I am being thrust out of my happy young life into the darkness. I can't see anything, and my faith is so weak I can't seem to believe anything! What shall I do?" The preacher's grave, strong face grew very tender as he looked at her.

He knew she was a true child of God and that Satan was attacking Jenny in her final moments. He said, "A year ago there came into your sister's household a sweet, lovely baby. Do you remember all that was done for her? Everyone in the family tried to think of something they could do for that tiny bit of helpless humanity. Dainty dresses and a lacy bassinet were made ready before she came. Her food was specially formulated, and the love that was displayed to assure her comfort was wonderful to behold. That is the kind of care we give to a new life when it comes into this world. Well, do you suppose that God is any less loving than we? In that Home He is calling you to enter, He too has arranged everything necessary for your happiness and to make you feel perfectly at ease!"

A light broke over the face of the dying girl. "I see what you mean," she said. "He went to 'prepare a place' for ME!" Her last moments were spent in peace, and there was a smile upon her lips as she entered the "desired haven."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

THE PEACE-FILLED LIFE

When H. B. Macartney, an Australian pastor, visited Hudson Taylor in China, he was amazed at the missionary's serenity in spite of his many burdens and his busy schedule. Macartney finally mustered up the courage to say, "You are occupied with millions, I with tens. Your letters are pressingly important, mine of comparatively little value. Yet I am worried and distressed while you are always calm. Tell me, what makes the difference?" Taylor replied, "I could not possibly get through the work I have to do without the peace of God which passes all understanding keeping my heart and mind." Macartney later wrote, "He was in God all the time, and God was in him. It was the true abiding spoken of in John 15."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Ray Stedman says:

There is only a limited time of testing to go through now. It cannot go on forever. I often think of the motto that used to be prominent in many homes: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last." I would like to change one word in that verse: "Only what's done BY Christ will last." That is where the apostle leaves us, with the coming of our Lord and the resources God has provided so that we may live in a new and different way in the midst of this modern age.

Ian Thomas, in his book If I Perish, I Perish, says:

Lord Jesus, I can't but you can, and that is all I need to know. Let's go!

STUDY #12 - 1 Thessalonians

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Have you experienced the peace that "the God of peace" wants to give you?

LESSON #2: Salvation, sanctification and glorification are all God's responsibility.

LESSON #3: Surrender, submission and obedience allow God to work unhindered in producing holiness in our lives.

LESSON #4: We are going to be presented without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON #5: God is faithful and will fulfill His promises.

LESSON #6: You can depend upon God.

LESSON #7: He is calling you to a relationship, to suffer, to sacrifice, to serve, to sanctification and ultimate glorification.

LESSON #8: When He comes into our lives He washes out our record, sets us free, gives us strength for victory, lives in us, sustains us in suffering and makes us more like Christ.

LESSON #9: Paul recognized the power and potential of prayer in God's program.