

A Practical Study of 1 Thessalonians

Delighting The Heart of God “Learning to Bring Pleasure to God”

Question Number Twelve – Are You Plugged In? – 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

I asked the question in study #12 in this remaining verses that we have:

Are You Plugged In?

You know it's so easy to have a study like this and to make all kinds of great commitments to look at the prescription that's been diagnosed for the Spiritual Check-up and to go down the hill and forget who's doing it.

It's almost like I make a determination that I'm going to do something and then I go down the hill and realize that that isn't going to get done.

It's HIS strength that's made perfect in our weakness.

“I can do all things through CHRIST who strengthens me.”
(Philippians 4:13)

And it's getting plugged in, it's getting hooked up to His divine resources that gives us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You know probably one of the hardest areas of life for folks who get up around 40 and above is to control the diet. It's like you can make all kinds of commitments about weight loss and what you're going to do and then sooner than you care to talk about, there's somebody's serving a rich dessert, there's someone else that does something and you're a victim. And so you say "Oh well, shoot! Let's go ahead and I'll just put the blimp back in the hanger." You know, I mean we kind of are just content to go along with that.

I love this little piece by Victor Buono that was a prayer from a tortured dieter. This was just too classic to pass up.

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

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

You know the frustration is there isn't it?

Oh I'm sure you've probably had some of those feelings this week.

When we're talking about STRENGTH, the Scripture reveals quite a number of portions that talk about that. And I want to meditate on that for just a second before we break into the verses.

2 Samuel 22:33

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

Acts 4:31

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

Zechariah 4:6

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

Acts 1:8

you shall receive power ...

The question is not is there power enough available. The question is, is the switch on? And is the power flowing through your life?

If you're grieving the Holy Spirit by sin or quenching Him by saying "No" you have flipped the switch and you're going to go down the hill the same way you came up. But if you really, in your heart of hearts, have been examined this week in a number of areas that are so crucial and critical, then it's time now to really surrender.

It's time now to turn it over to Him. The power is available. It's just a question of whether or not we're plugged in to that particular power.

I loved what Hendricksen said in his little Greek commentary. He says:

In this passage [that we're looking at right now] 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."

(source unknown)

So what's he saying? He's saying in your own strength you can't do those 20 things we talked about last time. When he issued those commands and he gave that prescription, you think you can do that on your own? You know you've got another thing coming.

If you think you can post those and by your own holy determination and your consistency, you're going to do that—forget it.

You're going to be a drop-out quicker than you can think.

But, if you recognize that His strength is made perfect in weakness, then you're ready and you're prepared for the spiritual battle.

Now pick up with me at verse 23.

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.

“Now”—okay, what do we got? We've got the word “Now” again. Here is your last division.

And he is breaking into PRAYER. When the little word “may” is there, it always indicates he's praying.

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

Now we have already noted that he began the letter in prayer in 1 Thessalonians 1:2 and 3.

In the middle of it we made a study of prayer as we looked at those three petitions in chapter 3, verses 11-13.

And now he concludes it with a prayer.

And he prays for TWO THINGS:

1. “may the God of peace Himself sanctify you”—or make you holy—“(through and through);”

You see what we’re saying already?

He is the one who brings this about.

He’s the one who accomplishes, as a result of His work within us.

Notice He is called “the God of peace” and He is that.

Colossians 1:20

He has made peace through the blood of His cross; ...

Romans 5:1

When we are justified by faith, we have peace ...

And we have already learned in:

Isaiah 32:17

The work of righteousness shall be peace; ...

And we know in:

Philippians 4:7

the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,
shall guard our hearts and our minds through Christ
Jesus.

And so Yes, it is “the God of peace” who is going to do a good
work in our lives and He’s going to “sanctify us entirely
(through and through).”

Now the emphasis is on the word “Himself.”

It is “the God of peace Himself.” He is the one who does the
sanctifying in every area.

Now in essence, He is praying here for his number one
concern and that is to supply what is lacking in their faith.
And that is that God will have the freedom to work in their
lives.

Now are you willing to say that today?

“Lord, I can’t but You can. Let’s go!

I am going DEPENDENT. I’m going TRUSTING. I’m going
fully COOPERATING. I’m going with no greater desire than
to express this by an obedient heart.”

Are you willing to say that?

You know I guarantee it'll revolutionize your life as you go down the hill.

You see, holiness of life is the one thing that is #1 priority as far as God is concerned. And when you express that desire and you surrender to Him, then He begins to produce that in our lives.

I would give you:

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 here upon earth;

"Now may the God of peace sanctify you" holy—make you holy, set you apart—" (through and through)."

Second prayer request:

2. "and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now I'm not going to yield to the myriad of texts that take 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as the proof that every right-thinking

person is a Trichotomist rather than a Dichotomist.

Now I've used some big words that blew you away and it's in the afternoon and you just threw it into neutral because you don't want to learn about that.

What is a Trichotomist? He's a person that believes that man is a tri-part being—body, soul and spirit.

And then you've got the others who believe only Dichotomy—body, soul.

That is not the issue. So many times we wage theological battles on texts like this and miss the whole message.

Just like last time when we were at chapter 4 on the Rapture. That's really comforting to a Christian about the promises of the future with regard to physical death.

This passage is teaching us what is involved in our being set apart and being made holy.

If he were really talking about the whole person, he'd have to talk about the mind and the heart and all of the rest of it rather than just these three parts.

So this proves no point whatsoever with regard to these great battles.

I would prefer rather for you to notice that it says “and may

your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That word that I have translated “be preserved complete” is only used here in the New Testament. And that is the word which could be translated “wholly, totally.”

Ryrie says of this word:

It’s only here and it’s made up of 2 words, “complete” and “end.” Thus the idea 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.

pp. 82-83 (paraphrased, original source unknown)

In other words, every part is preserved for the glory of God and He permeates every area of our lives.

Now we understand the SPIRIT. That’s the part of us that responds to God.

We understand the BODY. That’s the part that’s starting to decay and is starting to fall apart—more for some of us than others.

And then you’ve got the SOUL. That’s the intellectual part of us. That’s the earth-bound part of us.

In Second Corinthians 4:16 Paul says:

2 Corinthians 4:16

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

It is fun to get old, isn't it? And to be so forgetful and have such a hard time just remembering things in life.

I found a wonderful little piece the other day that kind of made me laugh. I don't know if it was just due to the fact that I'm getting older and I'm having a hard time, but there was a widower who was speaking to his elderly girlfriend and he said:

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

[His elderly girlfriend said]: "Well, someone did, but I've forgotten who it was!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Somebody said it this way:

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)

Another guy said it this way:

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)

Oh man! Oh!

I love this little piece. I found this the other day. It’s called “The Gown With the Split Down the Back.” You know everybody’s got to go to the hospital as they start aging:

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)

Yes—aging!

The body it's falling apart. But thank God the "spirt and soul
and body [are going to] be preserved complete, without blame

at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And yes, He’s doing a good work in each of our lives.

Now, when we talk about those three parts—let’s just spend just a minute.

It’s the “SPIRIT” that points us toward God. It’s the “spirit” God communicates to us through.

“The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they’re foolishness unto him, neither can he know them” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

And then our “SOUL” refers to our self. It is expression of the “spirit.” And Mary said:

“My soul exalts the Lord” (Luke 1:46).

And then we know the “BODY” points toward the world. That’s what people see. That’s what we live in.

Romans 12:1, 2—we’re to “present our bodies.”

First Corinthians 6:19 says:

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Don’t you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,

Now here comes the KEY VERSE and what a wonderful verse.

This is one of my very favorite, favorite verses in the New Testament.

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

“Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it.”

Now you’ve got the WISH in verse 23 but you’ve the WARRANTY in verse 24.

Are You Plugged Into the Power?

“FAITHFUL is the one who is [PRESENTLY] calling you, who also will do it.”

Now in the Greek language the first word in the sentence is always the most important word in the sentence. And it’s not like our sentences where we just read consecutively.

But the first word is the EMPHATIC POSITION, emphasized by the author. And guess what that word is?

You got it—“faithful.”

And we translated it that way. God is FAITHFUL! He will not call you to these things without providing the resources

necessary to express in obedience what you have learned during these previous eleven expositions.

I want to just give you some verses.

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?

And the answer is NO! He doesn't!

Psalms 117 is only two verses:

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.

And then another favorite passage is:

Lamentations 3:22, 23

It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning; [and we express it]
great is your faithfulness.

Then one other very instructive passage that I haven't heard mentioned too often is:

1 Corinthians 1:9

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

J. Vernon McGee in his commentary, when he gets to this verse, just says a very simple:

You can depend on God.
(source unknown)

That's really all that it's teaching us. That you can depend on Him to come through in doing what He has promised to do.

Now would you look at the rest of the verse?

"Faithful is the one who is calling you,"

Now we've got to stop because we're going to ask ourselves a question: Calling us to what?

What is He calling us to?

I came up with several things He's calling you to. Some you're

going to like and some you aren't. But nevertheless, it is scriptural.

First of all:

1. He is calling us to a RELATIONSHIP.

Revelation 3:20

I am standing at the door and knocking; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come into him, and have fellowship with him, and he with Me.

He's calling us to relationship.

Secondly, and this is what we don't like:

2. He's 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 to follow in His steps,

You know Philippians 1:29 says:

Philippians 1:29

For unto you it has been given on the behalf of Christ, not

only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Did you really understand that when you came to know Christ, you were not only called into relationship but you were called to suffer?

That's part of it!

He knows that that is part and parcel of the experience to make us like His Son. So yes, he's calling us to suffer.

Number three, it gets a little bit deeper:

3. He's calling us to SACRIFICE.

Luke 9:23

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Romans 12:1, 2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, ...

Throw it on the altar!

4. He's calling us to SERVE.

“For we do not preach ourselves”—2 Corinthians 4:5 says—

“but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus’ sake.”

Just like Jesus came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life, we as His sons and daughters, are to be characterized by sacrificial servanthood. We are to be servers.

5. He is calling us to SANCTIFICATION.

That means just simply to be made holy. To be set apart unto Him—1 Peter 1:15 and 16—we looked at a minute ago.

And then finally:

6. He is calling us to GLORIFICATION.

“For the Lord Himself”—yesterday, 1 Thessalonians 4:16—”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.

You want one more on that?

Revelation 22:17

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

You know I started meditating on that and God brought to my mind that great old hymn that Charlotte Elliott wrote while she was on her knees and coming to Jesus Christ:

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”)

Joan Beaver knows a whole lot about that because she had the privilege of leading one of her grandsons to Jesus this afternoon. Walking through the little blue booklet, he signed the time and the place as he invited Christ.

We have had a worthy two weeks if one little grandson comes to know Jesus and nothing else happens. It’s worth all of the trouble.

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.

All she’s doing is expressing a response to a call. And maybe God is calling you right now to a full realization that you can’t but that He can. And He has all the power and resources necessary. And if you fail when you go down that hill, don’t

blame Him because it's all right there. You just turn on the switch and watch God begin to work.

“Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it.”

The two KEY WORDS in that verse—since this is the KEY VERSE—is:

1. “calling” and
2. “doing.”

He calls us and then “who also will do it.”

Now I know what you're thinking. You say “Okay, He's calling me to all these wonderful things. But what does it mean doing? Do what?”

I knew you were going to ask that so I thought on that for a little while.

Psalm 138:8

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

Okay, what are you going to do Lord?

1. He will WASH out my record like the waves upon the sand.

He will wash out my record like the waves on 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 of the Holy Spirit,

You say that's kind of strong!

Well listen to John 8:10, 11. This dear woman has been made a spectacle—thrown into the presence of a bunch of vicious men who are wanting her to be stoned because she's been caught in the act of adultery. And Jesus just starts writing on the sand and the guys that are the accusers start disappearing like termites in the woodwork. And when they're gone it says this:

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."

He washes it all away.

Secondly:

2. He will set me FREE.

John 8:32

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

3. He provides STRENGTH for victory.

That's the vital part of tonight's study.

He will do that. He will provide the strength for your addiction, for your diet, for your exercise, for your discipline in the Scripture. Whatever it is, He will provide the strength for you to go on from victory unto victory.

1 Corinthians 10:13

There has no testing taken you but such as is common to man; God is faithful, [there it is again!] who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with it provide a way to escape, that you may be able to bear up under it.

He is there!

Philippians 4:13

[I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Isaiah 40:31

they that wait upon the Lord
shall renew their strength.

Fourth—this is the neat part:

4. He will come and LIVE in me.

He will come and live in me. He wants to live out His life in and through me.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ is living in me; and the life which I am now living in the flesh I can live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

5. He will SUSTAIN me in suffering.

He will sustain me in suffering. Isn't that wonderful?

When you're going through it, the resources are there, the grace is available.

Second Corinthians 12:9 is a wonderful verse for you to memorize.

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, will I rather boast about my weaknesses, [Paul says] that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

And number 6—saved the best till last.

6. He will make me more and more LIKE JESUS.

He’ll make me more and more like Christ.

That’s Philippians 1:6.

Philippians 1:6

I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in me will continue to perform it until the day of Christ.

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 working in you, both to the willing and

the doing of His good pleasure.

He's there working on your WANTS and your WISHES.

And the accomplishment of that is His work in you.

2 Corinthians 3:18

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.

Okay, what should that verse teach you? That verse should teach you that you've got all the resources and experience victory in your Christian life.

Now would you do something? Would you surrender? Would you submit? Would you give it all to Jesus?

Just let go of the whole package man and turn it over to Him.

And the question in the Spiritual Check-up is:

Are You Plugged In?

And I'll ask you these questions:

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 that abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

He's waiting to express His desire in you.

You know probably one of my greatest favorite old hymns is a hymn that they wouldn't even let me put in one of my books. The editors edited it out because they said, "You know, you can't use the word channels anymore because that's all new age." And I said "Well I know that! But I also know that that's biblical truth and they stole it!"

And that great old hymn "Channels Only" is just too much for me to lose and I want to tell a few new agers to hang it on their nose, boy. I'm going to keep singing "Channels Only" because that's exactly the thought of this twenty-fourth verse. Listen to these words:

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.

("Channels Only" by Mary E. Maxwell, pub. 1900)

The question is:

Are you available?

I think it was Ian Thomas who said:

God does not want your ability, He wants your availability!

(source unknown)

And when you present yourself to Him, He begins to work in mighty dimensions.

Verse 25.

v. 25 Brethren, be praying also for us.

Command # 21.

“Brethren, be praying also for us.”

Okay, I gave you 20 commands last week in the prescription didn't I?

Okay, there are 3 more and here they are in verses 20, 21 and 22.

The little word “be” is there again isn't it?

“Brethren, be praying also for us.”

He uses the word “Brethren” in all three of these verses, too—25, 26 and 27.

Isn't it interesting that the apostle realizes that his strength comes through the intercessory prayer of others? As they are praying for him he knows he's going to have freedom in his preaching and in his teaching.

Verse 26.

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

Command # 22.

“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.”

And everybody says “Amen!”

I'll always remember my two sons when they read that verse the first time back in the early days when I had first taught this series, they said “You know dad, that must be that we are to pat each other on the back and shake hands.” I said “Yeah, that's exactly right.” That's our culture. That's their culture.

But greet each other, a certain encouragement and love as expressed among the brotherhood.

Verse 27. Here is command #22.

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

Command # 23.

“I am binding you with an oath by the Lord Jesus that this letter be read to all the brethren.”

That's your final command.

Now why is it so necessary that this letter be read to everybody? Why is he so urgent?

Because there's some idlers sitting in the congregation that have quit work and they need to hear this letter. And there are some people who've been teaching that the Day of the Lord has already come and they need to hear this letter. So he is urgent!

You see Paul is fully aware that he is writing to them under divine inspiration and so he says "to all the brethren."

"To all"—I mean without distinction, limitation or exception. This letter is to be read to all of them.

Now I want to just say a word at this point about the authority of Scripture. And also remind you once again that the Scripture is complete. And when somebody says to you that God spoke to them, or God said something to them, you be very careful and test what they say against the Scripture. Because 9 times out of 10, what they're going to say is not going to be consistent with the full revelation of Scripture.

And when you discern that, then you've got somebody sitting right there that's funning with you and they're trying to fool you into believing that they have a certain channel to the Lord that nobody else has.

Now MacArthur in his hard-hitting book *Charismatic*

Confusion says—or *Charismatic Chaos* says:

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

The canon is *not* still open. [That's c-a-n-o-n. That refers to the divine revelation of books that were included in the 66 books.] 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

[Then he says this and I didn't know this:]

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

There're a lot of people going along with this kind of thing today. Let's put the Scripture back where it belongs. It is a completed revelation and you just feel, in this twenty-seventh verse, that Paul is recognizing that and says "be sure this

letter is read to everybody.”

And then he wraps it up:

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

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

It is the GRACE OF GOD that is going to provide eternal salvation.

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

[Maybe you’ve] 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

Barbara Johnson put it this way:

(*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

And it’s the grace of God that the apostle ends with in this marvelous letter.

And isn’t it great that he would mention GRACE in almost in the same sentence with STRENGTH.

I mean the fact that God not only saves you by grace but He provides the power necessary for victory. Now that’s grace! I mean that is total grace, God would care and be so concerned about us in that regard.

Now I got 9 lessons:

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.

Did you get that? 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.

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.

And He's able to do that—Jude 24 and 25.

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 the 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.

Okay, where've we been? And what are we going to do about?

We've been making a Spiritual Check-up:

1. Did you make a 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 their walk with the Lord?
6. How's your prayer life?
7. 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?

No one recognizes 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 as long as possible.

I want to conclude with a statement from Ray Steadman and Ian Thomas in his little book *If I Perish, I Perish*.

Ray Stedman:

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. (source unknown)

And Ian Thomas agrees exactly:

(*If I Perish, I Perish* by Ian Thomas)

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

Let's go!
(source unknown)

Father, I pray as we've allowed this wonderful epistle to be used by the Holy Spirit to probe into our hearts and into our lives, that it would never be the same as a result of being exposed to these wonderful verses. Father may we take them home in our hearts and may we respond in surrender, submission and obedience. We love You. We praise You. We thank You for the wisdom of Your plan. May we this day make those decisions and commitments that must be made before we go down the hill to be the kind of men and women You want us to be. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A Practical Study of 1 THESSALONIANS: Your Spiritual Checkup

“Victory in Areas of Vulnerability”

Key verse 3:10 — *“night and day praying as earnestly as possible that we might see your face and complete what is lacking in your faith”*

QUESTION NUMBER TWELVE – ARE YOU PLUGGED IN? – 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28

KEY VERSE 5:24

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.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What is Paul’s desire for them in verse 23?

3. What two things are mentioned to us in verse 24 that God is doing?

4. What does Paul ask them to do for him in verse 25?

5. Explain what you think Paul means in verse 26.

6. What does Paul ask that they do with the letter which he has sent, according to verse 27?

7. What is Paul's final wish for them in verse 28?

8. What verse in this study has meant the most to you?

9. What lesson have you learned from this study?

10. In what areas of your life has the Spirit of God spoken to you in this study of 1 Thessalonians, and how are you going to be different as a result of your obedience?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons 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.

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