

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This letter seems to have been written by all three men in collaboration. Regardless, if it is only by Paul then obviously both other men are in full agreement. Whatever the combination here the Holy Spirit is the one calling the shots. The Silvanus named here is none other than Silas and Timotheus is Timothy. This letter was written around 50 AD and is one of Paul's earliest. That is about 20 years after Jesus' resurrection. Paul and his friends were in the city of Corinth when they wrote the letter. We can be sure about this, and about the date, from the letter and the book of the Acts.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making making mention of you in our prayers;

Notice in verse two that Paul was a southerner. He uses the term y'all. Paul has praise for the Thessalonian converts since they were doing exactly what they should be doing. They were working for the Lord, they were working by faith and they were patiently waiting for the Lord's return. Silas and Timothy were with Paul when they wrote this letter so we know when it was written since Silas was only with Paul on this, his second main journey.

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

This hope that Paul speaks of here is the hope isn't about getting into Heaven since we are already assured of that. This is the hope for the soon return of the Lord and of the salvation of the body.

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

Verse four gets some people messed up. God's election is based on His foreknowledge. In Matthew 24:24 God's elect are mentioned; **There shall**

arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect. But these are all Jews still operating under the Law. What the sinner does with God's salvation he does on his own but then God places the saved sinner into the Body of Christ.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

The words “our gospel” are the same as Paul uses “my gospel” in Romans and calls it the gospel of the grace of God in the book of Acts. Remember from our study of Romans that Paul's “my gospel” or “our gospel” is the one we are to follow in this age. Paul goes so far as to place a curse on anyone who preaches any other gospel. He says in Galatians 1:8 **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** The gospel does not change again until that angel preaches the “everlasting gospel” during the tribulation.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

Notice here that Paul is suggesting that Christians can follow a man provided that man is going in the right direction. If the man's direction goes wrong then the Christian is not to keep following him. In other words if the doctrine changes then change direction and stay with correct doctrine.

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

We have already been told in verse two that the conduct of the Thessalonican converts was such that they were examples to other Christian churches.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

They had sent evangelists to Macedonia and Achaia and had established

churches there. This bunch was “on fire “ for the Lord.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

Paul's manner was his way of doing things. The fact that the Thessalonians had been idol worshipers and were now turned to God was known throughout the region. They had not only turned to God but were now spreading the word.

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Paul says it other ways in other places. In Phill 3:20”we look for the Saviour,the Lord Jesus Christ” and in Titus 2:13 he says;”Looking for the glorious appearing of ...our Saviour Jesus Christ”.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

This letter is from Paul, Silas and Timothy. Paul is the main author since the style is like that of his other letters. In this letter, the use of ‘we’ shows that it is also from Silas and Timothy. They may have helped Paul to write the letter since we believe the “thorn in the flesh” that Paul mentioned was poor eyesight. The church, which is the assembly of those who believe in Christ, belongs to God and to the Lord Jesus. God started that church and Paul and his friends brought the message about Jesus Christ. The greeting requests that God will give to them grace and peace. Notice again that in the Pauline epistles that grace and peace always appear together with grace preceding peace. The peace spoken of here is peace in the heart and the mind.

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

When Paul and his friends taught the gospel of Jesus, the Thessalonians accepted it as true. This resulted, the same way it does today, in changed lives that lost people could see. They were now different people from what they had been. This change was evidence of their faith and that holds true today. If there is no change in a person's life the person was not saved.

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Salvation is something that comes from God. Nobody can earn it and no one can work for it. This is why Paul and his friends are thanking God for these brethren. God gave to them the new life that lasts for eternity.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

Paul avoids using deceit to fool his congregations into believing things not in the scriptures. This is something that goes on today in many of the TV ministries. It also goes on in our own denomination but for different reasons. In the case of the TV ministries the underlying reason is greed. In the case of good preachers it is listening to other, like minded, preachers and passing the error along until it becomes accepted as scripture and is taught from the pulpit. In this last case it is not a deliberate attempt to deceive but rather, an error that has been allowed to creep in. One preacher, or teacher, says it and it sounds good so they adopt it and pass it along. Paul didn't do any of this. He wasn't after a dollar, he was after their souls.

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

They might easily have been a burden to the church but they weren't. Paul was a tent maker and practiced his trade as he went from place to place, thus supporting himself. This changed when he was in prison and then he depended on gifts.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her

children:

Since these were his spiritual children Paul cared for them as a father.

8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

Since the soul is a bodily shape inside the body, Paul obviously wasn't talking about giving them his actual soul. This refers to giving them that part of us that feels and responds to God.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

When Paul came to Thessalonica, he taught for three weeks in the synagogue. He explained that the Christ had to suffer and die. He told them that Jesus is the Christ. And he told them that that Jesus came back from the dead. Those that believed welcomed Paul, Silas and Timothy. They believed the *gospel with joy and were eager to follow Christ. The believers talked about it to all they met. The news spread like ripples and reached as far as Corinth. We would say."they witnessed".

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

Paul, and the others, had a clear conscience in all that they did. They had worked there as servants of God. They did their best to do what was right and what would please God. God would know if there was anything wrong in them. He knows that their attitudes and actions were right and good and the Thessalonians also knew the way that they behaved while they were there. There were always accusers around but those who believed in Jesus knew that they were not guilty of the things they were accused of.

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Most of the Christians at Thessalonica had worshiped idols before. They lived in a city where the normal way of life was not how Christians should live. Instead of living for the idols or for themselves, they now had to live for God. Paul and his friends gave them a model to follow in the way that they themselves lived. This worthy walk spoken of here is described in Chapters 4 1-12 and again in chapter 5 6-23 so I will skip over it here and cover it next week when we get to those chapters.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Notice that the “word” here is with a small “w” so it is speaking of the actual words spoken by Paul. Words with a capital W refer to the Lord Jesus Christ while the small “w” refers to the spoken, or written, word. Notice also here that the word only works in Christians who believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

Those in Thessalonica, who were unbelievers persecuted those who did believe but these new Christians were ready and willing to suffer for Christ. This was further proof that their trust in God was genuine. It was a normal part of the Christians’ life to suffer for believing in the word of God. Their experience was the same as that of all Christians at that time.

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

The Jews spoken of here are the chief priest and the leaders and not the Jewish people as a whole. Paul and Silas were Jews and so were most of the first Christians. Jesus was a Jew and all his work on earth was among the Jews. So the leaders of the Jews killed Jesus, who was one of their own

nation. Now, those statements are technically true but we all need to remember that it was our sins that put Jesus on that Roman cross.

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

The Jews believed the Gentiles were lower than dogs and believed that salvation was only for the Jews. They did not accept that salvation was through Jesus Christ. They looked for a Christ who would come one day to deliver them from the Romans. Paul speaks of these things as “filling up their sins”. They killed the prophets, they killed Stephen, they killed Jesus and they refused to accept the Messiah. Is it any wonder they have had the troubles they have had throughout history. Do not ever be a part of that persecution though. Remember that verse from Genesis...”I will bless them which bless thee and curse him who curseth thee.”

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

Paul will soon be bodily absent from them but will be with them in spirit.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

All three of them wanted to return to Thessalonica, but only Timothy had been able to. Paul states that he had tried more than once to get to them but had failed. Each time they tried, Satan had prevented Paul and Silas from getting there. They don't say how Satan stopped them but he works to stop people trusting God and to hinder those who preach the word.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

The writers look forward to the time when the Lord Jesus will come. Then the Lord will judge what they have done. And then he will give them his rewards. Paul and his companions love them and are proud of them. Their hope was that the Thessalonians would continue to trust in God. They are

confident that God will complete the work that he has started in these Christians at Thessalonica.

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

The Thessalonians are the reason why Paul and his companions are proud. They are confident that these Thessalonians will be there in heaven with them.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER THREE

1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

A good part of this chapter is taken up with personal dealings. Paul had left Thessalonica for Athens and had been unable to return. He said at one point that Satan hindered his return. So, in his place, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica and sent Silas somewhere else. We don't know where Silas was sent but we can tell from the first verse that Paul was now alone in Athens. Notice in verse two that the gospel is here called the gospel of Christ. This is the same gospel Paul calls "my gospel and the gospel of the grace of God in other places. It can also be told from the last part of verse two that Paul had confidence that Timothy was now an able preacher/teacher of the gospel.

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Remember from the preceding chapter that the Thessalonian church was under some persecution from the non believers in the city. Paul was afraid that all the persecution would destroy their faith. But you know that as Christians we should expect such troubles. As I have said before, we do not get much persecution here in the US but Christians in other countries do. Check any newspaper to see how many Christians, in the middle east, were killed last week for their faith.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Before Paul left for Athens he warned the church that they would suffer persecution and it had come to pass just as he said it would.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

They had not heard any news from Thessalonica so now he tells them why he sent Timothy instead of waiting until he could himself. He was worried about them and wanted to be sure they had kept the faith.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

Now Timothy has come back and brought us good news. He has told us that you still think well of us and furthermore that you want to see us just as much as we want to see you. He tells them “news about you has made us strong and your faith is encouraging.

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

Now obviously Paul doesn't mean that he and his friends are going to die physically if the Thessolonians turn away from the faith. It has given the three friends a big spiritual “lift”. Now, he says, with this good news we really live

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

He has been giving thanks to God for the congregation there but now can pray even more earnestly for them since he now knows they have kept the faith. Now we can also thank him for all the joy that we have because of you.

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Keep in mind that when Paul refers to perfecting their faith, he is probably speaking of adding to their knowledge. I believe this since they did not have God's word as we have it and had to depend on scriptural knowledge being passed along by people like Paul, Silas and Timothy. The reason for their prayers was not only that they wanted to be with the Thessalonians again and also so that they could teach them more to help them to live as Christians

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

This is simply Paul's prayer that they would soon be allowed to return to Thessolonia. Each time they tried to return, Satan prevented them. Therefore, they asked God to remove all that had stopped them and to lead them back to the Thessalonians. Paul did return to Macedonia about five years later

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

Verse twelve is self explanatory. They ask the Lord to cause the Thessalonians to love each other so much that it is a testimony that spreads to the surrounding communities. They want it to go beyond their friends and reach to everyone.

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

The Lord Jesus will come again with all his saints. Saints are not special persons that the church has called saints but are all born again believers. When the Lord Jesus comes there will be more than one event. He will meet with us in the air. This includes both those who have died and those who are still living. We get glorified bodies and are soon judged for rewards and then attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. We do not have the exact timetable for these things but one thing is certain. Those of us who love the Lord Jesus can look forward to his coming. It will be a time of much joy and blessing to

them. There will be no more pain and suffering. We will see our Lord and will live with him for eternity.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER FOUR

1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

You learned from us how you should live in order to please God and this is how you have been living. Now we urge you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to do more because you know the instructions that we gave you came directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

This verse and those that follow are the directive will of God and not the permissive will. Another way to say this is, this is a commandment, not a suggestion. One other thing. People tend to separate adultery and fornication.

Fornication covers adultery as well as the other sexual sins. That is, all sexual sins including, but not limited to, such things as homosexuality, pornography, bestiality etc. Do be aware here that pornography also includes some of those tv programs we now can see in prime time. As I was surfing the so called Christian tv channels I saw a nugget that was worth keeping. This preacher tapped the side of his head and said, "the battle ground is here". Then he held up his bible and said, "the weapon is here". Sometimes it is possible to get something good from tv.

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not

God:

Paul is saying that sex,inside of marriage,is sanctified(there's that word again).Each of you should have the self discipline to keep your own body in subjection. Control your mind and keep it out of the gutter.

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

Paul is still on sexual sin,adultery in this case. It says here that “**the Lord is the avenger**”. That is serious stuff. Let's look at the most famous case we have a record of:that would be King David. This is 2 Sam 12.You all know the story. David watched Bathsheba bathing on her rooftop. The Kings house was the taller of the two. Lust for her got into his mind and he allowed it to stay there. She became pregnant by him and he had her husband killed to cover his sin. Most Christians think David had Uriah killed so he could have Bathsheba but his real reason was so that his sin would not be found out. There were some immediate consequences from this. The baby died. Then we have verses 10-12 **Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give [them] unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst [it] secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.**

When he says”before the sun” he means out in the wide open for everyone to see. Now you can carry this passage forward and apply it to lives today.It is entirely possible to do such sin that even though you are forgiven the punishment for sin will continue.You do not have to look any further than he nearest prison to see that one in action.And yes,there are Christians in prison.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

So then, if you refuse this teaching you turn away, not only from humans,

but also from God. You have the Holy Spirit so you have the ability, with His help, to lead a holy life.

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

They were aware of the duty that they have to love each other. They are brothers and sisters in the family of God. It is the teaching of God that they should love each other. This does not refer just one part of scripture. This is a common thread that runs through the entire Bible. The Lord Jesus said, (John 13:34). **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. {13:35} By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

The Holy Spirit places the love of God into Christians and the love Jesus had for his friends shows the kind of love that they should have for each other.

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

The Thessalonians lived in difficult times and suffered much at the hands of unbelievers in their city. It would have been natural to be angry and to fight back but that was not how a Christian should act. They should try to live at peace with all people. They should not be involved in the affairs of other people but they should mind their own affairs.

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Those who live as they should will not need to depend on anyone else. Instead, they will be able to support those who really are in need. The church should help those who are not able to work but those who can work should. We are never to support those who are too lazy to work.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

Now we get to the good stuff. We are all expecting the Rapture to take place at any time. We are told in other places to watch for it. In other words, to be ready when he calls. Paul is comforting the living in this verse and assuring them that their dead loved ones will be coming back with Christ. Before I go into these next few verses let me bring in a quote from 1 Cor 15: 51-55 **Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, {15:52} In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {15:53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. {15:54} So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. {15:55} O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory?**

So now the Holy Spirit has now given us this same passage twice.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again from the dead. So, we believe that God will bring back, with Jesus, the Christians who sleep in death. This was a mystery not shown until Jesus gave it to Paul.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

The saved dead come up first. I wonder if there will be a moment of time when we see this happen. The twinkling of an eye is a very short time so it may well be that it happens too fast for us to witness it. We will have our own thing going on. This body has to change to a glorified body and that too takes place in the same instant. A glorified brain goes with a glorified body and won't that be a wonderful thing.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

What a comfort these words are. He is coming for us and the sooner the better. We are not waiting for the kingdom. We are waiting for the King.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER FIVE

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Be aware that the first ten verses deal with the Second coming and not with the Rapture. From Luke 12 38-40 we know which part of the night he thief comes. Here are those verses. **And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find [them] so, blessed are those servants. {12:39} And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. {12:40} Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.**

This is another warning against “time” setting. We are encouraged to know the season, that is to look for signs but are warned against going further.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

It will be at a time when people say, “we have peace and are safe.” Then without warning, the Lord will destroy them. It will be as sudden as the pains of a woman who is suddenly going into labor. There will be no escape for

those people. The people it is speaking of here are the lost. There is always a way of escape for the saved.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

But you, are not living in the dark. That day should not take you by surprise .I have a problem here. If Paul intends this for believers in his day then this would seem to apply to the Rapture. Perhaps it does but the rest of the context is for the Jews in the tribulation period so maybe Paul intends it both ways. Think of it this way. We, as believers, are not to go through the Tribulation. That applied to believers in Paul's day as well. That is why I have a problem here.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

We,as believers belong to the light. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. Night,and darkness in the bible are almost always associated with sin and evil. John 8:12 gives us more light-no pun intended. **Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

In the sight of God,we in America are in the nigh time. The evil that goes on in our country is beyond belief. God bless America? That's a useless prayer since I don't think he can bless us anymore. So it's downhill for America until He returns.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

The words, "**hath not appointed us to wrath**" are a good proof verse that Christians are not going through the Tribulation. That period is spoken of in several places in scripture as the time of God's wrath. The "**hope of salvation**" spoken in verse eight is the hope of the salvation of the body since that is the only unsaved part we have. The salvation of the body occurs at the Rapture when both the dead in Christ and those who are still alive get our glorified(saved) bodies. I look forward to a glorified mind to go with my glorified body.

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

There it is again. Dead or alive we will live with Him for eternity. Always stress eternity when witnessing to the lost. Eternity can be a scary thing to a lost person if you can get them to thinking about it. You don't get out of Hell in five years or ten years. There is no such place as Purgatory or Limbo where you can do penance and eventually get out. Eternity just keeps going and going for, well, for eternity. Make your decision here, on this side, where you have the choice.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

So, encourage and help each other. Edify means to "lift up" and to teach. Paul admits here that they are already doing this but could do more of it.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

Now, this one is rich. Those who are over you are to admonish you, not to lord it over you. God, the Holy Spirit, calls those who lord it over the lay people Nicolaitanes and says that he hates this mindset and the people who do this. Revelations 2:6 which says {2:6} **But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.** This is speaking of people like the Pope but also has a closer application. Some pastors have become little dictators. That folks, is a Nicolaitane. For more on this see Revelation 2:15 **So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.** Now God has said it twice. That should be enough for any

Christian to sit up and take notice. This thing that God hates is anyone in authority who lords it over God's people. There is a proper hierarchy in our churches today. It is just this. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. The pastor is the under shepherd and is the authority in all spiritual matters. For an excellent example of the only "business meeting" we have in the New Testament look at Acts 15;12-13 **Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men [and] brethren, hearken unto me:** The context here is the dispute concerning the Gentile believers. Everyone had their say. They even argued about it. When they had all had their say then James, the pastor, settled the issue. I encourage you to read that whole chapter. It's a beautiful piece of scripture.

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

The Lord had called the church leaders and they serve Him in it. They were working so hard for the good of the church. The Christians at Thessalonica should be grateful for them and for all that they do. Their leaders deserve all the support that the members can give. Christians should always try to live in peace with each other. Now, with that said, how can any believing Christian vote to remove a pastor from office if they believe that God called him, and put him in as pastor, in the first place? That would be taking over God's authority. The only exception I can see to this rule is if a pastor is taken in some public, immoral issue or departs completely from the accepted doctrines of the church. In our case that would cover something like our pastor suddenly beginning to speak in tongues or preaching that one could lose his/her salvation in the Age of Grace. In any other case, where you can not agree, the solution is to remove yourself to another church.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

From verse fourteen and forward we are given more instruction in Christian behavior. This is the reason that First Thessalonians is a good place for a new Christian to start. He, or she, can get a good list of rules to go by right here. We

are told in this verse to warn some, support some and to be patient. We might change the politically incorrect term “feeble minded” to mentally challenged. Or maybe we should just leave it as God had it written.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

One of the hardest things for most Christians is to get over the desire to “get even”. Verse fifteen is clear on that point. Furthermore it says “to all men” and that even includes the unsaved.

16 Rejoice evermore.

A Christian should be filled with joy. Period. Anything less is disrespect of God and what He has done in your life..

17 Pray without ceasing.

This is about keeping that open line to God. Think of it as an intercom that is left open. Talk to God as you would to any other friend and do it throughout the day.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

We have talked about this one before. Give thanks to God for whatever happens in your life, the good and the bad. It is all a part of God's plan. This is especially true if you are yielded and lead a spiritual life. That old saw, God can give you a flat tire, or dead battery, to keep you out of the pileup on the interstate is still true.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

Do not do things that put off the Holy Spirit. This is the reason we sometimes have services that seem dry and dull. It can be one person or several people in the congregation. For instance, people wandering in and out, without good reason, during the service. People playing with their cell phones. People talking to their seat mates. All of these as well as other distractions tend to quench the Spirit in a church service.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

This one was true in Paul's day when the New Testament was not complete. Now you have to watch for the con men/women who claim the gift of prophecy to get to your pocketbook. There is another meaning here which does apply to us. This may well mean to give careful attention to preaching about prophecy since this is the way we prove the scriptures are true. No other book dares to give detailed prophecy about things which will happen in the future. Our Bible does and they come true without fail.

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Check up on everything you are told. Do not trust what your Sunday school teacher says. Check with the Book. The same caution goes for pastors and evangelists. Check with the Book.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Verse twenty two is self explanatory. Do not be satisfied with good behavior. Don't do anything that would cause gossip,true or untrue,to get started.

23 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.

This is one more excellent "proof text" for the fact that man is a trinity. All three parts are mentioned here.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Another good verse for eternal security of the believer. Another way to say this is, you can depend on God to do what he has promised to do.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

We have prayed for you, so you should also pray for us. They are asking the Thessalonians to support them by their prayers.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

This is a middle Eastern custom. Do not kiss me and I promise not to kiss any of you.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Here we are two thousand years later and this still holds true. If you have been here each Sunday, for Sunday school then you have had Paul's letter read to you in it's entirety. If you get nothing else from these lessons, since we go verse by verse, you at least have the scriptures read to you on a regular basis.

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