

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
1 Thessalonians: Discipling Afflicted New Christians
Part IX: Discipling Afflicted New Christians On A Godly Personal Life
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-28)

I. Introduction

- A. New converts to Christ often face affliction from the world that they don't fully understand, and for which they are often ill-prepared, so they need insight on living a godly personal life in a godless world.
- B. Paul provided this insight in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28, and we view it for our edification as well:

II. Discipling Afflicted New Christians On A Godly Personal Life, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28.

- A. We have learned in our study of 1 Thessalonians thus far that this epistle was written to new believers under trial for their Christian faith from others who were impacted by Satanic influence, 1 Thess. 3:1-5.
- B. It was thus necessary for Paul to instruct them on godly living in their personal lives in view of this pressure, and that information is instructive in view of such trials as follows (1 Thessalonians 5:16-28):
 - 1. First, new converts to Christ under Satanic pressure must realize the importance of staying joyful in the Lord, 1 Thessalonians 5:16. Satan seeks to discourage or to intimidate and so to diminish one's trust in God and in His Word in order to harm the believer's spiritual welfare (cf. 2 Cor. 2:6-7, 10-11); thus, it is necessary that new believers be told to focus on their joyful position in Christ opposite Satan's intent.
 - 2. Second, new converts to Christ under Satanic pressure must continually pray for God's help, 1 Thess. 5:17. Paul's Ephesians 6:10-17 KJV directive on the angelic conflict concludes with the call to pray always "with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" because offsetting superhuman opposition requires God's superhuman help!
 - 3. Third, new converts to Christ under Satanic pressure must give thanks to God in everything they face, for that is God's will for them, 1 Thessalonians 5:18. This directive indicates that even the trials new converts face are divinely permitted for the sake of discipling (cf. James 1:2-4), so God expects them to take advantage of the trials they experience to become overcomers by faith versus faithless defeat.
 - 4. Fourth, new converts to Christ under Satanic pressure must not resist the Holy Spirit's work, 1 Thessalonians 5:19 with 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21:
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 is to be understood in the context of what follows in 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21, meaning there was a tendency of the new Thessalonian believers to "underrate the value of [genuine] prophetic utterances," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 709.
 - b. Applied to our era where the gift of prophecy (as certified by the test of Deuteronomy 18:20-22) no longer exists in the Church, we must direct new converts not to underrate any part of God's **written** Word as being not divinely authoritative, cf. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 with Isaiah 8:20 NIV.
 - c. In light of the need for believers to be proficient in using Scripture to overcome the Evil One (1 John 2:14b), it is **imperative** that new converts under Satanic pressure be led to **value** and to **use ALL** of the **written Scriptures** for victory over Satan and his wiles! (Ephesians 6:10-12, 17b)
 - 5. Fifth, new converts to Christ under Satanic pressure must test all they hear and read by the measure of God's written Word, and hold to the truth and discard what is unbiblical, 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22:
 - a. Paul's call to test, to hold to the good and to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:21-22) is made in the context of not resisting God's revelations of truth in true prophecies, 1 Thess. 5:19-20.
 - b. As such, it is **imperative** that new believers be led to test **everything** they face **by written Scripture** for victory over falsehoods that Satan uses to try to defeat the believer in thought and action.
 - 6. Sixth, new converts to Christ under Satanic influence must realize that God alone must set them wholly apart, spirit, soul and body, to be blameless in living until Christ returns, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. Thus, they can face life, relating well to others with confidence and blessing, 1 Thessalonians 5:25-28!

Lesson: Discipling new believers who face Satanic pressure involves (1) directing them to be joyful in Christ, (2) to pray always for God's help, (3) to give thanks in all they face as this is God's will that they might mature, (4) to heed Scripture and (5) to test everything by God's Word so as to heed only the truth and (6) to trust God to make them holy in every way that they might be blameless at Christ's return!

Application: May we as new believers heed these directives, and may we lead others to heed them, too!