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GRACE**

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# 1 Thessalonians 5

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

# 1 Thessalonians 5.

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## Topics.

- Concerning the times and seasons.
- The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
- Whether we are awake or asleep we might live with the Lord.
- Rejoice always and pray without ceasing.
- Do not quench the Spirit or despise prophecies.
- Test everything and hold fast what is good.
- May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul spoke of the will of God for the Thessalonians, of sleeping in Christ and of the coming of the Lord. He talked about being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, the Judgement of Christ and the hope of the Christian faith.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-3

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### Concerning the Times and Seasons.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-3:** Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

**Times:** (kairos) (chronos) from Strong's Concordance can mean any of the following, a fixed, set or proper time, always, due season, a short while, a special occasion or a space of time in general.

**Times:** (aion) from Strong's Concordance can mean any of the following, a particular period or interval, an individual opportunity and by implication it can refer to a delay, years old, season or space of time. Paul tells the Thessalonians and by extension all who belong to Christ that they do not need anymore said or written regarding the ages the times, the seasons and the day of the Lord

**The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night:** when a thief comes in the night (v2) those being robbed are in darkness and totally unaware that the thief is coming. Once they are alerted that the thief has robbed them, they are struck with sudden fear and shock when they find that all the things they treasured and valued have been taken therefore the words, "The Lord will come like a thief in the night" implies the following three things:

1. The Lord will come unexpectedly.
2. His return will take people by surprise and come upon them suddenly and with fear and shock.
3. The Lord will return as the King of kings and Lord of lords and take total control of the world's governments, leaders and rulers, the economies, the banking systems, trade and the way money is distributed amongst the rich and the poor.

**In the night:** (v2) could literally mean in the night or that the people of the world are spiritually blind (i.e., in spiritual darkness).

**NOTICE:** it does not say when there is peace, but when people are saying, "Peace and security" (v3) which could imply that the Middle East or the entire world has suffered so many wars or acts of terrorism that the collective voice of the world's population is crying for "Peace and security." It is at this period of time when people are calling for, "Peace and security" that Paul says, "There will be sudden destruction."

**Labour pains:** Paul's use of the words, "Labour pains" (v3) here is brilliant because it immediately takes the mind of the ardent Bible student to the following words that Paul wrote to the Roman brothers and sisters in Christ.

- We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God (Romans 8:19-24).

The labour pains of a pregnant woman not only continue to increase, but they become more rapid until they are almost unbearable, the poor mum to be is at this point screaming in pain to be delivered of her child, but; and this is the glory, once she is holding that new born child in her arms all the pain is overtaken by overwhelming love and joy. Just as a pregnant woman's labour pains increase in strength and become more rapid until the child is born so too will the labour pains of the earth. There will be an increase in natural disasters and the world's suffering as this world approaches the Day of the Lord. When this destruction comes there will be no escape the world's governments, man's heroes, weapons of war and the world banks will collapse. Billions of dollars will not be able to save the world from this coming destruction.

**NOTE:** this is not about the end of the world, but the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and a total change of the world's governments, authorities, leaders and trade, economies and banking systems as we know them today. The Bible personifies the earth as a pregnant woman who is struggling to give birth to the sons and daughters of God. This breathtaking and awe-inspiring world changing event will take place when Jesus returns in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:4-5

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### Children of Light.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5:** But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

Children of the light refers to those who trust in Christ and live to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and who are eagerly looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses show that brothers and sisters in Christ should not be surprised or (overtake in KJV) by the return of the Lord or the trouble that is to come.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-8

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### Put on the Breastplate of Faith and Love.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:6-8:** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

**Let us not sleep:** in this context means zealously continue in the faith and live to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as opposed to becoming apathetic or indifferent. It means continue to be passionate about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and watch with patience for the signs that point to his imminent return.

**Night:** in this context speaks of spiritual darkness and living in the flesh (i.e., self, ego and pride, etc.).

**The day:** speaks of spiritual enlightenment and living in the Spirit (i.e., love, kindness, compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.).

**Be sober:** carries the following three ideas:

1. Always be the one who is in control of your mind never give it up to another.
2. Keep the mind filled with the word of God in contrast to allowing it to be influenced (intoxicated) by the enticing teachings of false religious leaders or the spiritual teachers of the secular world.
3. Flee from the sinful and unlawful pleasures and temptations of the world.

**Breastplate of faith and Love:** means having the full assurance that salvation is by faith and not works and having love dwelling in the heart and the mind so that whatever is said or done is clothed in love.

**For a helmet the hope of salvation:** carries the following two ideas:

1. Being fully aware that salvation is not dependent on works of the Law or keeping religious customs and traditions.
2. Being fully assured that salvation to eternal life is solely dependent on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace. It is being fully confident that not one of us can earn it or add to it since it is God's pure and free gift given to the faithful who are devoted to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** when salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ. It is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote:

- In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began (Titus 1:2).

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:9-11

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**Whether we are Awake or Asleep we Might Live with the Lord.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:9-11:** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

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Throughout history there has been and sadly still are many faithful brothers and sisters in Christ whose family homes have been destroyed and who have lost loved ones and greatly suffered because of tornados, earthquakes and floods etc., therefore God's wrath as used in these verses cannot refer to natural disasters that trouble the world. When we notice that God's wrath in the context of what Paul is saying is linked to those who will obtain salvation to eternal life it becomes clear that the wrath of God in this context refers to the opposite of eternal life which is the grave as the place of eternal death (i.e., total extinction and non-existence) which is the destination of all who deny the existence of God, contrasted to the faithful who belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ being resurrected and saved to eternal life and everlasting glory. For further information concerning eternal death, see the title:

- Death (What happens when we Die) in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-13

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**Respect those in the Lord who Labour Among You.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13:** We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup>and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

No-one in the family of the Lord is to exalt another brother or sister as being superior to themselves no matter how gifted or talented they maybe or how great a church is that they are head over, but they are called to show faithful workers in Christ respect and honour them in love for labouring in the service of the Lord.

### **Admonish the Idle encourage the Fainthearted.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:14-15:** And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle (religiously unruly in KJV) encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. <sup>15</sup>See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

**Idle:** (unruly in KJV) means unarranged and by implication insubordinate or wilfully and religiously disruptive and disobedient.

**Fainthearted:** (feeble-minded in KJV) means little-spirited or faint-hearted.

The words, "See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone (v15) sums up what it is that delights God and thrills the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTICE:** it not only applies to those in the Kingdom of God, but also to those outside of God's Kingdom. The words, "Always seek to do-good to everyone" (v15) sums up the Royal law (Jas. 2:8) and Jesus words, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31), which means, do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour. The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. Biblically a wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans, in contrast to this a good person is one who worships God and the Lord

Jesus Christ and do all they can, to do what is right, and what is just (i.e., fair for all). To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-22

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### **Rejoice Always and Pray without Ceasing.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-22:** Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from every form of evil.

**Ceasing:** means, uninterruptedly or permanent.

**Quench:** means to extinguish or go out.

**Rejoice always:** (v16) does not mean rejoice because you are suffering hardship, but rejoice because you are loved by God and saved to eternal life, it carries the idea of being happy and thinking on the joyful things in life and upon the good things in the world in contrast to being miserable and thinking only on the negative and depressive things of our lives and what is corrupt in the world.

**Pray without ceasing:** (v17) does not mean hide in a closet and pray all day, (no-one has time to do this, nor does God expect it of anyone, rather it means that no matter what you are doing always be talking to God in your mind. Let the chatter of self-talk that is constantly flowing through the mind be in communion and in prayer with God and the Lord Jesus Christ as you go about your daily work.

**Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you:** (v18) This is an interesting statement, most commentators simply mention all the blessings we have in Christ (i.e., God's love, grace, forgiveness, the promise of eternal life and such like things) and then say we all can find something to be thankful for, but no-one needs to be told to give God thanks for blessings, so the immediate question that comes to my mind is, "What about when a person is in pain, or a fathers daughter has been abused, or a natural disaster has destroyed the family home how is a person to give thanks to God for these things?"

I don't profess to have any brilliant answer to this question, but I will share my observations (feel free to accept or reject them) the following is not a Scriptural teaching or "Thus saith the Lord," but simply my thoughts in regards to Paul's words, "Give thanks in all circumstances because it is the will of God for us." No matter what happens to us in life (good or bad) we have two choices and only two whether we are believers or unbelievers, these two choices are:

1. To choose the path of self-pity, depression and despair and constantly wallow in our sorrow, this choice takes us down a path of misery, hopelessness, gloom, depression and bitterness etc., which in extreme cases can end in suicide, and if the suffering is a result of rape or unwarranted abuse etc., we can take a path that leads to resentment, anger, hostility and the burning passion for revenge which in extreme cases can lead to violence and even murder.

2. To accept the sorrow, the suffering and the hurt and chose to overcome it with a right attitude. I have seen children who have terminal sickness, a Christian man born with no legs and no arms, teenage Siamese twins and extremely disabled people live with more joy than many people who by comparison have absolutely no reason to be miserable yet they are.

It seems to me that God wants us to live in happiness no matter what the circumstance or situation might be and from my observation of life it appears if we take a right and overcoming attitude toward whatever situation we find ourselves in and continue to praise God, He by His Spirit fills the heart with joy and emotional and mental strength that will take us as time goes by on an upward path toward glory in contrast to going on a downward spiral of self-pity, which takes us on a path of despair and depression etc.

Habakkuk an Old Testament prophet beautifully expressed Paul's statement, "Give thanks in all circumstances" (v18) in the following words of his prayer:

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

Truly Habakkuk is a perfect example of 'Great Faith' how thrilled God must have been to hear such a prayer. Another possibility of what Paul meant when he said, "Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (v18) is that he did not have in mind that all circumstance are God's will for us, but that whatever the circumstance or situation (good or bad) it is the will of God for us to always be thankful and grateful toward Him regardless of whether we are being blessed or in loss and sorrow. This same principal applies to natural parents, no father or mother would be very happy if the only reason their child loved them was because mum and dad constantly gave them presents. Family members not only love each other through the good times, but also through the hard times their love is not dependent on circumstance but on the fact, everyone is a family member. It seems to me that this unconditional family love is the same kind of relationship God wants to have with us.

**Do not quench the Spirit:** (v19) carries the following three thoughts:

1. Don't deliberately do things that dishonour God and bring shame to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ or that gives those outside the Kingdom of God reason to mock and speak against the Christian faith.
2. Do not strive to keep religious customs and traditions to be saved.
3. Don't mentally beat yourself up and condemn yourself because you know that you have fallen short of the high calling of Christ in some manner.

Do not quench the Spirit can be summed up in the words, "Do not live in the flesh" (i.e., living for self, ego, pride and greed etc.), do not trust in religious works to be saved to eternal life and do not deny God's grace when you fall short of Christ's calling.

**Do not despise prophecies:** (v20) during the era of the apostles this applied to the words of Scripture men of God spoke by the inspiration of God's Spirit, but today we do not need prophets since everything we need to know has been written and recorded for us in the Canon of the Bible. There is no new revelation today, certainly men who have studied the Bible maybe able to clearly explain prophecy to those who do not have the time to study, but it is not new revelation since everything we need to know today regarding godly living, the path to God and eternal life and Christ's return can be found in the Bible.

**Test everything:** (v21) I not only personally think this is the best advice, but also believe that every Bible teacher should encourage (as Paul did) those who follow them to test everything they have been taught in the following two ways:

1. By looking up the verses and reading them in the entire context of what the writer is saying.
2. By comparing what they have been taught against the lives of Jesus and the apostles (i.e., if a teacher is proclaiming that God's children should prosper, be successful and wealthy because they belong to the King look at the lives of Jesus and the apostles and test this teaching against how they lived).

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## TWELVE TIPS TO HELP WHEN READING THE BIBLE

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1. Know that the Lord by his Spirit is with you as you seek after him so talk and pray to him as you read.
2. Don't trust what you have been taught, prove it for yourself.
3. Don't fear getting things wrong, it's Christ who saves us not head knowledge (when in doubt you can always ask someone you trust later).
4. Meditate on what you don't understand, but don't fret or be anxious about it, know that as you continue to read and gain greater knowledge the verses you don't understand will slowly unfold.
5. Keep in mind God delights in those who seek after him (whether they clearly understand everything they read or not).
6. Know that salvation is in Christ not in detailed knowledge so never be afraid to explore and test what others are teaching.
7. If born into a religious organisation mentally question what you believe until you have made it your own.
8. Treat your time in the Bible as a spiritual journey and adventure of discovery.
9. Pretend you know nothing and allow Scripture to reveal itself to you.
10. Read the verses in context and then apply the principal to yourself.
11. Take time to read it devotionally, be consciously aware that God is with you meditate on the Lord, allow it to transcend your mind to heavenly places, it does not always have to be about learning.
12. Compare what has been taught against the lives of the Jesus and the apostles, i.e., if a teacher is proclaiming that God's children should prosper, be successful and wealthy because they belong to 'God the KING' look at the lives of Jesus and the apostles and test this (and any other) teaching against how they lived.

Sometimes to bring encouragement or comfort (especially in moments of extreme crisis and sorrow) God may highlight a Scripture to the readers mind these are very individual and personal moments that only apply to the readers life, faith and their particular circumstance so they should be treasured as God's intimate gift to the reader only and not taught as something that applies to all.

**Hold fast what is good:** (v16) carries the following two ideas:

1. After testing what you have been taught and found it to be good embrace it, make it a stronghold of your mind, your heart, your life and your faith.

2. Hold fast to love, kindness, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, grace and such like things make growing and increasing in these the goal and ambition of your life.

**Abstain from every form of evil:** (v22) this of course needs no explanation nevertheless I will say flee from everything that dishonours God and brings shame to the name of Jesus and the gives occasion to those outside the Kingdom of God to mock and speak against the Christian faith.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28

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### **May the God of Peace Keep you Blameless.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:23-28:** Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. <sup>25</sup>Brothers, pray for us. <sup>26</sup>Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. <sup>27</sup>I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. <sup>28</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**NOTICE:** Paul's title of God, "The God of peace" (v23) which means whenever there is strife, contention, argument and quarrelling God is not involved nor is Christ present, James in his letter he wrote:

- If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic because where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice, but the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere and from these comes a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace (James 3:14-18).

Clearly, James and Paul understood that the God they worshipped was a God who Spirit inhabits peace.

**May God sanctify you completely:** sanctify means, to make holy, which means that the word holy in Paul's prayer, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely" (v23) carries the idea that brothers and sisters in Christ remain steadfast in faith so that God can declare them fully and completely holy in Christ.

**May your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless:** Paul's prayer, "May your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v23) does not mean that our spirit, soul and body would be kept free from sin, only one man in all history has ever been able to attain to that standard of holiness and perfection and he was the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ. Being blameless in this context means that we do what is right and good. It means treating people with respect and as though they matter, the secular world refers to blameless people as, "A decent person." If being blameless meant we could be without sin while in this mortal and fallen body then Christ died for no purpose.

### **The words, be blameless carries the following eight ideas:**

1. Live a lifestyle that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Forsake those things that are against God's will and any behaviour that could be harmful to another human physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally, mentally or spiritually.
3. Instead of being led by self, ego, pride, lust and greed be led by the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., humbleness, love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, patience, grace and mercy and such like things).
4. Trust solely in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace for righteousness that leads to eternal life, contrasted to trusting in self-effort and ceremonial rites, holy day or religious customs and traditions.

5. Crown biblical knowledge in the royal robe of love, mercy and compassion contrasted to being harsh, dogmatic and legalistic.
6. To do as much as is in our power to maintain the unity of the faith in contrast to causing divisions, arguments, contentions and strife.
7. Confess with honest repentance all sin when we have offended God, brought shame to the Lord or hurt another person especially a brother or sister in the Lord.
8. Put things right were possible when a wrong has be done.

**Noah was blameless:** Scripture says, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation and he walked with God" (Gen 6:9) (Gen 7:1). Righteous and blameless in this context does not mean that Noah was without sin before God, but that he was a decent man, who only did good. Today we don't use the word righteous in this context, we would simply say, he was a very good man, meaning he was kind, decent and treated others with fairness and justice. Notice it says he was blameless in his generation, meaning no human could accuse him of any wrongdoing. Righteousness as used in this context is about being blameless before mankind, and not about being without sin before God

**Job was blameless:** upright, he feared God and turned away from evil. God Himself confirms Jobs righteousness, by saying, "There is none like Job a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" And even after Job had been tested and suffered greatly the LORD said, "Job even continues to hold fast his integrity even though I the LORD have almost destroyed him without reason" (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). Blameless in this context does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human and that he helped the poor and did right before God.

**Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss:** (v26) the word, kiss in the following verse, "Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss" (v26) refers to both brothers and sisters in Christ. During the early church and the era of the apostles the word brothers embraced both men and woman. A holy kiss in this context is a kiss devoid of any romantic or sexual implications it is a kiss you would kiss your biological brother or sister with which expresses the excitement and joy of seeing them again it is a kiss of kinship love.

**Have this letter read to all the brothers:** Paul's final statement, "I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers" (v27) shows how much he valued what he had written in this letter and how much he wanted every brother and sister to understand Christ's return and the lifestyle they should live until that glorious day when we are all gathered together to be with the Lord in eternal glory.

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## FOOTNOTE

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It is interesting to notice that the word brothers, does not always refer to Christian brothers, sometimes it simply refers to people of the same nation. The Jewish nation viewed a Jewish man or woman as a brother regardless of their belief or whether they were female or male. The expression brothers is an ancient expression that shows a kindred spirit, either as belonging to the same family, the same nation or the same faith, but it does not always mean that two people are united in friendship. An example of this is seen in Paul writings; in his letter to the Galatians he refers to false teachers as brothers not because he is one with them in spirit or friendship (obviously), but because they belong to his nation Israel. Which means the word brother in the Bible can be referring to an enemy of Christ or a friend depending on the context. Another interesting fact regarding the use of the word brothers is that during the ancient Roman era even woman (especially those who had authority) were still

referred to as brothers by the Roman Empire. In Christ's time the word, brothers were not limited in its use to men only, but included both men and woman since it was an expression that signified a person belonged to the same family, the same faith, the same nation or the same group of people etc. The word, brothers was not used to differentiate between male and females during the Roman and New Testament era unless the context specifically states it.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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