

# Spirit, Soul, & Body

1 Thessalonians: 5:19-28

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**BIG BEND  
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## 1 Thessalonians 5:9-28 – (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not treat prophecies with contempt <sup>21</sup> but test them all; hold on to what is good, <sup>22</sup> reject every kind of evil. <sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. <sup>25</sup> Brothers and sisters, pray for us. <sup>26</sup> Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. <sup>27</sup> I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. <sup>28</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

### v19 – How do people quench the Spirit?

We can **quench** the fire of the **Spirit** by our doubt, our indifference, our rejection of Him, or by the distraction of others. When people start to draw attention to *themselves*, it is a sure way to **quench the Spirit**.

- “‘Quench’ properly applies to the putting out of a flame of some sort, as that of a fire (Mark 9:48), or a lamp (Matthew 25:8).
- This is the only place in the New Testament where it is used in a metaphorical sense.
- The phrase could be more literally translated, “Stop putting out the Spirit’s fire.”

A flame can be extinguished when it is ignored and no longer tended, or when the flame is overwhelmed by something else.

- There is a quenching of the Spirit in others as well as ourselves by discouraging them.

### v20 – How should we regard Bible prophecy?

The Lord speaks to and through His people today, and we learn to be open to His voice. Of course, we always *test* prophecies (following the command to **test all things**), but we do not **despise** prophecies.

### Why might Paul have had to make this warning not to *treat prophecies with contempt*?

It is possible that prophesy was being despised because individuals were abusing the gift.

- There were idlers among the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12), perhaps who spiritualized their idleness with prophecy.

- There were date-setters and end-times speculators among the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5), perhaps who backed up their speculations with supposed prophetic authority.

### v21 – How do we test all things?

See how they line up with Scripture... if it contradicts God’s Word, it is not of God. It is as simple as that.

- After Thessalonica, Paul was in Berea (Acts 17:10-12). There, the Christians were of a noble character because they diligently searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was true. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be more like the Bereans.

### How should we regard those things that pass the test of Scripture?

*hold fast what is good*: We should regard it as being from God and thus is good and we should believe it.

### v22 – How should we regard evil?

Reject it, abstain from it and expose it...

Ephesians 5:11 – *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

That is how we work with the Holy Spirit to restrain evil; *the unfruitful works of darkness* cannot exposure to the light of truth.

Romans 12:21 – *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

### What is evil?

Evil is usually thought of as that which is morally wrong, sinful, or wicked; the word evil can also refer to anything that causes harm, with or without the moral dimension. The word is used both ways in the Bible.

- Anything that contradicts the holy nature of God is evil (see Psalm 51:4).
- Any disaster, tragedy, or calamity can also be called an “evil” (see 1 Kings 17:20).

Essentially, evil is a lack of goodness.

### **How is evil un-God-like?**

God is love (1 John 4:8); the absence of love in a person is un-God-like and therefore evil. And an absence of love manifests itself in unloving behavior.

- The same can be said concerning God's mercy, justice, patience, etc. The lack of these godly qualities in anyone constitutes evil.

Evil then manifests itself in behavior that is unmerciful, unjust, impatient, etc., bringing more harm into the good world that God has made.

- God is not the author of moral evil; rather, it is His holiness that defines it.

### **Why does God allow evil?**

It serves a purpose... Being created in the image of God, we have a free will and thus able to accept or reject a relationship with Him. God loves us so much that He wanted us to experience the depth of love only possible if we are free to accept or reject Him.

### **v23-24 – What does it mean to be sanctified?**

The idea behind the word **sanctify** is "to set apart" — to make something different and distinct, breaking old associations and forming a new association. For example, a dress is a dress; but a wedding dress is *sanctified* — set apart for a special, glorious purpose.

- God wants us to be *set apart* to Him.

### **What does it mean to be sanctified completely?**

The adjective (*hololeis*), is a compound of *holos*, 'whole, entire,' and *telos*, 'end.' Its basic connotation is 'wholly attaining the end, reaching the intended goal,' hence has the force of no part being left unreached.

### **What role do we have in our sanctification?**

Paul made it clear that sanctification is God's work in us. He puts this emphasis in the words **Himself**, in **be preserved**, in **He who calls you is faithful**, and in **who will do it** (v24).

- Our sanctification will be complete when we are glorified at His coming.

### **But isn't it important to be responsive to the Holy Spirit who convicts us of changes we need to make?**

Certainly, but Christians are defeated on account of self-reliance... God urges us to do certain things, *but* it is only in God's strength that we are able to do them.

### **What does it tell us that our *whole spirit, soul, and body* needs to be *preserved blameless*?**

This reflects one of the ways we were made in the image of God. As God is a triunity of Father, Son, and Spirit, all people are triunities of *spirit, soul, and body*.

### **Aren't the terms *soul* and *spirit* synonymous?**

The Bible makes a distinction...

Hebrews 4:12 – *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

God's Word helps us distinguish what is of God and what is of man. So, I take it...

- The soul is our inner self, our intellect, our personality, the seat of our emotions.
- The human spirit is another component of our inner self which has the capacity to commune with God.

### **If everyone has a human spirit, why doesn't everyone have a relationship with God?**

Because since Adam sinned, all of us are born with a spirit that is dead to God. That is why Jesus said...

John 3:3 – *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Only those who are born from above, whose spirit has been made alive by God have the ability to commune with God. And we have the presence of the Holy Spirit speak with us...

1 Cor 6:19 – *do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*

The presence of the Holy Spirit in us assures of our eternal security in Christ...

Romans 8:16 – *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

### **How are we sanctified completely when we are resurrected?**

Our born-again spirit is a down payment on our ultimate body and soul resurrection (glorification)...

Ephesians 1:13-14 – *having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory*

So, this means that our soul will be resurrected along with our bodies. Our resurrected souls will not have a selfish sin nature that seeks to put ourselves ahead of others...

1 John 3:2 – *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

### **Is there significance to the order of *spirit, soul, and body*?**

God designed the human to live after the order of **spirit, soul, and body** instead of *body, soul, spirit*. We are to submit the needs of the *body* to the *soul*, and the needs of both *body and soul* to the needs of the *spirit*.

**v25 – What is significant about the mature Apostle Paul asking for prayer from new believers?**

The effectiveness of the prayers of new believers can be as powerful as from mature believers...

Romans 8:26 – *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

**v26 – What is a holy kiss?**

This is how brethren greeted one another in their culture... The idea is that Paul wants those who *read* the letter to **greet** all the Christians in Thessalonica on his behalf.

**v27 – What did Paul want the Thessalonians to do with his epistle?**

*I charge you by the Lord:* Paul used a strong phrase here. It was important that **this epistle be read** among Christians. This is an unusual statement, unique in Paul's letters. Many different reasons have been suggested for why Paul added this phrase at the end of his letter.

- Since this was his first letter, there was as of yet no established custom of the public reading of his letters, and he wanted to make sure the practice was established.
- Paul wanted to make sure that the church heard the letter first-hand, and not through intermediaries who might misstate his message.

**v28 – What does it mean, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you?***

**Grace** is God's unmerited favor, His bestowal of love and acceptance on us because of who He is and what Jesus has done. **Grace** means that He likes us, and all the reasons are in Him. **Grace** means we can stop working for His love and start receiving it.

**How may one obtain God's grace?**

By believing in Jesus Christ, God's provision for eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8–9 – *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), but those who have saving faith in God's Son are declared righteous (Romans 4:5; Philippians 3:9) and live in God's favor.

**How does God's grace benefit us in the here and now?**

Those who are favored of God know that God is with them and that nothing can happen to them apart from His good purpose...

Romans 8:28 – *we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*

They have His ear as they walk through dark valleys (Psalm 34:15) and know that their struggle to remain true to Him will not go unrewarded (Matthew 10:42; Rev 2:10).

- We rest in quiet confidence that our sins are forgiven (Romans 4:7), we are within the plan of God (Psalm 86:11), and that He is there for us at all times (Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:20).
- We walk with God as with our closest friend. We begin to see and appreciate the little blessings that God provides for our enjoyment—blessings that we once took for granted.

**What applications come to mind from this passage?**

- Don't quench the Spirit; encourage those serving God.
- Evil should be rejected, abstained from and exposed.
- People are triunities of spirit, soul and body; we'll always be spirit, soul and body even in heaven.
- God's grace is His gift to; receive it by faith.