

## I Thessalonians 5:6–19

*I Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

**T**HE Greek word for *sleep* is #2518 *katheudó*. When used figuratively, it means, as *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines it, “to yield to sloth and sin, and be indifferent to one’s salvation: Ephesians 5:14;<sup>1</sup> I Thessalonians 5:6.” When men are asleep to the spiritual realm, they cannot perceive and are not aware of the opportunity for salvation or of future judgment for sin.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Thess. 5:6) In this passage there is an allusion to the fact that persons not only sleep in the night, but that they are frequently drunken in the night also. The idea is, that the Lord Jesus, when he comes, will find the wicked sunk not only in carnal security, but in sinful indulgences, and that those who are Christians ought not only to be awake and to watch as in the day-time, but to be temperate. They ought to be like persons engaged in the sober, honest, and appropriate employments of the day, and not like those who waste their days in sleep, and their nights in revelry.

The opposite of spiritual sleep is vigilance to hearing God’s voice and avoiding the danger of disobedience and rejection of God’s commandments. A spiritually watchful man is aware of the dangers of sin and warns others of divine judgment.

*Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me* (Ezek. 3:17). Conscious of the possibility of being found unapproved and suffering the Lord’s wrath, the watchman will apply himself first by preparing for the Lord’s arrival and second by warning others of potential judgment.

*I Thessalonians 5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

If a man lives in sin, his sin will keep him asleep and separate him from any true awareness of the Lord and future judgment for sin. Like an intoxicated man who does not know where he has been the previous night or what he has done, so are those who are unprepared for Christ’s return, equally as ignorant of their sinful state and the coming judgment for sin. God’s Word clearly reveals that the soul that sins will die,<sup>2</sup> yet those who sleep in the night know nothing of the great consequences they will reap by choosing such as a manner of living. A spiritually sleeping and drunken man also has no real awareness of Jesus Christ or the exalted position of the Son of God because he does not possess the spiritual ears and eyes to perceive Him. (*According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and*

1 Eph. 5:14 *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

2 Ezek. 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

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ears that they should not hear;) unto this day (Rom. 11:8).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 11:8) *The spirit of slumber*—The spirit of slumber is not different from slumber itself. The word "spirit" is often used thus. The word "slumber" here is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The Greek word, however *κατανύξεως katanuxeōs*, implies also the notion of compunction, and hence in the margin it is rendered "remorse." It means any emotion, or any influence whatever, that shall benumb the faculties, and make them insensible. Hence, it here means simply insensibility.

Oblivious to God and the higher spiritual realm, those in sin are totally unaware of the wrath of God promised to all who remain in it.

***I Thessalonians 5:8 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.***

Just as in verse 6, in which the believer is exhorted to *watch and be sober*, now he is instructed to put on as defensive armor the *breastplate of faith and love* and the *helmet, the hope of salvation*, which will prepare him for the day of the Lord. The contrast to being drunk and sleeping in the night is the pursuit of faith, love, and the hope of salvation. By these spiritual qualities Christians prove themselves to be of the day and connected to the realm of the Holy Spirit. It is also worthy of note that the spiritual qualities that the apostle encourages the Thessalonians to pursue and add to their lives are not qualities the

unsaved can possess since he who does not have the Spirit cannot grow in qualities solely derived from it. Hence, if men are devoid of these divine qualities, even if they are religious, it is certain that they remain dead in sin<sup>3</sup> and ignorant to the Holy Spirit, from which faith, love, and hope originate.<sup>4</sup> The result of this is to remain carnally minded, which ultimately separates men from any chance of eternal life and peace. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace* (Rom. 8:6).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 8:6) *For to be carnally minded*—Margin, "The minding of the flesh." The sense is, that to follow the inclinations of the flesh, or the corrupt propensities of our nature, leads us to condemnation and death. The expression is one of great energy, and shows that it not only leads to death, or leads to misery, but that it is death itself; there is woe and condemnation in the very act and purpose of being supremely devoted to the corrupt passions. Its only tendency is condemnation and despair.

*Is death*—The penalty of transgression; condemnation and eternal ruin; Note, Romans 5:12.<sup>5</sup>

*But to be spiritually minded*—Margin, "The minding of the Spirit." That is, making it the object of the mind, the end and aim of the actions, to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, and to submit to his influence. To be spiritually minded is to seek those feelings and views which the Holy Spirit produces, and to follow his leadings.

*Is life*—This is opposed to death in Romans 8:5.<sup>6</sup> It tends to life, and is in fact real life. For

<sup>3</sup> Eph. 2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

Col. 2:13 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup>Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 8:5 *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

to possess and cultivate the graces of the spirit, to be led where he would guide us, is the design of our existence, and is the only path of happiness.

It is only when sinners are tired of their flesh and the unholiness and uncleanness of it that the desire for holy things will enter the heart and a search for God will start. This journey undoubtedly begins with the pursuit of faith.

*Faith.* The first quality the apostle lists for the Thessalonians to manifest is that which produces peace with God. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 5:1). Man in his fallen state is at war with the Lord, and the Lord with him.<sup>7</sup> Hence, it is only when faith in God is desired that men prove themselves willing to come under divine government since no man would seek to believe if he had not already determined that he would yield to the One in Whom he is seeking to believe. Thus, by the pursuit of faith men prove themselves willing to hear God's voice and follow His commandments. At its core, faith is an act of submission to divine rule and government.

*Love.* If any do not love, they do not know God.<sup>8</sup> This is true because love is the highest form of piety and the very essence of true religion. Thus, not until men are acquainted with and manifest divine love in their hearts and lives can we know that they are truly born of God and possess fellowship with Him. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God* (I John 4:7). It is love that is the strongest evidence of the new birth, and it is love that proves a man truly born of God.

So also because God is love, any who do not love cannot know Him and categorically have not become His own. The absence of love reveals that men remain estranged from God, simply because love is what God is. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (I John 4:16). There is no greater evidence of pure and holy religion than when divine love is manifested in the Lord's people. Jesus said that men would know who were His true disciples by the love they held one for one another. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another* (John 13:35). Love is therefore that spiritual test that reveals if a man is a true son of God or if he merely panhandles Christ's name. Ultimately every true child of God will be taught by God to love, and there is no exception to this rule. *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another* (I Thess. 4:9).

*Hope of salvation.* He who has faith in the Lord and has obeyed His commandment to love will anticipate and long for his full salvation. Just as critical as faith and love are to the human heart, equally as important is *hope*. Christian doctrine therefore should never be deemed complete until the hope of Christ's return dominates the believer's heart as much as faith and love are purposed to manifest itself in their lives. It is also only when faith, love, and hope are possessed that Christian doctrine is complete. Whatever a man hopes for is what he will navigate toward. If it is carnal hopes, he is proved to be a carnal man. But if his hope is the Son of God, he is proved to be a spiritual man, one who possesses a sincere love

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Jas. 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

<sup>8</sup> I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

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for God, manifested by anticipation for Christ's return.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 1 Thess. 5:8) Faith, hope, and love, are the three pre-eminent graces (1 Th 1:3; 1 Co 13:13).<sup>9</sup> We must not only be awake and sober, but also armed; not only watchful, but also guarded. The armor here is only defensive; in Eph 6:13–17,<sup>10</sup> also offensive. Here, therefore, the reference is to the Christian means of being guarded against being surprised by the day of the Lord as a thief in the night. The helmet and breastplate defend the two vital parts, the head and the heart respectively. "With head and heart right, the whole man is right" [Edmunds]. The head needs to be kept from error, the heart from sin.*

***I Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,***

*Obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If a man truly desires to obtain salvation, then he must realize that he can gain it solely through faith in Jesus Christ—simply because it is through the Son of God that God saves men. Ultimately there is no other way to enter heaven apart from responding to God's call in Christ, which implores the unsaved to be reconciled to

God.<sup>11</sup> It is through Jesus Christ that God has called men to Himself, and there is no true reality of abiding with God apart from faith in Christ. It is through Him that salvation is offered to sinners and only through Him that eternal life can be gained. Because the Thessalonians had believed in Jesus Christ, their appointment was not to suffer God's wrath but to obtain the salvation offered through God's Son. Hence, they did not need to fear being judged by the Lord because their destiny was now to be saved by Him. It is the very same God Who saves men if they believe as the God Who brings divine wrath if they do not. The true Christian's appointment is not to wrath but to be saved from it by the Son.

***I Thessalonians 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.***

To *live together* with the Son of God is the Christian's hope. Charles Spurgeon said that if Christ died for you, then He will not forget you.<sup>12</sup> It also makes no difference whether believers wake or sleep, or are dead or alive, because those whom Christ died for are purposed to live with Him.<sup>13</sup> In John 17 Jesus' prayer<sup>14</sup> directly

9 *I Thess. 1:3 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;*

*I Cor. 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

10 *Eph. 6:13–17 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; <sup>15</sup>And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

*<sup>16</sup>Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

11 *II Cor. 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

12 "God's Memorial Of His People" (No. 3441), published Jan. 14, 1915

13 *John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

14 *John 17 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: <sup>2</sup>As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. <sup>4</sup>I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, O Father, glorify thy name with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. <sup>6</sup>I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. <sup>7</sup>Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. <sup>8</sup>For I have given unto them the*

preceded His crucifixion and death. In this prayer we observe how it was the Son of God's desire that all who believed upon Him would one day ultimately behold Him and be with Him where He now is. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world* (John 17:24). The ones spoken of, whom Jesus says God has given Him, are those who have believed the record that God has given of His Son.<sup>15</sup> It is they who are promised sight of Christ's glory, and they who are promised to live together with Him. Hence, those who have believed the re-

cord that God has given of His Son are promised to live eternally with the Son of God, Who presently sits in heaven.<sup>16</sup> This, no doubt, included the Thessalonian believers to whom Paul was writing. None also can freely give themselves to Jesus Christ until first they have been chosen to be His possession.

The glory referenced that Christians will be able to behold is the glory of God, which will be seen to be bodily housed in the Son of God. It is similar to the beatific vision that Peter, James, and John observed when Jesus was transfigured before them.<sup>17</sup> This is the reward of faith, and all who have sincerely believed upon Je-

*words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* <sup>9</sup>*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.* <sup>10</sup>*And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.* <sup>11</sup>*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.* <sup>12</sup>*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.* <sup>13</sup>*And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* <sup>14</sup>*I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* <sup>15</sup>*I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.* <sup>16</sup>*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* <sup>17</sup>*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* <sup>18</sup>*As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* <sup>19</sup>*And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* <sup>20</sup>*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;* <sup>21</sup>*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* <sup>22</sup>*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:* <sup>23</sup>*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* <sup>24</sup>*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* <sup>25</sup>*O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.* <sup>26</sup>*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

<sup>15</sup> I John 5:11-13 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.<sup>12</sup> He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.<sup>13</sup> These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

<sup>16</sup> Col. 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

<sup>17</sup> Luke 24:50-51 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.<sup>51</sup> And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

<sup>18</sup> Heb. 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

<sup>19</sup> Eph. 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

<sup>20</sup> 17 Matt. 17:1-8 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,<sup>2</sup> And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.<sup>3</sup> And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.<sup>4</sup> Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.<sup>5</sup> While he yet spake, behold, a bright

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sus Christ will be partakers of it. For true believers will see and behold the fullness of the godhead dwelling bodily in God's Son. This celestial glory that saints will be privileged to ultimately observe will be the result of having faith in Christ. Hence, only those who have believed upon the Son of God will be given full sight of the fullness of the Godhead, dwelling bodily in Him. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily* (Col. 2:9).

(*Benson Commentary*, Col. 2:9–10) *For in him dwelleth—Inhabitheth, κατοικει, continually abideth; all the fulness of the Godhead—Believers may be filled with all the fulness of God, Ephesians 3:19;<sup>18</sup> but in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, the most full Godhead, Colossians 1:19;<sup>19</sup> bodily—Really, substantially. The very substance of God, if one might so speak, dwells in Christ in the most full sense. “It is plain,” says Dr. Doddridge, “that the Godhead is an anglicism equivalent to Deity. . . . I assuredly believe, that as it contains an evident allusion to the Shechinah, in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the glorious Emmanuel, which makes him such an object of our hope and confidence, as the most exalted creature, with the most glorious endowments, could never of himself be.”*

***I Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.***

When love is sufficiently strong, it cannot be broken, and this is especially true regarding Christ's love for those He has called to Himself to be a partaker of heav-

en's blessings. It is because of love for His people that Christ died, and this love cannot be interrupted until they ultimately share with Him in His own glory. The comforting message that the Thessalonians were to share with one another was that whether alive or dead, or awake or asleep, all would collectively live with the Savior. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one* (John 17:22).

***I Thessalonians 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;***

True ministers of the gospel are heavenly gifts whom Christ has given for the purposes of the church's edification.<sup>20</sup> Because the Son of God has placed these spiritual ministers in the church, it is a great affront to His spiritual authority if their divine appointment is not spiritually respected. To be subject to the Son of God requires that men freely become subject not only to Jesus' words and the Holy Spirit but also to those heavenly ministries both ordained and sent by Christ for the church's edification. It is through these divine ministries that Christ governs His people and when necessary, admonishes them. Without the heavenly ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers both overseeing and functioning in the church, believers would be tossed to and fro, carried about with many false and misleading doctrines, doctrines that would not lead to a greater faith in and knowledge of the Son of

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*cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. <sup>6</sup>And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. <sup>7</sup>And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. <sup>8</sup>And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

<sup>18</sup> Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

<sup>19</sup> Col. 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

<sup>20</sup> Eph. 4:11–12 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup>For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

God<sup>21</sup> but are actually intended to lead people away from Him. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive* (Eph. 4:14).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:14) *Tossed to and fro*—κλυδωνιζόμενοι *kludōnizomenoi*. This word is taken from waves or billows that are constantly tossed about—in all ages an image of instability of character and purpose.

*And carried about with every wind of doctrine*—With no firmness; no settled course; no helm. The idea is that of a vessel on the restless ocean, that is tossed about with every varying wind, and that has no settled line of sailing. So many persons are in regard to religious doctrines. They have no fixed views and principles. They hold no doctrines that are settled in their minds by careful and patient examination, and the consequence is, that they yield to every new opinion, and submit to the guidance of every new teacher. . . . No man can be useful who has not settled principles. No one who has not such principles can inspire confidence or be happy, and the first aim of every young convert should be to acquire settled views of the truth, and to become firmly grounded in the doctrines of the gospel.

When children are young, they are most vulnerable to deception. This is especially true concerning those who, though born of God, remain spiritually immature. Just as an infant will place virtually anything into his mouth, whether it is dangerous or not, so new believers, because of their lack of proper spiritual instruction,

can easily be deceived to receive false doctrines that will not strengthen and settle them but actually create greater instability in their lives. The devil's playground is often within the church, where also through planting tares amongst the wheat,<sup>22</sup> false doctrines are introduced. Whenever also these false doctrines are received into the church, saints will be led away from the simplicity of religion that is found in Christ. *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ* (II Cor. 11:3).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, II Cor. 11:3) *But I fear*— . . . The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact that the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. The grounds of his fear were:

- (1) That Satan had seduced the first woman, thus demonstrating that the most holy ones were in danger of being led astray by temptation; and,
- (2) That special efforts were made to seduce them from the faith. The persuasive arts of the false teachers; the power of philosophy; and the attractive and corrupting influences of the world, he had reason to suppose might be employed to seduce them from simple attachment to Christ.

Just as there are true ministers in Christ's church, so also are there an equal amount of, if not more, imposters sent by Satan to deceive the elect,<sup>23</sup> imposters who stealth-

21 Eph. 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

22 Matt. 13:25 *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

23 Matt. 24:24 *For 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.*

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ily come in Christ's name<sup>24</sup> yet have no true relationship with Him.<sup>25</sup>

*I Thessalonians 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

It is God's will that those spiritual gift ministers whom Christ has set in His church are held in the highest regard—that they are honored and loved because of the labor they faithfully exert toward the gospel's advancement. All Christian works are to be respected, and none more so than those spiritual ministers who labor because of love to both spread the gospel and care for those already in it. It is also true that these divine ministers should not be merely esteemed but also *highly* esteemed because of the selfless labor of love they exert through both imparting and advancing the believers' faith and trust in God's Son.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 5:13) *Very highly in love.*—... The bond which binds the Christian community to their directors is not to be one of "recognition" and obedience only (1 Thessalonians 5:12),<sup>26</sup> but of holy affection above all.

*And be at peace among yourselves.* It is important that saints maintain peace not only with those who have rule and oversight over them but also amongst themselves. Thus, even as both flock and shepherd are purposed to be at peace, so also should members strive for this same spiritual peace between each other. It is the will of God that there is no schism or divisions in the church<sup>27</sup> simply because where division and schism are, there will also be marring of the Lord's temple, where also the Lord now dwells.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the peace that Jesus has established between the believers and God,<sup>29</sup> between believer and believer,<sup>30</sup> and between believers and ministers should manifest itself throughout the entire Christian assembly.<sup>31</sup> By this, Christ's ministry to establish peace in the kingdom of God<sup>32</sup> is both honored and respected. Because Jesus has brought peace to men<sup>33</sup> and established peace between sinners and God, then the Lord's peace should burgeon and flourish throughout the family of God. The pursuit of peace is also not a small thing but is in fact indicative of being a child of God. *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God* (Matt. 5:9).

24 Matt. 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

25 Matt. 7:21–23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup>And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

26 I Thess. 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

27 I Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

28 I Cor. 3:16–17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? <sup>17</sup>If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

29 Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

30 Eph. 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

31 Heb. 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

32 Col. 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

33 John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(Benson Commentary, Matt. 5:9) *The peace-makers*—Those who are themselves of a peaceable temper, and endeavour to promote peace in others: who *study to be quiet*,<sup>34</sup> and, as *much as in them lieth*, to live peaceably with all men:<sup>35</sup> who are so far from sowing the seeds of discord between any of their fellow-creatures, that they both studiously avoid contention themselves, and labour to extinguish it wherever it prevails, laying themselves out to heal the differences of brethren and neighbours, to reconcile contending parties, and to restore peace wherever it is broken, as well as to preserve it where it is. *They shall be called the children of God*—That is, they are and shall be owned by God as his genuine children, by reason of their great likeness to him: for he is *the God of peace and love*, and *is in Christ reconciling the world to himself not imputing their trespasses to them*.

***I Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.***

Everyone in Christ's spiritual body is spiritually responsible for caring for and being concerned with all the other members in it. This includes both warning the unruly and comforting the feebleminded, if necessary.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Thess. 5:14) *Warn them*—The same word which in 1 Thessalonians 5:12<sup>36</sup> is rendered "admonish." It is the duty of every church member, as well as of the ministers of the gospel, affectionately to admonish those whom they

know to be living contrary to the requirements of the gospel. One reason why there is so little piety in the church, and why so many professors of religion go astray, is, that the great mass of church members feel no responsibility on this subject. They suppose that it is the duty only of the officers of the church to admonish an erring brother, and hence many become careless and cold and worldly, and no one utters a kind word to them to recall them to a holy walk with God.

***I Thessalonians 5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.***

All recompense, if others sin against us, must be left to the Lord,<sup>37</sup> Who alone has sufficient sight and wisdom to execute justice properly. There is but One power and ultimate authority purposed to render unto men as they have sown,<sup>38</sup> and it should never be any man's right, let alone his responsibility, to render evil for evil. Thus, there is no reason whatsoever that the people of God should ever render back either evil for evil or railing for railing. To do so is completely contrary to how the Savior said His disciples should conduct themselves. The opposite response, therefore, of rendering evil for evil is to *follow that which is good*. This pursuit of both following and pursuing good is to be exercised toward not only those in the family of God but also all outside it. Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of

34 I Thess. 4:11 *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*

35 Rom. 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

36 I Thess. 5:12 *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;*

37 Deut. 32:35 *To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*

Prov. 20:22 *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

II Thess. 1:6 *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;*

38 Gal. 6:7–8 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

<sup>8</sup>*For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

## The Dead Shall Rise

the devil,<sup>39</sup> and His people should seek to manifest this same generosity of life. Ultimately God has purposed every Christian to do good works, and this should be his primary objective in life. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (Eph. 2:10). By pursuing good, through good works, Christians will discover satisfaction of life and peace within themselves. It is also for the preordained purpose of doing good that saints were created in Christ Jesus. By doing good, and manifesting good works in our lives, the Lord is glorified. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven* (Matt. 5:16).

(*Benson Commentary*, Matt. 5:16) *Let your light*—The light of that doctrine which you receive from me, and the light of your holy conversation, *so shine before men*—Be so evident and apparent unto men, *that they may see your good works, and glorify, &c.*—That is, that seeing your good works they may both praise God for sending such a religion into the world, and also, embracing your faith, may imitate your holy example, or may be moved to love and serve God as you do, and thereby to glorify him.

Because saints also have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works, they should live their lives with the express purpose of fulfilling them. By this God is glorified, and the light of God is made visible to a world in darkness.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Eph. 2:10) *Created in Christ Jesus for good works. . .* The purpose of the new creation is to produce them. Christ “gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people of his own, zealous of good works.” It is not good works first, and grace after; but grace first, and good works after (see Titus 2:11, 14<sup>40</sup>). *Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* A further proof of the true origin of good works. They are the subjects of a Divine decree. Before the foundation of the world it was ordained that whoever should be saved by grace should walk in good works. The term “walk,” here denotes the habitual tenor of the life; it is to be spent in an atmosphere of good works. Here we have one of the Divine safeguards against the abuse of the doctrine of salvation by grace. When men hear of salvation irrespective of works, they are apt to fancy that works are of little use, and do not need to be carefully attended to. On the contrary, they are part of the Divine decree, and if we are not living a life of good works, we have no reason to believe that we have been saved by grace.

Because saints are God’s creation, and because God has purposed that they should reveal His goodness to the world,<sup>41</sup> then doing good should be as spiritually natural to believers as doing evil is to sinners.

(*Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, Eph. 2:10) *Unto good works: as the immediate end for which we are new-created. We receive our new being that we may bring forth new works, and have a carriage suitable to our new principle.*

***1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.***

39 Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

40 Tit. 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Tit. 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

41 1 Chrn. 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ps. 86:5 For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Ps. 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Ps. 145:9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

No one in the history of the world has been given more reason to rejoice for the life given to them than Christians. Christians are the most blessed of all people and therefore should faithfully and joyfully thank and praise the Lord for the abundant life given to them. And though many of God's blessings are intangible and reside in heaven,<sup>42</sup> still they are as real and substantial as anything material. The Lord is good beyond all measure, and none are aware of this more than those He has saved and made His own. For none can come into contact with the one true God and not be amazed at His goodness. All true Christians are therefore instructed to *rejoice evermore*, simply because there should never be any lasting reason to do otherwise. The ability to rejoice and praise God for the blessings given to us stems from the spiritual reality that believers are actually given the Lord's own joy when saved by Him. Thus, he who has been imparted with Jesus' spiritual

joy<sup>43</sup> will have both sufficient strength and reason to rejoice, simply because it is what Christ has imparted into his heart.

***I Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.***

If a man has a genuine relationship with the Father, it will be proven in his prayer life. Prayer is that means, whether rendered for thanksgiving<sup>44</sup> or seeking direction<sup>45</sup> or pursuing forgiveness,<sup>46</sup> through which believers reveal their great dependence upon God. He who prays unceasingly is aware of his own earthly weakness and his great need for God's power to both preserve his life and bring blessings into it. A praying man is by all measures a truly dependent man, leaning upon God not only for life but also for that which makes earthly life pleasurable.

***I Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***

42 Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

43 John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

44 Neh. 11:17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakkukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Luke 2:37–38 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.<sup>38</sup> And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

John 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

45 Exod. 33:13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

II Sam. 2:1 And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

46 Deut. 21:8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them.

Ps. 51:1–4 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Ps. 32:5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

## The Dead Shall Rise

The will of God for saints is that in all things they give thanks.<sup>47</sup> Just as joy and rejoicing will fill the standing believer's heart, so should the giving of thanks be his constant habit. There is much to thank God for, and the Holy Spirit will remind us of it daily. So many blessings have been given to believers by God that they are exhorted not to forget all of them. Hence, no Christian, regardless of his attention to detail, could ever calculate and sum up properly all that God has done for him. For this reason the spiritual exhortation is to *forget not all His benefits*. It is worthy of note that there is no true Christian who is not first a thankful Christian. *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits* (Ps. 103:2).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 103:2) The call here on his soul is not to forget these divine dealings, as laying the foundation for praise. We shall find, when we reach the end of life, that all which God has done, however dark and mysterious it may have appeared at the time, was so connected with our good as to make it a proper subject of praise and thanksgiving.

The opposite of manifesting godly thankfulness is remaining unthankful.<sup>48</sup> He who is not thankful to the Lord and all that has been given to him must in some degree or measure murmur against Him.<sup>49</sup>

So great also is the sin of unthankfulness that it is connected to not giving the Lord the glory due His name and is a very clear indication of man's spiritual depravity. *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened* (Rom. 1:21).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 1:21) *Neither were thankful*— ... The apostle here clearly regards this unwillingness to render gratitude to God for his mercies as one of the causes of their subsequent corruption and idolatry. The reasons of this are the following.

(1) the effect of ingratitude is to render the heart hard and insensible.

(2) people seek to forget the Being to whom they are unwilling to exercise gratitude.

(3) to do this, they fix their affections on other things; and hence, the pagan expressed their gratitude not to God, but to the sun, and moon, and stars, etc., the mediums by which God bestows his favors upon people. And we may here learn that an unwillingness to thank God for his mercies is one of the most certain causes of alienation and hardness of heart.

***1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.***

<sup>47</sup> Eph. 5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Col. 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

Col. 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Phil. 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

<sup>48</sup> II Tim. 3:2 *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

<sup>49</sup> Num. 14:2 *And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!*

Deut. 1:27 *And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.*

Being filled with God's Holy Spirit will create a divine fire within the believer.<sup>50</sup> It is this supernatural driving force that should never be quenched. This could be done if saints do not care for themselves spiritually and/or if they engage so much in the world, that their spiritual fire is dampened. To *quench not the Spirit* means that believers should not dampen the spiritual fire placed within their souls, nor resist the Spirit's urging to carry out the Lord's divine will in their lives. In truth, every true and faithful Christian will be on fire for the Lord. Wherever then the Spirit of God truly abides and men are led by It, spiritual fire will fill their souls. Like the two men on the road to Emmaus, the inward man will burn with spiritual excitement when Christ is revealing Himself to His people.<sup>51</sup> It is this spiritual fire within the soul that is the genesis of all true spiritual transfor-

mation and gospel advancement. For he who burns with spiritual excitement for the Lord will also quickly seek to spread His name to others.

It is common in Scripture for God's presence to be manifested in the form of fire. This is because fire is one of the elements that God likens Himself to. Examples include when the Lord revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush<sup>52</sup> and later manifested His presence to both Moses and Israel on Mount Sinai, through smoke and a visible holy fire.<sup>53</sup> Israel was led to Canaan via a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.<sup>54</sup> When Daniel received his vision of the Ancient of Days, he observed the Lord sitting upon a throne ablaze with fire<sup>55</sup>—even as when God spoke to Israel He spoke out of the midst of a fire.<sup>56</sup> The Psalms also speak of a spiritual fire devouring all before the Lord while a

50 Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

51 Luke 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

52 Exod. 3:2-6 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. <sup>4</sup>And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. <sup>5</sup>And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. <sup>6</sup>Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

53 Exod. 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

54 Exod. 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

Exod. 40:38 For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

55 Dan. 7:9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

56 Deut. 4:33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

Deut. 5:22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

Deut. 5:24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

Deut. 9:10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

## The Dead Shall Rise

tempest raged round about.<sup>57</sup> The gospels reveal that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.<sup>58</sup> On the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were gathered together in the upper room obeying Jesus' command to wait for the promise of the Father,<sup>59</sup> which we now know as the Holy Spirit, the Scripture reveals that the Spirit descended from heaven, accompanied by a *rushing mighty wind* and *cloven tongues like as of fire*.<sup>60</sup> The Bible also reveals that the Lord will try every man's work through the agency of fire in order to determine its true worth, whether it is precious stone—or wood, hay, and stubble.<sup>61</sup> Thus fire is often used to denote the presence of the Lord and if necessary, His

anger and judgment toward sin.<sup>62</sup> Last, in respect to the Son of God and in John's vision of the Savior, Jesus is portrayed in heaven, as possessing eyes as a flame of fire. *His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire* (Rev. 1:14).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Rev. 1:14) *His eyes were as a flame of fire*.—Comp. Revelation 19:12; Daniel 10:6.<sup>63</sup> The eyes of the Lord, which are in every place, beholding the evil and the good, are here described as like unto fire, to express not merely indignation (He had looked once on the Jewish rulers in indignation) against evil, but determination to consume it; for our God is a consuming fire, purging away sin from those who forsake sin, and consuming in their sin

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57 Ps. 50:3 *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

58 Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

59 Acts 1:4 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

60 Acts 2:1–4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

61 I Cor. 3:12–13 *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; <sup>13</sup>Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

62 Num. 11:1 *And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.*

Num. 16:35 *And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.*

II Kgs. 1:10–14 *And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. <sup>11</sup>Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. <sup>12</sup>And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. <sup>13</sup>And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. <sup>14</sup>Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.*

63 Rev. 19:12 *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

Dan. 10:6 *His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

those who refuse to be separated from it. (See Revelation 20:9; Daniel 7:9–10; Jude 1:7.<sup>64</sup>)

By understanding the spiritual nature of God, as a fire, we should recognize the great importance of Paul's command to the Thessalonians to *quench not the Spirit*, which is in fact minimizing and suppressing the Spirit's powerful influence in our lives. To therefore *quench the Spirit* is to minimize God's spiritual and strong presence in our lives and therefore to limit His will from being fully obeyed. To *quench the Spirit* is to quench that holy spiritual fire produced by the Holy Spirit, which has been placed in all true believers. It is to dampen the spiritual zeal that prompts men to carry out God's will and make His name known to the world. He also who has lost his fire for the Lord has equally lost all true fellowship with Him—simply because there is no stronger evidence that a man is both filled with and then is led by God's Spirit than when spiritual fire fills his soul. Hence, if spiritual fire is not what drives a man, then you can be

certain that the Holy Spirit no longer governs him, and sadly, sometimes has even completely left him.<sup>65</sup> Consequently like love, where fire is not you can be sure God is not. For no man can be filled with the Holy Spirit and not be filled with a passionate desire and fervor to both know more of God, and do His will.

(*Benson Commentary*, I Thess. 5:19) *Quench not the Spirit*— ... It is easy to observe that the qualities and effects of the Spirit's influences are here compared to those of fire. See note on Matthew 3:11.<sup>66</sup> And as fire may be quenched, not only by pouring water upon it, or heaping upon it earth and ashes, but by withholding fuel from it, or even by neglecting to stir it up; so the enlightening, quickening, renewing, purifying, and comforting operations of the Spirit may be quenched, not only by the commission of known and wilful sin, and by immersing our minds too deeply in worldly business, and burdening them with worldly cares, but by omitting to use the private or public means of grace, the fuel provided to nourish this sacred fire, and by neglecting to stir up the gifts and graces which are in us.

64 Rev. 20:9 *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

Dan. 7:9–10 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.<sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

Jude 1:7 *Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

65 I Sam. 16:14 *But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.*

66 Matt. 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

