

An Attempt at

LISTENING TO THE LORD

in

Paul's **FIRST** Epistle to the

THESSALONIANS.

Ch. 1-3 is concerned with the PAST, and the part Paul had played in it. Reminding, reinforcing, explaining Paul's attitude and actions. A good defence against any attempt to counter the truths Paul had proclaimed by slandering his person, motives, and action.

Ch. 4-5 is concerned with the FUTURE. Exhortations to confident hope, and activity suitable as preparation for the Coming of Christ. Supplementing what Paul had already taught but been unable to complete.

Commentaries by Best, Bruce, Hiebert, Hogg & Vine, McDonald, Marshall, Milliken, Morris, Neil, Stott, Wanamaker, Wilson, have been explored, material absorbed, adjusted, and simplified for this study aid. They could all repay reading by those who have the time. Their versions and some 15 others, along with the Translators's handbook, Concordances and Vine's Expository Dictionary, have helped to make the text clear to me.

Because of space constraints only Key words commented on have been set out. These notes are intended as a study aid to use as you work through the Epistle verse by verse. We need to deal directly with the Lord in His Word, using any helps as tools to this end.

E. Read

Explanation of signs "BRETHREN/brothers" is KJV/ Niv.

LXX is Septuagint Greek OT. [RT]= Received Text. [Nes]= Nestle Text

marks an important word defined for future use. #14 = This GREEK word was used in Ch. 1, vs 4.

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BRIEF BACKGROUND

(A fuller background is given in the II Thessalonians Booklet)

ACTS 17, tells of the visit of Paul and his friends to this major seaport city of about 200,000 people. Paul's preaching at the Synagogue resulted in the conversion of some Jews, and a larger number of God-fearing Gentiles. Driven from the Synagogue after three Sabbath days Paul seems to have stayed on for some weeks and seen a number of raw heathen added to the Church, as these Epistles ignore the OT and are directed to Gentile Christians.

Jewish antagonism to Paul's successful preaching stirred up a mob to attack Jason's house, looking for Paul. The city authorities were told that Paul was promoting Jesus as a rival to Caesar, so they put Jason under a bond which he would forfeit if there was further trouble. This left Paul in an awkward position, unable to return without Jason's approval, and yet open to the charge of leaving the converts to suffer persecution for which they could blame him.

After a brief visit to Berea, Paul went on to Athens, sending Timothy back to see how the Believers were coping, encourage them, and bring news. Paul wrote this from Corinth, having suffered opposition, ridicule, and discouragement in three towns since leaving Thessalonica. It seems as if the Epistle had been half completed when Timothy brought his cheering news. Paul's loving pastoral concern for the readers fits the reality of his recent experiences as recorded in Acts.

Paul is careful to show that God, who unlike Paul is ever with them, is all important in the Gospel, and in their lives. He reminds them of the content of the Gospel, and his motivation, attitude, and behaviour as its Apostle, which sets an ideal for all of God's servants to aim at. The loyalty and joy under persecution of the converts also sets a good example. Chapters 4 and 5 give further teaching concerning the Lord's coming for Believers, and exhortations to live hard-working, moral, and mutually supportive lives as a witness to the saving power of God and His Gospel.

In writing to the Romans, who he'd never seen, Paul set out the Gospel systematically. But here he assumes their understanding of its basic doctrines, and writes informal, practical, pastoral exhortations that make sense only on the basis of those unstated doctrines he'd proclaimed to them recently. As it was written about AD 52 it shows that 18 years after Pentecost those doctrines were already clearly established, understood and their practical application common knowledge. It may be the first book of the NT.

Throughout the Epistle, God and the Lord Jesus Christ are referred to together quite casually/naturally, as closely associated. This shows that their unity, substantial equality of Person, and Joint activity was already taken for granted. While the Cross isn't mentioned specifically, the Lord's substitutionary death, bodily resurrection and Second Coming are used as the basis of teaching. The Holy Spirit's role in their lives is touched on.

New Birth/ Justification by Faith aren't stated, but clearly the Acts 16:31 Gospel had been his message. They're reminded that God has chosen them, they've believed, and obeyed, and the completion of their salvation is guaranteed by the Lord, 5:23-24. At the same time they're bluntly reminded that being united with Christ means suffering now, a totally different lifestyle to that around them, and wholeness, free from blame, in the Lord's presence forever.

That an active, flourishing church was established under such conditions shows that God works through the Gospel proclamation in a way impossible to mere human effort, zeal, and wisdom. What it has to say of and to those under such pressure, is good news, and essential reading as we face the pressures of our modern world.

I urge you to read and study the Epistle as a continuous whole. Isolated verses may be jewels, but they shine most beautifully and helpfully in the setting in which God Himself chose to put them. If a human friend writes to us, we might wish to clip out and re-assemble those extracts which say what we want to hear. With human friends that might be justifiable, if less than honouring to them. But, when God our Friend, Jn 15:1-17, chooses to speak His mind to us desiring our fellowship, it's appropriate for us to read and listen to the whole of what He has to say in the form in which He has chosen to set it out. We do this by much reading and thinking about books of the Bible as a whole.

Be on the look out for F O U R major themes interwoven through the book

1. GOD- This epistle is full of Him- Count how often each Name and Title is used. Everything- past, present, and future, depends on Him, His person, His work.

2. His SERVANTS- Their work, responsibilities, methods, attitudes, etc. God has ordained that in general His will is made known to, and through them, and His work done in, and by them. His work and His reputation are in their hands.

3. BELIEVERS' LIVES- As they are transformed by the Gospel of Christ they are responsible to God and to His servants to see that they take actively what God gives, and live it out/demonstrate it, in an unbelieving and often hostile world. Being God's people, and doing God's will are inseparable. Believers are Doers!

4. The LORD'S COMING and Presence with us Eternally. It will manifest/reveal all God's work, all the work of His Servants, and all the lives of His people, (the other three themes,) and do so forever. The harvest will be in and over. The exam results will be out. The Bridal day will have come and the Bride's dress, Rev 19.8, can have nothing added to it. That Coming and that Presence needs to be the great fact of our daily life, day in, day out.

The LANGUAGE / Vocabulary varies somewhat between Paul's Epistles, but many features are common to all. The variations are those one would expect from a profound and creative thinker, sensitive to the specific situations which each letter addressed. And, emotionally involved, adapting himself to their needs, and deeply concerned for their welfare. Not, a machine, churning out stereotyped, approved by critics as being "Paul Style," material.

CHARACTER and CONTENTS- A genuine letter to meet current needs, and provide the pastoral care Paul would have supplied personally if he'd been able to be present. Paul freely expresses his feelings and concern to them as "Brothers," from whom he has recently been torn away. That he was delighted to hear of their progress is obvious. It's frank, friendly writing, showing a warm-hearted personal interest in them. Things were going well in spite of persecution, but Paul urges and encourages continued progress.

The RECIPIENTS are seen as a good sample of a NT church- Loyal to doctrine, loving each other, loyal to Paul, resisting bitter persecution. Paul encourages them to wider understanding of the Lord's Coming, and further growth in a lifestyle appropriate to their position in Christ, so as to be better witnesses to Him now, and to maximise the Glory they will share with Him forever.

<< For convenience and simplicity PAUL/HE will be used for Paul and his helpers
US used for all readers of the Epistle. >>

CHAPTER ONE

1:1 PAUL -Converted from being a violent enemy of Christ and Christians about 15 years before, and made an Apostle by the risen Christ. Called by the Holy Spirit, and commended by the church at Antioch to be a missionary. His coming to them had brought them the Gospel, and united them as "Brothers" in Christ.

SILAS- Paul's chosen helper, commended by the Antioch Church, Acts 15:40 A chief man of Jerusalem church/prophet, Acts 15:22-32

TIMOTHY - A youngman chosen by Paul, Acts 16:1-3, Valued for his loyalty to Paul/ Gospel, 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19-20 2 Tim 1:4.

CHURCH - Ekklesia- A called out company. Used of the mob, Acts 19:41. Christians are "Called out" from the world, by God the Father, Jn 6:44-45 to Jesus Christ, and for Him, Eph 5:25-27.

IN GOD.. CHRIST - Not merely heard the Gospel and trusted in God, as a human decision and action. In= brought into being as a result of His actions and standing in a special relationship to God as Father and Jesus as Lord, Col 2:6; 3:3. An intimate fellowship in a shared life, Jn 15:1-17, as active limbs of His body. They lived in God day by day, as a fish lives in water! This invisible security makes perfect provision for those who were at the same time in a city of violent persecution, or for us, in whatever trials we face.

LORD - Kurios- The LXX and NT use Kurios to translate Jehovah/Yaweh, Lk 3:4, 4:18 etc. In the Gospels it was used of Human "Lords" etc. but after Thomas used it in saying "My Lord and my God" Jn 20:28 it's used only of Jesus Christ as in Acts 2:36 10:36 Phil 2:10-11, or angels twice Acts 10:4, Rev 7:14.

JESUS- Greek form of Joshua- Jehovah is Salvation/Saviour, the name given the Son of God when He became human for our Salvation, Mt 1:21; Jn 1:14. Used 600x in Gospels, yet He's never addressed as Jesus - no such familiarity. In Epistles He is called simply Jesus only if there's a special reason such as emphasizing His true humanity. The full title Lord Jesus Christ is used 24x in the Thessalonian Epistles, showing that His Deity/Lordship was proclaimed from the first.

CHRIST - Christos- Anointed, used in LXX of High Priest, Lev 4:3, 5, 16; Israel's Kings, 1 Sam 24:6, etc, Cyrus, Isa 45:1. But Ho Christos= THE Anointed is used in LXX, and NT only of the Messiah/Christ. He is the Anointed Servant of God, to fulfil all God's purposes/OT promises, types, shadows, hints.

GRACE - #Charis- God's willingness to look upon Christians as His people, grant them forgiveness, fellowship, and gifts. In addition to the Eternal security provided by our being in God, all our present needs are met freely, because He loves us and we belong to Him. Just as we meet the needs of our babies, not expecting them to earn, or deserve what we give. The Christian greeting, Charis/ Grace retains the Greek thought of Goodwishes and joy, (Chairo, Acts 15:23) plus the Grace of God through Calvary -

the Freedom of God's gift, and the power that God gives to enable us to enjoy and exhibit it

PEACE - #Eirene- A right and harmonious relation between God and men in the security Grace provides, now, and forever, through the blood of His Cross, Col 1:20 A total well-being which He gives, and we enjoy, as we trust Him and live in His grace. We're no longer rebellious and afraid. Having peace with God, we have peace in our hearts, knowing that all we are, and all we experience, is given by our Loving Heavenly Father, for we are in Him. Peace with others around us flows out from this inner peace because now we love them in Christ, instead of competing with them selfishly. As a greeting it reminds us of all this.

1:2-10 WHAT GOD HAS MADE THEM THROUGH THE GOSPEL .

(Paul's rejoicing and loving concern for the outworking of the Gospel in their lives through God's Grace and their obedient responsiveness)

1:2-3 THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS- An appropriate response to God for His Grace and its Gifts. God loved and valued them, and Paul was thankful to play a part in God's work in them. This set the tone of his constant thinking of, and praying for them.

FOR - #Peri, as in perimeter= For all the things that surround all of you, pleasant or not, their whole setting. All - no favourites, no ignored ones. God loves All. All are His. All have a contribution to make that's essential to all, Eph 4:15-16

PRAYERS- Prayer is a large part of our fellowship and work with God. In this hostile-to-God world, people are converted, established, and grow in Christ, only by the power of God. Prayer alone can keep us and others in step with Him, freeing His power to work.

WITHOUT CEASING/Continually- Without giving up or having an "off & on" attitude according to his mood. Only God Himself can be remembering all of us, all the time, but we're to have His unchanging attitude towards people, as they're brought to mind.

IN THE SIGHT OF/before- In Greek had the sense of a subject facing his King. While this refers specifically to praying facing the Father, it applies also to their work of faith etc. GOD AND FATHER - To God, who is our Father.

WORK OF/Produced by FAITH - #Pistis- Faith/Work, are inseparable. To Trust is to Obey. Being Saved by Faith Rom 5:1, must result in Good Works Eph 2:10, Titus 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14. "I would not work my soul to save; For that my Lord has done. But I would work like any slave, For love of God's dear Son." Because they trusted Christ they worked for Christ & each other. Faith is a personal trust & reliance on Christ that defines a Christian - he is a believer in Christ. Faith, hope, and love and their outworking sum up the total response to what God has done, is doing, and will do. All we do should be in the sight of & done to please our loving Father, who sets us work within our capacity, Ps 103:13-14, and delights in our efforts to please Him. The

burden of work is shared with Him, and the responsibility as to the outcome is His - We need not carry that burden. What we believe is shown by what we do. Cp Heb 11

LABOUR - Exhausting painful work, done out of love to the Lord. Faith gets us going, but Love for God and His people in response to His love, is needed to keep us going when enthusiasm ebbs, we are weary, the work seems fruitless, those we work for unresponsive and thankless, and those we work with seem uncooperative. When a man realises God's love for him he either rejects and resists, or yields to it and allows himself to be transformed to what that Love desires him to be. He then starts to view others as God views them, 2 Cor 5:16, and begins to act towards them as God acts towards them. So Paul thanks God for the way their love is continuing to reach out. Working for the good of others is a reflection in human relationships of God's love for people.

PATIENCE/Endurance- Hupomone- Hupo= under, Meno= To abide. To stick with it, or "Hang in there," in modern language. It's used passively of enduring opposition and persecution, 2 Cor 6:4; 2 Tim 3:10, etc. Actively of persistent perseverance in doing what is good and right, Rom 2:7; Lk 8:15; Heb 12:1.

HOPE - #Elpis- A confident, happy expectation of good that is the basis for a course of consistent action to which the hoped-for result is the natural consequence. A farmer sows seed in hope of a Harvest. That harvest may fail, or he may not live to reap it, of course. But obedient Faith in the Word of God gives us confidence that God will enable us to do His will and that He will keep His promises - a secure Hope. The Believer acts as he does because he has reason to believe that it is pleasing to God and ultimately a blessing to himself and others. Christ indwelling us is our assurance of being with Him in Glory, and provides the fellowship to work towards that desired goal, Col 1:27.

Faith, Hope, & Love are Outgoing - Faith to God Love to man. Hope purposeful working with a view to the future. All three are evidence of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Each is productive, not simply an abstract concept, but creative, producing results.

IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - Our Hope rests upon Him, Rom 15:12, He is our Hope, 1 Tim 1:1.

1:4 KNOWING/We know- #Eido- To see, know, recognise. Paul knew, not by revelation, but by the visible evidence of their changed lives.

LOVED BY GOD - #Agapao- To love unselfishly. They were Brothers under God the Father, personally chosen by Him to be His own, belonging sacrificially, fully, to Him. Love is God's constant attitude towards mankind, Jn 3:16, and particularly to those who believe on the Lord Jesus, Jn 14:21. We're to reflect that love, Jn 15:12, as the Spirit empowers us to, Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22. Paul's love for them, their love to Paul and each other were within God's Love.

YOUR ELECTION/He has chosen you- Their response to the Gospel was triggered by/ in response to, the fact that God had chosen them (and us) in Christ, Eph 1:4. All that He does is done in Holiness, Wisdom, and Power, as well as in Love, and carried out to perfection, so our hearts can rest on all His promises. He knew our every need and weakness before He saved us, and made adequate provision in Christ. As our obedient faith sets God's Holy Spirit free to show His presence and power by transforming our lives to Christ's likeness, we as Believers experience and demonstrate the certainty that God has chosen us, Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18, etc.

God's sovereign choice of individuals to Salvation/ blessing and man's freewill/ responsibility are both taught in Scripture, sometimes in the same verse, as Jn 6:37. Some twist (2 Pet 3:16) the doctrine of Election into an arbitrary damning of men who had no choice in the matter. But election comes from the Love of God for Sinners. See Rom 9:11 notes. Salvation is impossible without God acting in Grace. When men face the challenge of the Gospel they may know nothing of God's purposes. But as they freely choose to submit to God's redeeming claim on them in Christ they find to their joy that they have been loved with an everlasting love, and have responded to it. Those who equally freely reject/ ignore the Gospel, demonstrate that they are following Adam in his rebellion/ independence. Knowledge of the Biblical truth of Election fosters assurance, holiness, humility, and witness, not lazy selfishness.

BROTHERHOOD/brothers- #Adelphos- From the same Delphos= womb, Full brothers and sisters. A key word in this letter, used 17x. Leaders/ followers, teachers/ taught, young/ old, Jew/ Gentile, rich/ poor, master/ slaves, male and female, stand together united as all being equally "Born again" by the Gospel Grace/ Faith, New Birth process which breaks down all racial/ cultural/ religious barriers. All are given the glorious reality of membership in the church defined in 1:1, and are equipped/ challenged to walk worthily together in a fellowship of mutual encouragement. The brotherhood of man is a fine ideal, easy as long as we keep our distance. The brotherhood of the redeemed in Christ of the early church was a vivid joyful reality, Acts 2:42-47.

1:5 FOR/Because- Paul lists the evidence for his reasoned confidence that they were truly God's by His choosing. His confidence is based on the content of the Gospel, the way it was presented - no clever words, psychological pressure, bribes, etc. 1 Cor 2:1-5, and the nature of their response to it. Their attitude to the Truth, to the Preacher, to God, to each other, to persecution etc.

OUR GOSPEL - Not a distinctive Paul Gospel, but the Gospel that is ours because all Believers share its blessing and responsibility to proclaim it. The preachers had made it their own, and it owned them! It was God's Gospel, but Paul mediated it to them.

CAME - Not simply given to you for your approval. It was directed to them purposefully both on Paul's part and on God's part. NOT WORD ONLY /Simply in words- The Gospel does come to us in words, Rom 10:17. But mere words, no matter how orthodox, earnest, or persuasive, are not enough. God's Sovereign Grace is involved, and that is not automatic or arbitrary. The lives and testimony of the preachers were in tune with it and manifested it.

POWER- Duramis- Ability power, Acts 1:8. The Gospel preached is God's power unto Salvation Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 24 etc because it effects what it proclaims. There is no power in our own natures, or even desire to hear of our sins and their cure.

HOLY SPIRIT.. MUCH ASSURANCE/Deep conviction- As the Lord promised, Jn 16:8-15 they experienced confidence in God, His Word, their need, and His saving purpose. This is the effect of the Holy Spirit's use of the Gospel in preacher and hearer alike, 1 Cor 2:6-16 The experience is subjective, but it's based on the objective facts of God's truth and His Love.

KNOW WHAT MANNER/how we lived- #1:4. Literally "What sort we were." A recently beaten man proclaiming a crucified Saviour obviously wasn't offering health, wealth and happiness in this life. No miracles are mentioned.

FOR YOUR SAKE - Preaching is effective when what God says by His Spirit in men's consciences, is what the preacher says to their ears, and demonstrates in his life. The power for all three comes from the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:8, as we use His sword, Eph 6:17. The content of Paul's message, his method and attitude, all fitted the Gospel. His lifestyle reinforced the truths he was preaching, as his hearers saw him living what he meant.

1:6 FOLLOWERS/imitators- In Greek not a person who outwardly copies another, but an adult pupil sharing his teacher's whole lifestyle in order to learn to think and live as the Master did. Christian living isn't a set of rules, but a fellowship with Christ.

US ..THE LORD - Their first contact was with Paul. Through him they made contact with the Lord, as he pointed to his Sender, Gal 2:20 Phil 4:13 It's still like that. It's important for us to represent Him rightly in words, attitudes, and actions, as people learn most easily by following/ imitating. It isn't us trying to live as He did before the Cross. The risen Lord indwells us, by the Spirit, and works in us, using the record of His earthly life rather as a picture book to illustrate the truth.

AFFLICTION/Severe suffering- #Thlipsis- Pressure, so, trouble, distress affliction. In responding to God's love in the Gospel they faced bitter and violent pressure from Christ-Rejectors. Jn 15:18-27. Pressures and conflicts arise in us, and we are under pressure from outside forces, as part of being human, Job, 5:7. The World, Flesh and Devil combine to pressure us Christians to conform to the normal pattern of life in this world. God the Holy Spirit through the Bible, Christian fellowship, and Conscience applies pressure to transform us, Rom 12:2. We're to place ourselves in the Lord's hands in everything, so that the pressures combine to mould us into His likeness, Rom 8:28-29. If we escape pressure by conforming to the world we place ourselves outside God's purposes, Rom 12:1-3.

WELCOMED- Dechomai- To receive deliberately, readily, gladly. WITH JOY - Affliction- externally. Joy- internally, mark the Gospel. It was born out of Christ's suffering and was a sharing of His joy, Jn 15:11; 16:19-24 17:13. The measure of persecution/suffering has often been the measure of a convert's joy. Both are tangible assurances of their election, Rom 8:16-17; Phil 1:27-30 link them with the saints of the past Mt 5:11-12, and with their rejected Lord. Suffering in fellowship with the

Lord, we share His joy in its results, Acts 15:3; 2 Cor 7:4; Heb 10:34 12:1-2; Jude 24
That external pressure strengthened their sense of close community.

SPiRiT - As they believe/obey, the joy of Heaven, Lk 15:7, is shared by repentant sinners here on earth, in fellowship with the Holy Spirit who witnesses with our spirit, Rom 8:16 A subjective experience, resulting from and demonstrating the reality of an invisible objective fact - their new relationship with God The Lord, in promising Tribulation, also assured that He would give JOY with it/ in it, upholding His own, assuring them of the spiritual realities, Jn 15:3; 16:3.

1: 7-8 ENSAMPLE S/a model- Tupos- Representation or pattern, as the image on a coin was imprinted by a blow on the die. From Tupto= to strike. Singular -The church as a whole represented/proclaimed Christ, and His purpose for His people. What Paul had learned from Christ, in message and lifestyle, they had followed, and in turn became, within the local culture, leaders that others could profitably follow. The church, having been stamped with Christ-likeness, became the die that stamped that likeness on others.

Their joy encouraged others to accept the Gospel in spite of threats, as Paul's joy in sufferings had encouraged them, Rom 8:17-25 The church that proclaimed the Gospel, also embodied it. None can proclaim the message effectively who aren't changed by the message.

THE WORD OF THE LORD - From Him, and concerning Him, and His purposes. SOUNDED/Rang OUT - Execheo- To sound out as a trumpet or thunder, continuously- Perfect Tense, as Rom 10:18 (Eng Echo) It was the Lord's Word, His Gospel that they echoed/ passed on loud and clear. As they were on the main route East from Rome it was a strategic place for passing on the Gospel. It assumes that their lives and profession rang true to each other. Only the reality proclaimed in the Gospel could produce the enthusiasm of the early Christians for passing on to others the blessings they had received.

EVERY PLACE/Everywhere- Everybody's talking about it! Aquila and Priscilla recently come from Rome, Acts 18:2, may have heard there the report of a riot against the Christians for potential treason. The Riot was News! So what had happened to them, and why, and their changed lives, was talked about far and wide in an ever-increasing circle. ANY THING - About their conversion, and the effect of the Gospel.

1: 9-10 THEY - The changed lives. SHOW.. MANNER/Kind OF - God was very real to the preachers, and in the hearers, and the reality in the lives of the converts came from this. God's servants didn't need to spend time talking about how wonderful they were, or how successful their ministry was. People looked at the changed lives of the converts, and knew. Today, changed lives still speak loudly.

TURNED TO GOD - The NT never says that God TURNED anyone. Always it's the exercise of free will in voluntarily accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord in response to hearing the Gospel. They turned to God and found Him so satisfying they dropped their idols as irrelevant. Not turned from idols looking for an alternative and happened

to find God. They were idol-worshippers, even if already learning of the true God at the Synagogue, Acts 17:4. Conversion here isn't analysed into Justification, etc. It's a simple statement of what observers saw and reported of them. They might be unaware of the doctrinal niceties of Christian beliefs, but could confidently sum up the visible effects.

FROM IDOLS- Mt Olympus the home of the "gods" was 50 Miles away. They turned in principle from the totality of past religious experience that ruled their public and private lives - Public events, religion, entertainment, trade guilds, culture, centred on temples. Temple iddlatry can make an attractive show in buildings, statues, dances, and myths, but the overall effect corrupts society with its glorification of human lusts. The gods pictured as idols don't exist, 1 Cor 8:4, but behind them, demon powers are dealt with, 1 Cor 10:20

As with animism, the religion of primitive tribes everywhere, spiritism, demonism and deceit, keep people in superstitious slavery from which they dare not break free

The Sophisticated iddlatry of the modern secular world is also enslaving, corrupting, and addictive. The "White Collar" criminal or compulsive Gambler whose pursuit of wealth robs those who trust him of \$millions, isn't too different from those who make their \$Millions out of drug traffic, and pornography. Those who make a god out of promiscuous sexual pleasure, and enjoyment of drugs, are also enslaved. Immorality and Greediness are iddlatry, Eph 5:5. Any Iddlatry makes morality and purposeful confident living in view of ultimate righteous judgment, impossible.

God should be the centre of every life. Idols are anything self sets up as an alternative. Self-indulgence, self-expression, self-righteousness, self-fulfilment etc is the worship that results. Having seen Him, 2 Cor 4:6, by His grace we look off from self to Him, His rights, His purposes, not ours. From a life directed towards bribing and honouring conflicting deities, to make use of them, the Christian receives life from, and orientates life towards one moral, wise, powerful, purposeful God who loves him and has the highest possible purposes for his life. He is actively at work in the world with a view to ultimate judgment and reward. The Gospel coin has two sides Repentance - a change of mind about self, sin, and God, and Faith - a turning to God for Salvation Acts 20:21. Our will responding to Grace in a sense reverses the action of the Fall.

TO SERVE- Douleuo- To serve as the property of another. Present infinitive= continuous, complete, whole-hearted serving. No Greek or Roman ever served god. He tried to manipulate them so that they would serve his interests. Those who serve God are truly free, being what He Created them to be, living a life centred on the Lord of the Universe. In centring our lives on self we were rebels, enslaved by our sin, but God the Son took our place under Judgment and bought our freedom with His life's blood. Jn 8:36 Using that freedom to live in obedient union with Christ is both a response of love, and to live in His Love, Jn 15:10 Living with our eyes on the Bema/ His rewards isn't selfishness/ self-centred, in fact is a crucifying of self Gal 2:20 So the rightly ambitious Christian is uncomfortable with selfishness. We can't make ourselves or the world around perfect, but we can/ must work towards the fulfilling of God's purposes in both.

THE LIVING - And Life-giving God The source of all that is TRUE GOD - Alethinos - True, real, genuine. The word used in the self-revelation of Christ as the TRUE Light, Bread, Vine, God, Jn 19, 6:32 15:1; 17:3. All alternatives are dead, empty, husks.

WAIT FOR - Anameno - To wait up for, or be preparing for someone's coming, Lk 12:36 Jews had served the living and true God. The early Christians did so with their eyes on the Lord they knew and loved personally, who might appear at any moment and complete the work which He had begun and that they were involved in. This body, and world, is the chrysalis case to be sloughed off at that moment. The inward spiritual transformation produced by their work for Christ and His work for, in, and through them, will be revealed at that moment. This enabled them to make the right decisions in the light of eternity, with their eyes on the "City" ahead, Heb 11:10

As boys we were left home when our parents went to the "Worship Meeting." Our pleasure in their return, and the hearty Sunday Dinner to follow, depended on how well we prepared it in the time of "waiting" for their return! So Believers take the gift of life He has given us, and seek to live it out to the full in evergrowing Christ-likeness of eager service, with an expectant eye towards Heaven, Phil 3:20-21.

HIS SON - Huios - Refers to Relationship of offspring and parent, who share/display/exercise common characteristics.

RAISED - The Lord's resurrection proclaimed His Sonship, Rom 1:4. His triumph over death is the pattern and proof of our final deliverance, and of His appointment to Judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17:31. His resurrection guaranteeing these was basic to the Gospel from the first and an incentive to moral living.

JESUS - The Name sums up all He is as the Son of man, Perfect Man, Representative Man. He died and rose again, and we also in union with Him.

DELIVERED/Rescues - Rhuomai - To rescue, deliver from danger, judgment, etc. Present participle which implies that it has a duration which has begun but is still incomplete.

US - Paul passes from talking TO/about them, into standing WITH them.

WRATH - Orge - It's never used of God's attitude towards men, but He can never be indifferent to evil. His wrath isn't vindictiveness or outburst of temper but a controlled action of loving moral concern. Wrath is the revulsion of the whole being of God against everything that offends His holiness. Sin is destructive, injures everyone, and must be dealt with. The Lord who is present with us, will be manifested in glory. The wrath of God working itself out in current history, Rom 1:18-32 will be revealed in its fulness then, Rom 2:3-6. That Judgment was inevitably ahead is the point - the Final Intervention by God to deal with all evil, so that righteousness alone would remain in the Universe, Rom 1:18 9:28 Eph 5:6 Col 3:6 Rev 6:16 17:11:18 19:15

Gods Will/ desire is that none should perish, Ezek 18:31-32, 33:11; Mt 23:37, Rom 2:3-5; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9. But man's refusal to accept Gods Light and Salvation places him under Gods Judgmental wrath, Jn 3:19, Heb 10:26-31. In the inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe failure to run Gods World, or our own life, in Gods way brings inevitable disaster.

Fear, is part of the Gospel of Love. Awareness of their future deliverance, and the wrath that would fall on their persecutors, and sinners in general, was a source of boldness and power to the Christians who in their weakness faced the mighty power of Rome, Phil 1:27-30

Turned- is past. Serve, Wait for- present. His Son From- Future. These may be paired with the 3 statements of vs 3. Both are compressed statements possible because readers already knew a great deal of what Paul was writing about- it was freshly in their minds.

CHAPTER TWO.

2.1-6 PAUL'S PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

(The enemies of the Gospel try to discredit it by twisting the message, 2Pet 3:16, and slandering the messengers and their motives. Paul strengthens their confidence in what the message said, by reminding them that the methods and behaviour of the messengers confirmed that they were Gods authorised spokesmen. Paul was uncomfortable in boasting, 2Cor 11:16-33. He states the facts, confident that God the Holy Spirit in them would confirm it.

This serves to set before us the motivation, attitude and behaviour every servant of God needs in relation to the Gospel, and its hearers. His awareness of the tricks and temptations Christian speakers face are brought to our attention so that we can avoid them. Setting out for ourselves lists of positive and negative requirements is helpful. What we are is as important as what we say or do, 1Tim 4:16. Jim Elliott said that the character of the missionary decides the quality of his work. Poets, artists etc may produce beauty while living rotten lives, but Christian workers can't)

2.1. YOU KNOW- #1:4. Whatever others might say, they had personally experienced his behaviour, message, and the consequences in blessing and persecution. This should give them confidence to continue with God, the Gospel, and Paul. BRET HREN/Brothers- #1:4. Gods Servants are to function in the loving fellowship of the equally loved children of the Father, Mt 23:8.

SUFFERED - PHILIPPI - They knew at once what it would be like to be a Christian because the wounds from the flogging would be still obvious when Paul arrived. The public humiliation involved could be seen as discrediting Paul, his message, and his Master, OR as authenticating him as representative of the crucified Lord who in the Gospel invites men to join Him in rejection and resurrection.

BOLD/dared- Parrhesiazomai- To speak freely, frankly, and fearlessly. Human wisdom would have made him conceal the ill-treatment stirred up by proclaiming the Gospel, or modify it to present only aspects attractive to hearers. But as it was GOOD news he wanted as many as possible to hear it, so spoke freely and frankly.

IN OUR/with the help of GOD- Serving the Lord may cost us dear. In fact human strength, love, and will are inadequate. Life and service must be in fellowship with the Master - they prayed and sang praises in prison! Only their living in God and the assurance of His commission, approval, and working through them to bless hearers, could embolden them to "Do it again,". **THE/HIS GOSPEL** - This gave Paul confidence to preach it unchanged.

CONTESTATION/opposition- Agon- A contest of athletes. (Eng Agony.) Implies intense exertion, and strenuous persistent effort, and the anxiety involved in this. Contests are won in the mind as well as with the body. Used in 1 Tim 6:12, 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1. Inward Col 2:1; Outward, Phil 1:30 Always behind these the invisible spiritual opposition of God's enemies, Eph 6:12 In a sense the Christian's life is a battleground between God the Holy Spirit, and Satan and his rebel powers. Salvation meant the Cross for our Saviour. Salvation is effective in us now only as we share the Cross with Him, Gal 2:20 We mustn't water down that Gospel. (Paul didn't have a contentious attitude, 2 Tim 2:23-26)

2.3. EXHORTATION/Appeal- #Paraklesis- Para= to the side, alongside, Kaleo= to call. Paul didn't rely on "Pulpit Work" alone. God's servants must draw close alongside people, identifying with them so they can understand how the Gospel applies to them and their varied needs. The Holy Spirit is the Parakletos, Jn 14:16, 1 Jn 2:1. What He does within, He calls us to do- to get alongside those in need, right where they are to help them, 2 Cor 1:4. In contrast to this, Pagan or Semi-Christian parasites make a living out of hawking religious ideas, Acts 20:30 Rom 16:17-18 2 Cor 11:3-4.

DECEIT/Error- Plane- Eng Planet- leading sailors astray if they used it to steer by. Paul kept strictly to the truth as God gave it. Eagerness to reach the thinking and desires of the current generation tempts one to graft attractive humanism into the Gospel. Christian deviations, and semi-Christian cults, are always around to confuse the hearers. No matter how pleasant the person, and plausible his message (how good it may look to us, Gen 36,) we must always seek the truth straight from God's Word, with a humble prayerful willingness to know and do His Will, Jn 7:17; 1 Jn 2:20

UNCLEANNESS Impure motives- As in Mt 23:27, whatever is morally or spiritually unclean. Sexual sin was a common feature of idolatry and cults. It's still not uncommon with religious pretenders. Paul's message wasn't dirtied by unclean ideas, or selfish motives. God who is pure and holy was its source and he proclaimed it in a pure form in personal purity. Jews might view his association with Gentiles as unclean, but God didn't, Acts 10 That the Gospel purifies men's lives demonstrates its purity.

GUILE Trying to trick you- dolos- To lure with bait, ensnare. Error may be made honestly, Impurity implies dishonourable behaviour, Deceit is deliberate, and purposeful. Dolos is the mark of the Devil and his false messengers, Acts 13:10 Paul presented the truth of the Gospel to men as simply as possible with a view to their

understanding the facts, counting the cost, and so accepting it by exercising their God-given freewill as God intended.

Paul didn't come with glowing reports of past successes, or offer personal fulfilment, healing or wealth in this world as bribes to win converts. Didn't use spell-binding oratory, or tricks of salesmanship. That would leave them thinking how wonderful he was and relying on him, and that would be deceiving them. He relied on God to do the persuading, and on the hearers to make the decisions, 1 Cor 2:1-5. Paul knew that the content of the message, the method of proclamation, and the life of the preacher must all be free from error, uncleanness, and deception, 2 Cor 4:2. He'd given God's Truth, with God's motives, in God-honouring ways.

2.4 ALL OWED/Approved- #Dokimazo- To test, examine, prove with the hope of approving. Originally of metals as in LXX Prov 8:10 17:3. Perfect tense as both the testing and approving continue. Used of a person being approved for election to public office. Cp scrutiny of US Presidents, etc. God had in a sense set Paul apart for His service from birth, Gal 1:15. He did so in a different sense, with Paul's willing co-operation, at his conversion, Acts 9:15-16; 22:10. More than 10 years later God publicly and formally approved Paul for His service, and entrusted the Gospel to the Gentiles into his hands, Acts 13:1-3. God's principle is the servant must be proved in the sight of men, before he is publicly authorised/approved for public service, 1 Tim 3:6-7, 9-10.

Paul claimed no rights or power to use as he pleased, but looked to, relied on, felt responsible to God, and served Him confidently with a clear conscience, Ps 19:13; 1 Cor 9:27; 11:28; 2 Cor 5:9. So in our lesser sense must we. How we behave in the little things of our ordinary life may determine what He will trust us with, Lk 16:10-12. If we don't work faithfully as assistants, God won't give us direct responsibilities. God tests us with a view to our approval of God, and therefore His approval of us. The Devil Tempts - Peirazo - with a view to ruining men, and is always the accuser throughout the process, Job 19:11; 2:4-5; Rev 12:10.

PUT IN TRUST /entrusted with- Pisteuo #17 God trusts Himself, and His work to us, when we trust Him! Paul rejoiced in this, 1 Tim 1:12. Being entrusted with a message/work is a challenge to persistent faithfulness, whatever the consequences, Mt 25:21; 1 Cor 4:2. God enabled Paul in this, 2 Tim 4:7.

SPEAK - Present tense, as a continuing exercise of stewardship.

PLEASEING - #Aresko- To please, especially by serving MEN- Words spoken to please the hearers will deceive them and leave them to face God in the end, unprepared. Paul's willingness to be all things to all, 1 Cor 9:19-23 had in view, not his own popularity but the eternal good of the hearers, and was always anchored to the unchanging truth of God. This gives security to Believers, who by following it know their lives to be pleasing to God. His presentation of the Gospel WAS pleasing to those who believed, but that was a spin-off from his serving God to please Him. What his commending Brethren, his converts, or his enemies thought was not his main concern. His message never ceased to be God's property. He wasn't free to modify the message to please anyone.

GOD.. tests HEARTS- Ps 17:3. As the heart is so important to life it came to stand for the whole mental/ moral/ rational/ emotional/ volitional life of a person viewed as having moral responsibility towards God, and fellow man, Mt 12:34 15:18-19, etc. Present tense, a continual testing, implies Paul continues to pass God's tests, and this was his constant earnest endeavour. Continually exposing His life to that light Jn 3:20-21; 2 Cor 5:7-11, allowed God to exercise "Quality Control," over what it produced. We also need to do so, and test every decision with "What does God think of/say about this?"

2.5 FLATTERING WORDS/flattery- Aimed at pleasing hearers so as to get them to do what the speaker wants. The opposite of #21, the open frankness of friendship. He didn't adjust the message to make them feel good, tell the people that they were wonderful, etc.

CLOAK /mask- Prophasis- Pro= before, Phaino= To Appear. A mask used to hide facial expression. A Cloak worn to conceal a weapon, stolen goods, etc. Covetousness generally wears such. It doesn't express itself openly, or even admit to itself its naked greed.

COVETOUSNESS/Greed- An appetite that's never satisfied, but increases with every gain. The sin which moves people to take advantage of others, and amounts to iddlatry, Col 3:5. Paul didn't perform so as to gain wealth, praise, or anything for himself. His success was not of the sort the worldly would envy, 2 Cor 6:10 Jn 13:12-17.

GOD IS OUR WITNESS- As He alone can know motives. Only by choosing to live in His presence, as Paul did, can His servants hope to be kept on the right path. As God the Holy Spirit was in each of them, they could check personally and receive His witness.

2.6 GLORY /Praise- #Doxa- Visible glory, from Dokeo= to seem. What Herod expected and got in Acts 12:21-23 Paul didn't aim at, or insist on, being treated with deference, or told how wonderful he was. The preacher must speak with authority, realising the source and importance of his message Mt 7:29 1 Pet 4:11, but never adopt a self-important, domineering or patronising attitude. Paul gloried in the Cross, not in himself. Their world was full of men like Simon, Acts 8:9-11, so Paul challenged them to check him out for any evidence of such attitudes. To enjoy appreciation from converts is natural, but to work with that end in view frustrates God's purposes. A witness must keep pointing to his Lord so that his hearers join him in giving glory to God for what is said, and done. Concern for one's right to honour, as God's representatives, and material support worthy of it, undermines all that is said.

2.6b-12 PAUL'S PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD CONVERTS.

(A mother doesn't stand on ~~er~~ dignity, or demand ~~er~~ rights with an infant - to do so isn't motherly. Motherly self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice is a challenging example to all who care for "Babes in Christ" and will save us from self-seeking tactics.

A mother may want to keep ~~her~~ infant dependent on ~~her~~, and be content to see the child happy in himself. But a good father is eager to see his son grow up into an admirable man, and disciplines both himself and his son towards that goal. (Converts need both kinds of care.)

APOSTLE S- Apostolos- An authorised representative. Paul, like the 12, was chosen by the Lord as His Authorised witness/ representative, but to the Gentiles. "Apostle" is used in a lesser sense of other witnesses, Acts 14:14. Here, Paul includes Silas and Timothy as associated with his ministry as an Apostle.

MIGHT /could HAVE BEEN- Duramai- It was within their power to be.

BURDENSOME /a burden- Baros- A weight, burden, or importance/ authority. Used of obligation to support financially, 1 Cor 9:1-15; 1 Tim 5:16. The Emperor's representative was expected to act with the demanding arrogance of the Emperor, in order to do ~~his~~ work effectively. Paul, as Christ's representative, was Christ-like in order to do ~~his~~ work effectively, Lk 22:42-7; Jn 13:4-17. Unspiritual men despised him for this, and were impressed by those who were self-important and demanding, 2 Cor 11:7-29. But in his undemanding unselfish dependence on His Lord, he exercised a spiritual authority, and set a high standard for God's servants for all time, warning them against demanding recognition of status, expecting congregation to boost their egos and pockets, standing on their dignity, or becoming a burden by their fussiness.

27 GENTLE - Epios- Mild, gentle, as in 2 Tim 2:24-25. Used in Greek for parental kindness to young and trying children. (Some MSS have Nepios, but Paul uses nepios only of childishness to be outgrown, Rom 2:20; 1 Cor 13:11; Gal 4:1, 3; Eph 4:14; Heb 5:13.) Either way it means that Paul adapted himself, his behaviour and message to their need, not expecting or demanding an adult response from them. All teachers should avoid being self-centred, authoritarian, and assertive. We need to be God-oriented, and congregation-oriented in the sense that their needs and welfare are more important to us than our status, comfort, and popularity.

Paul is saying "We didn't stand on our dignity as Apostles, authoritarian, and aloof, but were content to think/ speak/ act as a Mother, concerned only with providing protection, nourishment, and care for those dependent on ~~her~~ - delighting in their well-being, growth, and happiness. So should we. Bold frankness and gentleness are both essential, merely gently giving in to the whims of a wilful infant is not kindness/ exercising love.

AMONG YOU- Not Lording it OVER them, but identifying himself with them 2 Cor 1:24; 1 Pet 5:1-3; as Christ commanded, Mt 23:8-12.

NURSE /Mother- Trophos- Nursing mother. Tropho= To rear, nourish. He'd acted as a mother on whom the babe is totally dependent. A Mother feeds a babe from her own life. Trophos is used in LXX Gen 35:8; 2 Kings 11:2; 2 Chron 22:11.

CARING FOR- Thalpo- To keep warm as a bird does by covering its chickens with its wings

CHILDREN- Teknon- One born into a family. From Tikto= to bear. Paul regarded converts as his children, not as a source of income. A Mother's all-important role, in the early years, parallels the conversion and establishment stage of the Christian Life. Being a mother is a 24hr a day job. Gods servants can't limit themselves to set hours, or such time as we feel we can spare some time when it suits us.

NOTE Contrary to the nonsense spoken about Paul being a woman hater, bitter bachelor, etc he referred to women as "fellow workers/soldiers," Rom 16:3; Phil 4:3, even if they didn't share the speaking platform with him. In Gal 4:19 he wrote "My dear children for whom I am again in the pangs of childbirth until Christ is formed in you," and here was obviously proud of having acted like a mother. There's a great need today for Gods servants to provide such closeness and care, such understanding love.

DESIROUS/delighted- Eudokeo- A freely and gladly chosen action

SOULS/lives- #Psuche/Psyche- The Soul, inner self, that thinks, desires, feels, as it reads to the people and things around it. It is what each builds for himself with the spirit/ life principle God gives to man. Our Lord urged a love that was willing to lay down its life/ Psuche for others, Jn 15:9-13 = give up its instinctive preferences, what pleases us, and give way to others, put their feelings, benefit, and blessing ahead of our own. Zeal, commitment, gift, skills in communicating the Gospel are all good. But the one essential is a devotion to, and fellowship with the God of Love that is willing to give up its rights/preferences in order to put itself at the disposal of those it serves, and put itself out in warm personal fellowship for their blessing, 1 Cor 13:1-7. We give ourselves to God in giving ourselves to our hearers, and vice-versa, 2 Cor 8:7-9, 12:15; 1 Jn 3:16-18. The Gospel is a great treasure, but those who give it to others must give themselves with the Gift. Paul did not throw the Gospel at them, take it or leave it, and go home to a comfortable bed, leaving them to fend for themselves. Souls will not be won except in response to the love of Christ seen through His servants. A baby is nourished from its mother's soul as well as her body. So Paul was eager to give from his soul/ life.

DEAR - Agapetos- Beloved, very dear. When we give ourselves to bring the Gospel of Gods love to people, we find like Paul that those on whom we have compassion for Christ's sake, 2 Cor 5:14-16 become personally dear to us through fellowship with God in giving and receiving. When we attempt to treat even enemies as the Lord commands, Mt 5:44 He makes it possible, Rom 5:5. Without such love no one can teach, preach, give help, etc of any value, 1 Cor 13:1-3. Even scruffy, unlovely and awkward sinners will become dear to us if we treat them as Christ treats us.

29 LABOUR Toil- #1:4 TRAVA IL hardship- Mochthos- Painful effort

LABOURING NIGHT AND DAY - The Jews rightly taught that God expected all men to work, and Rabbis were not to charge for their services. Study without practical work becomes divorced from reality. William Carey said "My business is to preach the Gospel, but I cobble shoes to pay expenses." Providing for their own needs involved

Paul and his team in exhausting manual labour, as well as earnest witnessing and selfless emotional and spiritual involvement in shepherding converts. Paul saw this as setting an example to them, as a Father does for his sons.

BE CHARGEABLE /a burden- Epibareo- To burden heavily. Some like Jason were well off. But the later generosity of the Thessalonians came from poverty, 2 Cor 8:1-2. See also 1 Cor 9:1-18 for other reasons.

NOTE While working for his living was Paul's chosen way to show appreciation of God's grace to him, 1 Cor 9:16-19, it was also a missionary strategy, 2 Th 3:8-9. We reap what we sow. Hearers interpret the Gospel in terms of what they see in the preacher. If he emphasizes giving to God, some will gladly give money to keep him in "Holy Idleness" seeing the giving as earning favour with God, and paying the holy man to pray for them. If he seems to be in a position of wealth, comfort, and prestige, they expect conversion to bring them the same privileges. As Paul patterned the way Believers should earn their living in the secular world to the glory of God, and as a witness to their Lord, converts could learn to do the same, and not be idle, 1 Th 4:11-12, 2 Th 3:7-9. It also set a standard by which converts could judge the sincerity and helpfulness of those who might wish to be their Church leaders, 2 Cor 11:12. His converts saw leadership as a sacrificial service.

When the Disciples proclaimed the Kingdom, they had the right to material support, and gave the material blessings of healing, etc. Mt 10:5-10. Christian preachers had the right to material support because they brought spiritual blessings, 1 Cor 9:6-14. Paul as a Christian preacher patterned himself depending directly on the Lord, not looking to the world for support, 3 Jn 7. He accepted hospitality when it was offered by Lydia, Acts 16 and presumably from Jason. And, he was pleased to accept support from a congregation of its own volition when they were established and dependent directly on the Lord, Phil 4:14-19. He expected assistance in his further mission from established assemblies, Rom 15:24.

PREACHED- Kerusso- To proclaim the Gospel as a herald- Kerux. A herald's work is to state his Master's will loudly and clearly - Good news or bad, accept it or rebel, the facts aren't arguable. It's then up to the hearers to do something about it. We Christians are called to be heralds with a factual message/Kerugma to proclaim/Kerusso, 2 Tim 4:17. But we're also to Evangelise- spread the Good news and seek to persuade men to accept it.

210 YOU.. WITNESSES.. GOD- A solemn appeal. Man sees the outward appearance, God sees the Heart, 1 Sa, 16:7. Both are important. Paul, as God's servant, kept both in mind, so as to rightly represent his Master. The three words that follow are adverbs so stress the nature of their visible actions/behaviour. (Adjectives would have described their characters.) Actions are visible, and so facts beyond argument. Character may be a PR projection. Paul sums up what he's been saying by appealing again to their memory and the witness of God, and using the figure of a Father's care.

HOLILY /holy- Hosios- The careful discharge of duties towards God. Pure from evil conduct, and obedient servant of God's will. Hosios and Dikaios overlap, covering all of life in relation to God and Man. JUSTLY /righteous- Dikaios- Originally to follow Dike=

custom, right, rule, with regard to religious and civil obligations. So that which is Righteous Eng originally "Rightwise." God is Righteous in judging/ treating all without partiality or favour. Paul lived righteously in his dealings with men. To do our duty to other people is an essential part of Godliness

UNBLAMABLY /blameless #Amemptos- His conduct was such that no-one had reason to criticise him. He could and would be pleased to have done what he had done when he saw those he loved imitating him. Example is important. The moral content of the Gospel Message Paul preached, and Gods use of it to transform their lives, both supported the claim that the messengers acted morally.

BELIEVE - #1:7. Faith is so essential a feature that in the NT Christians are often referred to as those who believe. It's not to say that Paul didn't behave in the same way to unbelievers. He's writing to those who had believed the Message, and Gods Messenger.

211 KNOW - #1:4. Common legal formula before a statement or decree EVERY ONE /each- Emphasises personal concern and effort on behalf of every believer. Follow-up work with each convert is essential. He didn't try to impose a set of rules on them, but as they brought themselves and their situation to his attention, discussed with them what God had to say about what they should be and do it.

FATHER - If a speaker fails to love, be concerned for/ compassionate towards his audience, (as a good father is with his own children,) harsh, cold, abrasive ministry is given, or tolerant, uncaring ministry. We need to remember what happened when Moses "told off" the Israelites, Num 20:10-12 The Father's role of example-setting is essential, and he may hope his example will be followed, but he is responsible to make it explicit by explanation and instruction, and at first /as required, enforce it by loving discipline, 1 Cor 4:14-21; Gal 4:19-20 Heb 12:5-13

Fathers were responsible for the moral and behavioural development of children to fit them to live rightly in the situation they were born into. Paul took the responsibility of re-socializing them into the new, and in many ways different, community into which they had entered by the New Birth. The Christian Faith, and Christian life, and their new Master/ Owner who had purchased them by His blood meant radical changes. Converts still need re-socialising out of the destructive ideas and habits of their unsaved life if they are to be effectively incorporated in the body of Christ and its life.

Suggesting that social-integration (Learning how to live and work in relation to the world at large) is the Father's role - and that personality integration (Learning to be a happy and worthwhile person) is the Mother's role, isn't meant to lay down exclusive separate parental roles, as circumstances differ from home to home. Mother and Grandmother moulded Timothy's life, 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15 Lamenting the passing of a more ordered society is a waste of time. Let's concentrate on encouraging the nurturing and admonition of all, by whoever is within reach. Paul nourished them as a Mother - instructed, exhorted, comforted, charged them, as a Father, as God is recorded doing in Ps 103:13; Isa 49:15-16 66:13

EXHORTE D/encouraging- #Parakaleo- To Call to one's side- so to beseech, exhort, give comfort, help, strengthen, encourage, teach, cheer. Literally kept encouraging kept comforting kept urging

COMFORTE D/comforting- #Paramutheomai. To speak alongside, as Jews came to "comfort" Mary and Martha, Jn 11:19, 31. Paul came right where they were, and shared their concerns with them at close quarters. There's value in cottage meetings, home Bible studies, etc. Both words remind us of the need to get close to people, understand the needs they feel, 2 Cor 1:3-6; 1 Th 5:14.

CHARGED/urging- Martureo- Witnessed/ testified the truth to them. From Martus= a Witness Eng Martyr. Not merely presenting high ideals, and pleasant daydreams, but God's unchanging requirements that challenge us all, by which Paul himself lived. His tender consideration, and making himself all things to all men, never let them lose sight of the fact that it was God that he and they were answerable to as Creator, Redeemer and Judge, 1 Cor 9:19-27. We must never think of Grace as an excuse for the presumptuous folly of "God understands me, and loves me so it's alright to ignore or disobey Him," Gal 5:13. Obedient fellowship with God is the only alternative to disaster in one form or another.

With these three words (As with triple statements generally) there is considerable overlap that strengthens and balances the meaning of the whole. In the NT, admonition carries an element of comfort, but there's no thought of comforting that doesn't face the facts of Scripture, and help the believer to carry out the common duties of life with more confidence, understanding, efficiency, and less wear and tear. Amidst the opposition, and problems we may face (as they did) we need strengthening assurance to keep going with God, and that pleasing Him is all-important. Not the false comfort of being told that as life is unfair we can shirk our responsibilities.

2:12 WALK /live- #Peripateo- To walk, live, behave. A chosen course of action which, taken a step at a time, produces a lifestyle, and ensures a result - whether or not it's a result we wanted. The whole round of activities of the individual life. While "walk" is an old-fashioned word it reminds us that in learning to live the Christ-like life we take one step at a time. One small decision/choice at a time, to please Him. Being born into God's family, Jn 1:12, comes before learning to walk, with its tumbles/ falls, triumphs/ joys. Walking is never effortless, but each step taken in fellowship with God, as Enoch learned, is good and a step closer to Glory. Paul often links doctrine, lifestyle, and destination. If, in working out the will of God in fellowship with Him, Phil 2:12-15, we make each choice while talking it over with our Lord, we will be walking with One we love. As that can be a pleasure in ordinary life, so it is in the spiritual, 1 Jn 1:7. We have to choose to take each step, a step at a time. Being pushed is likely to land us flat on our face.

WORTHY - Axios- Suitable, worthy. Linked with "of equal weight" i.e. balanced - in conformity with the balanced character of God, not an embarrassment to Him, see Rom 1:6-2; Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10; 3 Jn 6. We can't be worthy of God's gifts, but having been given them by grace should use them worthily. Each conscience is to

develop before God in a fellowship and walk of love. Not spelling out legalistic details that smother fellowship and provide the Christian with an apparent alternative path to self-righteous worthiness. Greek priests were expected to live in a way worthy of the god they served. Totally different ways, depending on whether they were a priest of Mars, Venus, Apollo, Athena.... The character of their god determined the character of their behaviour. So God has said "Be ye Holy as I am Holy, Lev 11:45 1 Pet 1:16

CALL - #Kaleo- To call/ be called, invite or summon with a purpose in view. Used of the Call God makes to individuals in the Gospel. While God's Call is also from eternity, and made effective at a point of time when man responds, here it's present tense. His constant calling us to be holy in daily living 2 Cor 6:14-18 Phil 3:12-14. Being a Christian is a dynamic situation, not a static one. We're called to be active, because God is in us working against our natural state, changing us towards the future one, Phil 2:12-16 3:20-21.

KINGDOM- The sphere of God's rule. In another sense the sphere in which His rule is acknowledged. It can be entered today only by New Birth, Jn 3:5, as it's an invisible, spiritual kingdom, 1 Cor 2:6-16 under a rejected King who must remain in heaven until He returns to rectify all things, Acts 3:18-24. These include the fulfilment of the promises to National Israel given through Isaiah, Zechariah, etc Acts 1:6-7. The synoptic Gospels are full of the Kingdom, but close with its rejection by the then Nation of Israel. Paul explains the effect of this, and the future kingdom in Romans chapters 9-11. Meanwhile he writes of how, while suffering with a rejected King, enjoying none of the material blessings of the future visible kingdom, we are to live.

The Christian is under a new Covenant, 2 Cor 3:6-18 part of a new creation, 2 Cor 5:15-21, a new man living in a new sphere - Kingdom of Light, of His Son, Col 1:12-13 with a glorious future to live up to, Mt 25:31-34 Phil 2:9-11; 2 Tim 4:1, 18. We can't accept a lower standard than He set out in Mt 5 etc. We're to enjoy and manifest the righteousness, peace and joy of those who willingly live under the Kingship/ Lordship of Christ, Rom 14:17, having been placed there by His Grace Col 1:10-14.

In one sense the Kingdom of God is universal. Although this earth is a sphere of Satanic rebellion God hasn't relinquished His claim to it. The Cross and resurrection of Christ established the total righteous defeat of the rebellion, Col 1:12-20 2:9-15. We are to stand with Him in praying that His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, and set out to do it ourselves. Not the noble, but ignorant folly, that we can by human effort enforce the Kingdom on a reluctant world. Our only possible victories are in union with His Cross Gal 2:20.

GLORY - #26 Where it refers to glory from men. Here it's the visible moral splendour of God as it will be revealed in the future. The OT spoke of Glory in Fiery Radiance, etc. In the NT the Disciples saw God's Glory in every aspect of the life of Christ, Jn 1:14. Every Believer, as they face Him in His word, prayerfully willing to reflect Him in their lives, is increasingly changed towards that glory by the action of the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor 3:15-4:10.

Kingdom and glory are linked to a single pronoun as they're inseparable. "In your Glory," Mk 10:37, is "In your Kingdom," Mt 20:21. In that day the whole Creation will be ruled so as to give mankind the maximum fulfilment of the beauty and blessing inherent in it. Yet unregenerate mankind, given the chance, will rebel, Rev 20:7-9. But

we are challenged to live now, sacrificially to His Glory, by His grace and indwelling power, to reign then, Rom 8:12-25

2:13-16 PAUL AGAIN THANKS GOD - FOR THEIR RESPONSE

(Their response to God's word under fierce persecution repeated what had happened in Judea, making it obvious that God was at work.)

2:13 AND - NT writers often begin sentences with "and" meaning "Keep in mind what I've just been saying while I tell you something more."

RECEIVED - #Paralambo - To take to oneself, actively, involving a close personal relationship between teacher and taught as living links in the passing on of God's Truth - like a baton change in a relay. Paul uses it of the public, oral handing-on of already established statements before the NT was written down, 1 Cor 11:23 15:1-3.

WORD OF GOD - God was giving His Word, statements of facts etc, through the Apostles and prophets, like Paul. It was written down for us in the NT, Eph 2:20 2 Pet 1:21; Jude 3. Now it's preached/taught from the Bible, by His servants. It remains HIS Word directly to the hearers as it had been through Paul.

HEARD - Implying to hear and obey. RECEIVED/accepted - #1:6. Welcomed heartily, a personal response of Faith and commitment, Phil 4:9.

WORD OF MEN - It's natural to want to be believed because of who we are and how we speak. Paul made a point of not using verbal skills or psychological strategies, 1 Cor 2:1-5. We should bear in mind that what God is saying may be clouded by our words, manner, method and attitude, or shine out clearly for hearers to grasp.

BUT AS THE WORD OF GOD - As they heard Paul's words, they heard God's Word. Faithful stewardship and the work of the Holy Spirit combined to make this happen. Doesn't imply Paul's infallibility, or robotic action, but that God in Paul, and Paul abiding in God, Jn 15:1-8, were the means that God used in speaking to them. What Paul gave was not his contribution to their ideas about God, but an authoritative proclamation by a messenger authorised and approved by God, saying "God says." Paul resisted the temptation to adjust his message to the current philosophies, and felt needs, but what God gave him was designed to meet real needs as God knew them, and so what he preached was far more relevant than any alternative.

AT WORK IN - As in Phil 2:13. In spite of advances in psychology, social living and communications skills, so much time spent in compassionate Christian counselling from pulpit, in conversation, and print, is as effective as ointment on cancer. It's important that we "sit where those to whom we speak, sit," but essential that we stand with God in the power of His Spirit in what we say, so that they are compelled to break out of their "me-centred" thinking into a sight of the glory of God and the horror of sinful self-iddling independence, Ezek 31:5-19. Self-satisfied parroting of the traditional verbal form of the Gospel is worse than useless. But like Pauls, Wesleys, etc

solved more personal and social problems in an hour's preaching than any counselling clinic does in a year. God knows the need beneath the symptoms, and speaks to that need, by raising up faithful Gospel preachers. As they preach His Word, in the love and power of the Holy Spirit God reaches out to the hearers with the holy wisdom, love and power to solve all needs by working within. There is no possible solution for human need that can operate on the basis of God being allowed to do a little for the needy one, at their discretion.

BELIEVE - #1:7- Present tense, continuing Faith/obedient trust in God and His Word. Choosing to believe is a crisis and a process. All God's promises become real to us, are experienced and enjoyed, only as we take them up in faith and use them. (All of life is like that - neither soap nor food are any use unless taken up and used!)

2:14 FOLLOWERS/imitators- #1:6. We need good examples. Paul may have used the experience of Christ and Christians in Judea as an example of what they could expect. There's always a cost for those who receive Christ and some negative reaction from those who do not. There was nothing of unrepentant or deliberate copying. The thankful, triumphant lives of Believers show God to be at work.

CHURCHES IN JUDEA- The point is that Jesus was rejected and killed there. The Church was formed there. The Gospel spread out from there. The Thessalonica persecution was a local manifestation of the hatred of Christ and the Gospel that had existed from the start in Jerusalem. Yet Believing Jews still existed as "Churches of God in Judea" Paul worked to develop a sense of oneness between the founding Church, and all churches, Rom 15:25-32. There's a reassurance in knowing what we experience is shared with others of God's people, Mt 5:11-12, and our Lord, Acts 9:4. Churches are in separate places, but united spiritually in Christ.

IN CHRIST JESUS- In contrast to Synagogues which still claimed to be God's congregations, but who rejected Christ.

SUFFERED- Because of being associated with Christ. Aorist tense, an event and its continued effect. Jewish persecution of Christians in alliance with the Roman authorities, both opposing the Lordship of Christ for different reasons, continued until the Revolt of the Jews against Rome, and the destruction of Jerusalem, AD 70.

COUNTRY MEN- Those of their own race and culture. Those who could naturally be expected to defend their rights turned against them, and disowned them, when they owned Jesus as Lord and Saviour. **THE JEWS-** Used of the leadership that opposed the Lord Jesus, and so opposed the Gospel, Jn 1:8; Acts 9:23, 13:45, 50.

2:15 KILLED THE LORD JESUS- Their crowning sin, as He was God in human form, the perfect expression of God's Grace and Truth, and displaying the promised signs that He was their Messiah, Lu 4:18; Jn 15:18-25. In doing this they worked through the mob, and the Roman authorities, just as at Thessalonica. All parties bear their guilt, Acts 2:23; 1 Cor 2:8. The special guilt of the Jewish rulers was that they abused

their position of privilege by persistent opposition to God's purposes, Mk 12:1-9; Acts 3:14-15; 7:52

DROVE OUT - Ekdioko - Ek= Out Dioko= to Pursue, Persecute. As they treated the fore-runners, and Christ, so they treated, James, Stephen, Paul, Mt 23:37; Acts 7:51-53; 60; 12:1-4; 22:17-21. Jews from Moses on have denounced Jewish unbelief. Paul's passionate outburst is part of his passionate desire to see his Jewish people enter into blessing in Christ, Rom 9:1-3. He still evangelised Jews first in each new town, Rom 1:16; Acts 19:8, etc. Paul's words give no excuse for the persistent anti-Jewish actions of the professing Church in the centuries following Constantine.

DISPLEASE GOD - By opposing His purposes of blessing for all mankind, Rom 15:7-12; 1 Tim 2:1-6. No unregenerate can please God in the sense of conforming to His will. But by rejecting God's Servant Son, they rejected God Himself, Jn 15:18-25 and rejected their role in His purposes of Grace were themselves rejected.

CONTRARY /hostile TO ALL - Gentiles resented Jewish pride in despising all others as unclean, as Tacitus recorded in his History, 5:5. By opposing the Gospel, Jews were opposing the universal good for all men, everywhere.

2:16 FORBIDDING /keep US.. SPEAKING TO THE GENTILES - Simply Non-Jews, but Jews used it to mean they were unclean, ignorant, and under God's judgment. Jews regarded the Gospel offer of Salvation to Gentiles without demanding circumcision and law-keeping as a deadly insult to their position and pride, and were making a violent, persistent, effort to prevent it; Acts 22:21-22; Rom 9:11. Yet they had rejected the One to whom their Scriptures pointed as the only hope, Lk 13:34

MIGHT BE SAVED - Aorist Passive - Men are the objects of God's saving efforts, not the earners of Salvation. In Semitic thinking purpose and consequence go together. The Salvation of the Gentiles was God's purpose - and its result. Jews, God's chosen messengers, had rejected Christ and the Gospel message, and were doing all they could to stop the Gentiles from even hearing about Him. This reflected Satanic malice against God and man, Lk 11:47-52

FILL /heap UP - Filling the pan of a balance until it balances the weight on the other side, Mt 23:32; Acts 7:52. Cp "Iniquity of Amorites not yet full," Gen 15:16. The horror of Jewish rejection and murder of their Messiah is great, but it was also a step towards the purpose of Salvation of all who would repent. The worse sin was the Rulers' determined effort to ignore the evidence of His resurrection, and to silence His messengers, Mt 28:11-15; Acts 4:17-21; 14:19. To pursue Paul from town to town and stir persecution against converts continued to add further sin. God gives men all possible/profitable time to repent as in Noah's time, 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:9; Rom 2:4. And so that their evil, and the inevitability of punishment becomes obvious, as when Sodom faced faultless Angels. Only Christ's personal return will give National Israel the chance to reverse its verdict on Him, Mt 26:63-66; Zech 12:10

WRATH OF GOD #1:10..TO THE UTTERMOST /last - Eis Telos - The point aimed at as a limit. The statement is abrupt - emphasizing a sudden action at a critical point,

with noreturn currently available. Sin and repentance had marked Israel's life, but their rebellion had reached its final, inexcusable limit.

It was appropriate that God's responsive judgment/ rejection/ separation from fellowship and blessing should be symbolised by the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Temple, sacrificial system, etc. This was 20 years in the future, and Jewish actions, Jn 11:48 Acts 17:6 were intended to gain favour with Rome. But Roman-Jewish conflict was building up Acts 18:2, and they faced the inevitable visible expression of the wrath of God, Mt 21:42-43 23:38-42; 27:25 Paul in his loving concern for his own people, and God's purposes, had the spiritual insight to see it as inevitable, Rom 9:1-3.

(In Rom 9:11 Paul makes a clear distinction between Jewish acceptors and rejectors of Christ, the process of National rejection, and future National restoration and blessing and the combined effect of bringing blessing on the Gentiles, now and in the future.)

2:17-3:10 PAUL'S CONTINUING CONCERN FOR THEM.

(His absence might have seemed a heartless abandoning of them that would weaken their desire to be true to the Lord and the Gospel.)

2:17 BUT WE BROTHERS/brothers- #1-4 Shows the change of focus from the Jews, to them, and expresses affectionate fellowship.

TAKEN/torn away- A orphanizo- Lit. Bereaved/ orphaned, used of parents losing children as well as vice-versa. This follows on the Mother/Father relationship with them, vs 7-12 Aorist Passive, an action forced on them, its effect continuing. Paul left home and family for the Lord and gained an abundant new family along with persecution, Mk 10:30 He felt empty and bereft and helpless in being absent from them and unable to exercise care over them.

ENDEAVOURED MORE ABUNDANTLY/made every effort- Not just a token, half-hearted attempt out of a sense of duty.

GREAT DESIRE/intense longing- Paul/ God's servants are not fatalists, or unfeeling. It's right to be concerned, active. Paul was not aloof, superior saint, with a professional manner. He was a warm-hearted, loving, involved-with-those-he-worked-with, person.

2:18 WOULD HAVE COME - Thelo- Usually a natural inclination - what someone felt like doing, rather than a decision of the will.

I PAUL - Emphasising that this was his personal desire, although it was Timothy who had returned to them. His own concern was all the stronger because he was the one being kept from returning.

SATAN - A Hebrew/Aramaic word meaning enemy, opponent. In NT used only of the powerful rebel angel opposed to God, His people, and all good. Defeated in the Cross and resurrection, Col 2:15, yet frantically determined to do all he can to limit and mar the objects of God's Grace frustrate and spoil..... until his final defeat is enforced publicly, 2 Cor 2:11; 11:3, 13-15; 12:7; 1 Pet 5:8. Those who reject and oppose Christ are his children, Jn 8:42-47.

HINDERED - Enkopto - To break up the road, bridges etc to hinder progress of an army. His readers probably knew the visible hindrances. We don't need to. Perhaps Jason who'd gone bail for him, Acts 17:9, refused to agree to his coming. But Paul saw the invisible hand of Satan in it. (In Acts 16:6 the Holy Spirit blocked their way.) Paul doesn't tell us how he knew which was which, but he would be much more likely to be right than we would be, as he was dealing with God directly, and writing the words God wanted written for our learning. We too can expect to persist against opposition.

Paul wasn't quick to blame Satan as an excuse for human misfortune, failure, and sin. In Romans he sets out man's state before God in sin, judgement, justification and Christian living without even mentioning Satan. See Jas 1:13-15. But Satan can stir men up to oppose the work and people of God, 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 2:10, but only within limits, Job 1:2, 2:6. Because he hindered, Paul wrote this letter which God has used in blessing ever since.

2:19 (A disjointed statement/excited outburst of being concerned.)

HOPE - #1:3. Confidence in their sincerity, but more in God who can be relied on to complete the saving work He's begun, Phil 1:6.

JOY - #1:6. A parental pleasure in seeing his children doing well, and his Lord glorified in them, Cp. Phil 4:1, 4.

CROWN - Stephanos - A crown for success at Olympic games etc, a public appreciation/honour, military success or worn at a wedding, etc. From Stephos = To Encircle. (Not a Ruler's crown - Diadema.)

REJOICING /in which we will Glory - A reason for being justly proud and thankful. A reward to take pleasure in. Paul wasn't driven by selfish ambition, and he wasn't an emotionless passive tool of God. He was a heartily involved, unselfconscious, obedient child of God/servant of God, delighted to see the consequence of the love and action they shared with God, and so share in its wonderful outcome.

Paul's vigorous and sacrificial stewardship of the Gospel didn't have in mind his winning credit and crowns for himself. He rejoiced in seeing God's activity in the lives of converts, and their joy and steadfast progress in the Lord and His ways. He looked forward to sharing in the triumphant joy of his Lord at seeing them presented faultless before the throne of God, Jude 24 etc.

YE /you - Paul was keen to go back because he loved them as children, and felt so involved in their joy, suffering, and progress. He rejoiced in all that they were and

were becoming, and would be in Christ, in the Glory. So should we. The sower and reaper will meet the results of their work in Glory, and rejoice together.

T E Wilson Quotes Lord Beaverbrook as saying "When I was a youngman I pitied my father for being a poor man and a humble preacher of the Word. Now that I am older I envy him for his life and his career." His advice was that there was more satisfaction in being an Evangelist than a Cabinet Minister and millioaire as he was.

IN THE PRESENCE /when He comes- #Parousia- Para= With. Ousia= Being Not so much the fact of His Coming, as of His being present with us, (Bodily presence/ parousia weak, 2 Cor 10:10) What is real will then be seen, at His Judgment seat, 2 Cor 5:10 and "Well done.." Mt 25:21 heard. Christ's presence means Hope fulfilled, Joy, and Crown. The Lord will then give Paul his earned crown(s) but the sight of them getting theirs will be his joy and pride. That Paul will know them, assures us that we will know our loved ones.

Parousia is a technical term for a royal visit, or supposed manifestation of a god It isn't used in OT of the coming Kingdom. Inscription at Tegea "In year 69 of the Parousia of the god (Emperor) Hadrian in Greece" Such an Imperial Parousia was a sensational display of pomp and ceremony and could bring a new era of prosperity for the district - a shallow figure of the Parousia of the God of Glory.

2:20 INDEED - indicates this is a summary of what Paul has been saying

OUR GLORY - #26. AND JOY - #1:6. Two men are described as Doxa Christou= A credit to Christ, 2 Cor 8:23 Cp Job 18. What his readers had become in Christ through the Gospel made Paul proud and joyful. What they were already, gave him confidence to write 2:19. They reflected Paul's own life and attitude, 2 Cor 5:5-10

Paul gloried only in the Cross of Christ, as in Gal 2:20 He preached that Cross as God's answer to man's need 1 Cor 1:18 And in response to this they took it up, and Paul could glory in its effect in their lives, Gal 6:14.

CHAPTER THREE .

3:1 WE - Silas co-operating in the sending, Timothy in going

FORBEAR /endure- Paul's loving, worrying concern for their welfare became such a burden he had to do something about it While Ps 40:8 was true of the Lord, so was Gethsemane. While in one sense we're not to worry, Phil 4:6-7, there's nothing robotic about our obedient, fruitful fellowship with the Lord. We function in the freedom of sons, to choose among uncertainties the option which we believe is most likely to be an expression of Love for God, and our fellow men. A certain amount of worrying about people/ things, shared with our Lord, is essential in this.

THOUGHT GOOD /best- Believing prayer for converts doesn't make follow-up work less essential, wherever it's possible. Paul sent a messenger, wrote a letter, and continued to pray. The need of the converts came before the need of the Apostle.

LEFT ALONE/by ourselves- Kataleipo- Left behind, forsaken. LXX Isa 3:26 49:21. While Paul chose this, he expresses his feeling of loneliness without human support and encouragement.

IN ATHENS- An alien city, no mention of any Jewish synagogue, or converts from a synagogue. The sight of idols everywhere oppressed him. Philosophers mocked him, and few responded to the Gospel, Acts 17.

NOTE Details of their movements are unclear, and largely irrelevant. Paul was alone in Athens, Acts 17:15, and Corinth Acts 18:5, so presumably they joined him at Athens and were sent back, Silas to Berea? Philippi? and Timothy as described here.

3:2 TIMOTHY - As a half Greek, Acts 16:3, his appearance and speech would be less conspicuous than Paul's, and he would have played a less visible part, so less easily recognised and rioted against. "We" made the decision, 3:1. He was a helpful and willing substitute for Paul, Phil 2:19-24 and that was the measure of Paul's loss.

MINISTER OF GOD- [RT] Diakonos- Used to describe any kind of work done in the church. Eg ministering the word, or food Acts 6:2,4. God's fellow worker- [Nes] Sunergos- Sun= with. Ergon= work. In older/fewer MSS. A striking statement Scribes might well water down. Paul says we're workers together with God in 1 Cor 3:9. It's breath-taking to think that God is working with us as we work, but God makes many statements that shock us out of our small-minded/low expectation/settle-into-a-rut thinking. Mt 19:24 21:21; Jn 14:13; Eph 3:20 etc. God's direct involvement in the Believer's life is made dear in Jn 14:23 15:1-10; Phil 2:12-13, and is the reason we should take life responsibly. In working with Paul Rom 16:21, Timothy was also working with/for God. He didn't have to have Paul with him in order to do God's Work, so they were to accept him as representing God as well as Paul.

GOSPEL OF CHRIST- While in a sense Believers are fellow-workers with God (getting the Gospel out and encouraging those converted by it) it is CHRIST'S Gospel - proclaiming Him, His person and work.

ESTABLISH/strengthen- #Sterizo- To make secure, establish. From Sterix= a prop. Note how a framework with cross timbers, braces, etc in place is made stable. This takes time and effort on the part of Bible teachers and converts. Sterizo is used often of establishing converts in the Christian faith and life, in the face of ignorance, personal weakness and persecution, Acts 14:22 15:32 Rom 1:11; 16:25 2 Th 2:17; 1 Pet 5:10 Jas 5:8. There's no point in propping up anything God hasn't established/ isn't using, but Human commitment and effort is needed to ensure God's work goes on well. Used in LXX Ex 17:12, and of Peter in Lk 22:32.

COMFORT/encourage- #211. One article is used with strengthen and encourage as they're parts of the one process. There's a constant need to help Christians adjust to their new situation, status, beliefs, works, and life-style. Consolidate them into a sound growing, happy, effective and worthwhile pattern of living.

CONCERNING /in- Peri- #1:7. Everything that concerns our life of faith.

FAITH- #1:3. Enthusiasm is fine, but enthusiasm without knowledge is like running in the dark. God's servants need to get alongside converts to clarify their understanding of the truth, reassure them, show them how to put it into practice, how to persist and grow strong confident and joyful in fellowship with the Lord and one another.

All need to be established and encouraged in personal trust in God, i.e. trustful acceptance of all that He has given us in Christ in a life centred on Christ, as revealed in "the Faith" Jude 3. The statements of Scripture produce personal faith, which produces faithful living based on them. Having begun well, 1:6, they were to be increasingly steadfast and full of the works of faith/moral and spiritual fruitfulness. That there'll always be a need to improve is an incentive to earnest, cheerful endeavour.

3:3 MOVED/unsettled- Unless we're established in the Lord and His will revealed in His Word we have no stability, Eph 4:11-16 is the general meaning. The Greek word meant wagged as a dog's tail!

DESTINED FOR- A natural reaction to persecution is to think we've made a mistake, we can't be pleasing God after all. If we've become God's children, surely He wouldn't let us suffer? Paul reassures them that persecution was a normal part of being accepted by and acceptable to, God, Mt 5:11; Jn 16:33; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:27-30; 2 Tim 3:12. Christ lived in perfect fellowship with the Father, and suffered. This was His path to Glory, and we share it with Him, Jn 15:10-24; Col 1:24. Sonship involves chastening love, Heb 12:5-13, and equips us to help others, 2 Cor 1:3-4.

Conversion puts us on a collision course with the Goddess of this world. It will test and refine our faith as gold is refined 1 Pet 1:5-7. God will always make it possible to come through the test well, by providing a "Way of escape," 1 Cor 10:13. God doesn't organise persecution. He permits it, over-ruling it for good.

3:4 TOLD/kept telling- Imperfect tense - He'd told them often..

SHOULD- Inevitably because of the nature of the Gospel, the nature of those that rejected it, and the life Christians are called to enjoy in Christ against the pressure of the world, Rom 8:13-17; 12:2. SUFFER TRIBULATION/be persecuted- #Thli bo- To be put under pressure as the crowd PRESSED around Jesus. Mt 7:14. We'll feel crushed by the pressure of the mass of unsaved humanity going in the opposite direction - towards Hell, Phil 1:29-30. Paul reminds them that his experience and theirs was what is to be expected as part of the deal. Normality for the Church is persecution, Mk 8:34; Lk 23:4; Acts 14:22.

KNOW- #1:4. They had seen it happen and could understand its role in human lives. The Gospel must be honestly presented as including suffering, loss, problems in this life, balanced against spiritual gain. Possessions and ease may be lost, but our soul is not only saved, it is enriched, made Christ-like, as Paul was, Phil 3:1-15.

3.5 FOR THIS CAUSE /reason- Sums up 14. I SENT - Earnest believing prayer didn't mean he could complacently shrug off personal responsibility to do what he could to help them. Believing prayer and helpful actions go together.

KNOW /find out about- Ginosko- Personal fellowship knowledge. To learn how they were weathering the storm, by being with them.

YOUR FAITH - #1:4. Enthusiastic congregations, Church growth, etc are fine, but Paul gets straight to the heart of the matter - their believing relationship with God in Christ, and faithful obedient living in response to the Gospel revelation of God and His will. Faith is the living link with God from which all else grows.

TEMPTE D - Peirazo- To test, tempt, prove. Exposure to such testing is necessary, and commended in 1 Cor 14:29 1 Th 5:21; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Jn 4:1. The word has no association with improvement, but rather with giving people the chance to show/find out what they really are. Being truly human Christ was tempted, and His sinlessness demonstrated. Testing shows what men will try to do in response to the pressure. God can't be tempted by Evil, and isn't the source of any evil option men face Jas 1:13-15. The Tempter is at work all the time, but Paul means "tempted you successfully so as to make your profession useless for God"

With God the Holy Spirit, the stronger One, Lk 11:21 in us, demonic possession, oppression, or depression from WITHIN is impossible. But Satan manipulates our circumstances to bring pressure on us through those who threaten or allure us as we walk with the Lord. Mk 7:20-23 Jas 1:13-15 His ally within us, the Flesh, readily responds to his threats and bribes, with the result that we can be distracted, distressed, fed oppressed and depressed and will be so in the measure in which we disobey Phil 4:4-9; Col 3:17.

IN VAIN /useless Kenos- God permits the tempter to offer us easy alternatives to His will, leaving us a son's freedom to serve Him gladly. Paul expresses parental concern that they choose well, and pass the test. Otherwise all he'd done, all he'd been praising God for, (and in a sense Calvary) while of itself valued by God, if they failed to go on with the Lord, would fail to glorify Him and so bless them, 2 Cor 6:1; Gal 2:21; Phil 2:16

3.6 But- There's a warm emotional tone in this expression of Paul's loving concern for their well-being, turned to joy at the news.

FAITH - #1:3. CHARITY /love- Agape. The two sides of the coin of Godly Christian living, Gal 5:6. Faith represents their attitude towards God, rather than their faithfulness, and Love is the result, and Vice versa. Faith and Love aren't just words, but living vital realities of whole-hearted loving commitment to God, the Gospel, and each other, not just stubborn correctness of doctrine and life.

GOOD REMEMBRANCE /pleasant memories- They looked back on his visit as a good and beneficial thing, with loving appreciation of him. They shared his desire to be together and have fellowship in the Lord. Our attitude towards God, the Gospel, His servants and His people, go hand in hand.

3:7-8 COMFORTE D/encouraged- #211 BY/because of- Both true. FAITH- The original act of trust becomes a continuing reliance on the Lord that stabilises the life of the Believer/obeyer, and matures them in Christ-likeness. As we go on with our Lord in His revealed will, preacher/hearer, young/old are blessing and encouragement to each other, Rom 1:12, 2 Cor 7:4, 7, 13, Phil m 7.

ALL - suggests intensity, variety, frequency. AFFLICTION/distress #1:6. Trouble from being under pressure with little freedom of action. DISTRESS/persecution- Paul was under external persecution at Corinth, and internal concern for converts. While he viewed such distress as part of his service for the Lord, 2 Cor 11:22-29, 12:7-10, their response made him rejoice in the proof of God's effective work in them.

WE really LIVE - In contrast to past anxiety about them. The renewal of a relationship is like life after death "My son was dead and is alive," Lk 15:24. Paul felt like that, 1 Cor 12:19-26, 2 Cor 7:3; 11:28-29. His life and service could continue in renewed peace of mind, joy, and effectiveness when he had been reassured about them, Acts 18:5. To hear of Gospel successes refreshes our own spiritual life and service.

IF/since- IF, as I now know you do Not uncertainty. STAND ing FAST/firm IN THE LORD - Actively continuing to express their Faith and Love by living daily to honour the Lord and enjoy fellowship with Him in the path of His will. Their doing this was Paul's great concern. Cp Phil 1:20-26. All the Christian is, has and does exists in a relationship with Christ, 2 Cor 5:17. It is enriched and enabled by His being their Lord, 1 Cor 15:58, Phil 2:1-15. Their will supported by God lies at the back of their outward firmness.

3:9 FOR YOU in return FOR- Antapoddomi- To give back as an equivalent repayment. No possible thanksgiving is adequate to express the relief and joy Paul feels at the news, but he's putting his whole heart into the thanksgiving, and so should we. Cp Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; 1 Th 1:2; 2:13; 2 Th 1:3. He doesn't thank THEM, for the encouragement but instantly goes to the source, God, expressing an overwhelming sense of His grace and goodness. Grace experienced-> thanksgiving to God-> Glory, 2 Cor 4:15.

ALL THE JOY - Giving thanks is a debt. In paying, it becomes a joy. Deep heart's concern intensifies joy, as it had intensified his suffering and distress. Shallow humanity accepts joy as of right, and promptly forgets what a grace it is to us, any need that preceded it, and the cost to God and man that provided it. By treating that grace lightly we soon lose that joy. Paul treasures the joy and like David, 2 Sam 23:15-17, turns it Godwards in thanksgiving, and so continues in the joy.

BEFORE/in the presence of OUR GOD - A spiritual rejoicing in God's goodness, not a fleshly self-satisfaction in the success of his own work. They and Paul shared in joy in the presence of God. A joy out of reach of any persecuting tyrant or mob, and so do we share. Joy in what the Lord is doing/has done, joy in His people and their progress, marks those who serve the Lord. He pays well even in the present life, Mk 10:29-30, and ahead is His "Well Done," Mt 25:21, and the "Exceeding Joy," Jude 24.

3:10 NIGHT AND DAY - Spontaneously and habitually, at any hour. PRAYING - Deimai - Used of asking a special favour out of a sense of personal need and with a strong devotion to the one asked. Life in their trials was Life triumphing in the Lord. This moves Paul to thanksgiving and prayer for the chance to be with them helpfully.

EXCEEDINGLY /earnestly- hyper ek perissos- A double compound verb- exceedingly overflowing all bounds. A strong emphatic statement of persistent interest/concern 1:2; 2:13; 3:6; 5:16-17. SEE YOUR FACE /you again- This would enable full and responsive communication Paul felt the limitations of distance and pen and paper, but in Prayer he was with them before the face of God

PERFECT /supply- Katartizo- To equip an army, put nets in order, etc. (Mt 4:21; Lk 6:40; 1 Cor 1:10; Gal 6:1; Heb 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; 1 Pet 5:10) Paul longed to be with them to complete the work of equipping them with Doctrine, and Practical Wisdom for living. But Satan's keeping them apart was over-ruled by God so that this very letter was part of the Scripture which by God's life-giving breath, Gen 27, equips Believers in every needed way, 2 Tim 3:16-17.

LACKING - Not blaming them, or apologising for failing to give them everything when he was there. Cp. Rom 1:11-12 Time had been limited, but equally only when a certain level has been stabilised can further truth be added, Jn 16:12 They showed no lack of zeal and loving loyalty, but needed further knowledge and insight. Paul always rejoices in the Good as an encouragement to add to it, being content with nothing less than the perfection proposed by God in the Gospel 2 Cor 11:1-3. Ch 45 takes up the task by letter, reminding reinforcing clarifying extending what he's already taught. Conversion isn't the Goal of the Gospel, but the start.

FAITH - #1:3. Not the measure in which they trust God, so much as their understanding of the truth of God, Jude 1:3, in which they trust, and its outworking in love, life, and service/ fellowship with God and man. There was a tremendous contrast between current Heathen ethics and those of the Gospel. Plus the complete lack of Christian/ NT literature for them to refer to. There is still such a gap following conversion on the Missionfield of say Africa with the persistence of traditional witchcraft etc among converts. The need is increasing in the homelands as Western civilisation throws off its Christian heritage. Faith sums up the whole Christian experience, in which we need to mature, Phil 1:6-7; Col 1:10; 2 Th 1:3. This statement leads readily into the teaching section

3:11-13 THREE PRAYER SUBJECTS.

(Removal of barriers to his return. Increased love for each other, complete holiness)

3:11 NOW - As Paul thinks of what he has been writing, and the eternal consequences, he naturally and simply brings everything into the presence of God, and acknowledges that all hoped for is in Him. GOD HIMSELF - An emphatic statement that God is directly interested in, and active concerning all that affects His children. Satan may hinder and tempt, but Paul appeals to omnipotent Love.

LORD JESUS CHRIST - That Paul naturally and spontaneously addresses the Father and the Son equally in prayer, linked with one verb in the singular, shows that he accepted the Lord's statement that He and the Father were one in person and purpose, Jn 10:30 That the One God of the OT was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was an essential Christian doctrine from the first. Except for quotes from OT "Lord" seems to be used of the Son, only, indicating that He exercises Sovereign authority on behalf of God 1Cor 15:23-28 Phil 2:6-11. Father and Lord are used as titles in relation to the Believers, as children and servants. Father and Son in relation to each other in the Deity. (Elsewhere Paul refers to them as acting in distinctive ways - The Son dies/ the Father sends, etc. The Spirit is referred to as the Agent of God and Christ, Rom 8:9-11. We dare not wrangle over the nature and relationships of the Godhead. We must stick to the words of Scripture, His chosen words, and wonder, worship, and obey.

DIRECT/clear the WAY - Literally to Straighten, so to guide, or clear the obstacles Satan had used to block the road, 2:18 LXX used Direct in Ps 37:23 40:2; Prov 4:26 and it's in Lk 1:79 2 Th 3:5. Paul's efforts and God's directions are two sides of the same coin. He gladly puts himself, and his being with them, into God's hands, calling to mind His Person by naming Him fully. We too should at all times remember who He is, what He is in relation to us, and ask accordingly. Give thanks, and rest in the certainty that if we're willing His good and perfect will be done, in us, for, and by us.

3:12 THE LORD - Jesus, as in vs 11. Prayer is usually addressed to the Father, in Heaven, but to the Son in Acts 7:59 1 Cor 16:22 2 Cor 12:8 2 Th 3:5, at His right hand. It's appropriate as it was the Lord Jesus who urged that His disciples must love one another, Jn 15. In NT Prayer is never to the Holy Spirit who is within the Believer moving, directing, and enabling him to pray, Rom 8:26-27. We can't understand Prayer, but we are to be constantly in God's presence about everything.

MAKE YOU/your LOVE - Paul rejoiced that their Love was well known, 1:3, But if love isn't growing, it's dying. Christian love is never just a feeling but a loving activity towards others, 1 Cor 13:1-5. When by the miracle of Grace we pass from death (self-centredness) to life, we're taken up by God's love into fellowship with Him in His loving purposes and work for all mankind. As New Creatures, 2 Cor 5:16-18, we're to express Him to others. Cp. Gal 6:10

INCREASE - Pleonazo - Used in "Sin ABOUNDED, Rom 5:20 ABOUND/overflow-#Perissuo - To super-abound in quantity, or quality, be enough and to spare. There's no need to ration our loving actions. Just as 12 full baskets were left over beyond all that the 5000 could eat, Lk 9:17, so God's provision of love "Overflows" - the same word - all that we can possibly use or need. Paul heaps up words to emphasise the importance of Growth in Love, here, in Faith, vs 10 Increase in quantity - the cause. Overflow - the effect. Biblical devotion to God/holiness is always expressed in loving attitudes and actions towards others. While Paul prays for this to happen he also urges them to strive for it in 4:9-10

ONE ANOTHER/each other - This was the first and most natural break through from selfishness and racial/social/cultural barriers between the different groups called by the Gospel into the one Church/body of Christ. It was achieved by God's Grace in Christ crucified, and the enabling of God the Holy Spirit. Persecution, if they didn't

allow it to split them apart, strengthened their sense of unity. The need to exercise love within the fellowship is stressed in Jn 13:34 Rom 13:8, 1 Th 4:9, 1 Pet 1:22, 1 Jn 3:11-23

TOWARDS ALL MEN/everyone else- In vs 10 Paul expects God to use him to perfect their understanding of the truth/ their faith; but here he states plainly that God Himself is the One who enables them to love as they should, Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22. And as the latter chapter shows clearly, this happens as we're willing to act lovingly in obedience to our Lord, and in dependence on Him. Serving one another in the free surrender of our wills, lives and souls set free by the Gospel. Having learnt to love all sorts of people in the local fellowship they were equipped to reach out in loving concern and activity towards those around encouraged by the mutual support/prayer of their brothers and sisters in Christ, Rom 13:10 Gal 5:14. Even for persecutors, Mt 5:44-46

AS WE - Generally Preachers shouldn't draw attention to themselves, but exhortation is useless unless it's obvious we ourselves endeavour to do what we urge others to do. Paul asks them to echo the love he and his fellow workers had exercised towards them, 2:7-12

3:13 STABLISH/strengthen- #32 Food strengthens the body, LXX 1 Sam 28:22 Ps 104:15 To try to make oneself Holy before God is doomed to fail. It becomes possible only as God strengthens our heart, mind, will. It's on that basis alone that we're commanded to be Holy, as He is holy, Lev 20:7; 1 Pet 1:15-16 God never Loves/exercises love in order to gain anything for Himself, and that is the pattern we're taken up into. Our desire to please God is to be cultivated but to be viewed as a mere echo/reflection of His love to us. We're not told to be holy in order to be loved, but to love in order to be blameless and to allow God to strengthen us in that. Our stability isn't produced by outward conformity to rules, but from the inward life of the Believer in the presence/fellowship of God. Holiness produces blamelessness, not just calm and confidence. They're by-products of a life lived in fellowship with God. Any idealistic zeal not founded in that relationship will fail.

YOUR HEARTS- The whole inner being, not just emotions. Sins and failures grow out of lack of love, Rom 13:8-10. Growth into abundant overflowing love results in blameless conduct, and holiness of life. It is God's Purpose that we be Holy, Rom 8:29, 1 Cor 1:2, 1 Pet 1:2. It is the Position in which we are placed by the grace of God, 1 Cor 1:30 & 11. It is Practical and Progressive throughout our earthly life, 2 Cor 7:1, as the Holy Spirit works in us Eph 5:26-27, John 1:17. It will be Perfect/perfected at the Coming of the Lord 1 Th 3:13, 5:23, Jude 24.

BLAMELESS- #210- Used of OT sacrifices in LXX. In Phil 2:15, Jude 24 it's used of our freedom from any cause of shame, and from shame itself. Consciously spotless, unembarrassed in relation to ourselves, because we'll know that we're what God wants us to be/made us for. The result of living in abounding love for everyone will be a state of blamelessness in regard to others, and holiness in regard to God. We'll have been standing with God in His attitude towards all, and in His actions with regard to them. As a result no accusation or reproach could be possibly brought against us.

If they were to be that way at the Parousia/Bema they must learn to be so here and now, ready for the sudden Coming. A Positive thing, not merely freedom from sin. Not the fussing over outward details that enabled Pharisee Saul to feel pleased with Himself, Phil 3:6, but Blameless before God who reads the hearts and knows all we do, and do it, and why. 1 Cor 13:1-3 is the effective test of this.

HOLINESS- Hagiosune- Holiness as manifested in personal conduct uniquely by the Lord Jesus, as proved by His resurrection, Rom 1:4. The opposite of selfishness/fleshliness. Believers are to be "Perfecting Holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor 7:1. Acceptance of Grace/God's acceptance of us in Grace produces this holiness in which we live, and must direct ourselves towards living. God's Holiness is central to His Being - His moral purity in contrast to fallen man. LXX uses hagiosune only of God. LOVE towards men./HOLINESS in God's sight sum up the Christian life.

BEFORE/in the presence of GOD- Believers will face God as our Father who already disciplines us in love. We placed ourselves in His Hands, and are securely held there. That God is our Father softens the sense that He is our Judge, but equally sharpens it. Our sin is a grief we share with Him, a barrier of uncleanness which we are to be eager to see removed, 1 Cor 11:31-32, Heb 12:1-13, 1 Pet 1:17-19, 1 Jn 1:7-9, 3:1-3. God's judging is not that of a brutal slave-driver, or of an aloof and distant automaton but that of a loving Heavenly Father eager to be proud of/praise all He can of our life and service. But not that of an indulgent parent who can choose to ignore the reality, and be content with our being content with less than the best. To be blameless in God's sight then, is all important. It will be obvious at the Bema, 2 Cor 5:10 but at present we must make the effort to bring ourselves constantly into God's presence praying "Search me O God," Ps 139:23-24.

AT THE COMING - #219 This refers specifically to His appearing to take His people with Him, as in 4:13-18 when the trials and pressures of this life, and its opportunities for service will end. His coming in Glory to set up His Kingdom on earth, and the final destruction/renewal of the earth at the end of the Millennium, 2 Pet 3:10-13, are also used as incentives to Holy living.

HIS SAINTS/holy ones- As Paul never seems to refer to Angels as "Holy Ones," it's likely he's referring to the Lord's Saved people, those He has made Holy, the Christian dead in Christ. But as the OT Saints are also made Holy in Christ alone, it may include them. That by Grace we belong in such company challenges us to Holy living. Heb 12:22-29. In one sense the righteousness of Christ is the only "clothes" in which we can appear, Mt 22:11-14; Isa 61:10. But here it is our hearts/motives, open, sincere, as in Lk 8:15 who by receiving and persevering in the word received produce a crop. Whose service and life springs from "Love" 1 Cor 13:1-3, and so is revealed in that day as "Gold, silver, precious stones," 1 Cor 3:10-15. May God in His mercy grant us such repentance from self/sin, such unveiled looking-off-to/pre-occupation with our Lord in His Word 2 Cor 3:15-18 day after day, that this becomes a reality to us. "Put on Christ," Rom 13:11-14.

CHAPTER FOUR.

4:1-12 LIVING TO PLEASE GOD.

(What God is asked to do in 3:13, involves co-operation/ effort. An effective witness to the Loving Holiness of God requires Believers to demonstrate caring, fulfilling sexuality, a self-reliant, unselfish working lifestyle, and a church life that flourishes in Love.)

4:1 FURTHERMORE/Finally BROTHERS/Brothers- As in Phil 3:1 introduces a new section in which his main challenge lies. Instead of rushing in with orders Paul has reminded them of past experiences and teaching shared, of his prayers and concern for them, and the involvement of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus in their salvation, past, present, and future. On that firm basis and established fellowship he adds, as a brother, the blunt, wholesome truth that they need to know and live by, and are now able to take.

BESEECH/Instructed- Erotao- A word used between equals, Jn 14:16 17:9, 15:20. And his teaching and their obedience is equally "In the Lord Jesus." Paul, as all preachers and teachers should, closely identifies with his readers, urging them to join him in living to the full the life provided in Christ.

EXHORT/urge- #211. Paul is standing alongside them urging and encouraging them on in the Lord. Using both words gives urgency. Both words are present tense - we continue to request, urge.

OUGHT - Not a desirable option, but a compelling obligation inherent in their position as Believers, sinners saved by Grace Rom 12:1.

WALK /live- #212 Live seems more natural to us, but Walk reminds us that we never stand still spiritually, without drifting Heb 2:1.

RECEIVED- #213- The authoritative beliefs and practices separating them from the pagan world, into a fellowship of the Godly.

PLEASE - #24 A purposeful, persistent effort to please God, Rom 15:2-3; 1 Cor 7:32-34 2 Tim 2:4. As in fact you are living- [Nes.]

ABOUND/Do this more- #312 An overflowing God-pleasing life not a grudging attempt to be "near-enough-to-goodenough!" Paul, from the first, made it clear that the Christian life was essentially one of pleasing God. He rejoiced in their progress in this, but points them to the Lord, urging them to live that life to the full, Heb 12:1-3. Holiness is a process. When growth ceases decay takes over.

4:2 KNOW- #1:4 COMMANDMENTS/Instructions- Parangelia- Used of military commands passed down a chain of authority. Para= Beside, Angello= To Announce. Paul came right to where they were to pass on to them the Lord's commands - applying them to himself as well as to his hearers. The authoritative organising principles of life in fellowship with Christ, not a set of rigid detailed instructions. But beware of saying "The Lord has set us free from the Law - so whatever we do doesn't matter. Verses 1 and 2 emphasise the importance of the details that follow.

3.3 THE WILL OF GOD/God's will- Thelema- What is willed, desired. Gods will/desire, corresponds perfectly to His Being with none of the uncertainties, conflicting interests, inadequate understanding, and perverseness that mars what we as fallen creatures desire/will. His will isn't an abstract proposition, but a constant personal involvement in the Believer's life, in fellowship with us, Phil 2:13 The character of a person is expressed in their desire/will so He can desire only Holiness for His children.

SANCTIFICATION/That you should be holy- Hagiasmos- Set apart and made fit for fellowship with God in Christ, 1 Cor 1:30 2Th 2:13 by being born again into a new God-sourced, God-oriented life, 1 Cor 6:11 as a new Creation in Christ, 2 Cor 5:17. This is experienced/exhibited as we obey Gods Word, and follow the example of Christ, Mt 11:29 Jn 13:15 Eph 4:20 Phil 2:5 in the power of the Holy Spirit, Rom 8:2-16 Eph 3:10 This isn't mechanical obedience to laws, but actively enjoyed fellowship with God in response to His will revealed in His Word remoulding us in His likeness Col 3:10 To be sanctified by God, and to sanctify ourselves in response, are the two sides of the fellowship that is eternal life, Jn 17:3. The latter impossible without the former.

FORNICATION/sexual immorality- Porneia- Any sexual union outside marriage. Figuratively used of iddatry Rev 14:8, etc. In fact much iddatry involved Porneia. The sexual immorality taken for granted in the then world is obvious from the presence of thousands of Priestesses/Prostitutes as aids to "worship" in temples of Venus.

God requires His people to be Holy, Lev 11:44-45 1 Pet 1:15-16 Their response of Love to Him includes loving their neighbour which rules out sexual exploitation of others. Gods standards of sexual morality are an essential part of being a Christian/Gods children. This would be a battle for Greek converts as current Greek culture approved men having mistresses, concubines, harlots as well as wives. A few months of Christian life doesn't automatically undo the habits of a lifetime. Art, poetry and entertainment displayed immorality as pleasing, and attractive then, as it does today. Moral evil is always also Spiritual evil.

4.4 KNOW/learn- #1:4 To know how to, and so be able to. Instruction is needed, plus willed acceptance of Gods standards. Power to conform, and skill in avoiding temptation come from habitually turning to God for aid. God can do nothing for those who acknowledge no need to be different/make no effort to be.

POSSESS/control- Ktaomai- To obtain for oneself, and so possess Here and Lk 21:19 apparently to exercise control/conquer, and so be able to use rightly. Each Believer is responsible to God to control his body and bodily desires so that they are used to please God who has set him apart for Himself, Gal 5:13 Eph 2:10

HIS VESSEL /own body- Skeuos- A thing or person used for a purpose. Goods, Mk 3:27 etc; containers, Mk 11:16 Gods servant, Acts 9:15 Our bodies/beings, 2 Cor 4:7, wife, to be shown consideration by the "stronger vessel" husband, 1 Pet 3:7. It

could be used in Greek for the male organ. If wife is meant, the man is addressed as having greater freedom and responsibility for the way he used his freedom. "Body, embodying sexual desire," makes the best sense, and has the fewest problems. Sex is tackled first because it is our strongest drive, and misuse does the greatest damage/most closely affects us, 1 Cor 6:18

The general meaning of Vs 4 is obviously the opposite of fornication. By its vagueness this statement helpfully covers the whole subject of positive, holy, pleasing-to-God sexuality, in contrast to the negative of 4:3. God who created us and redeemed us from the slavery of sin so that we should be holy, and pleasing to Him, expects and enables His willing people to control their thinking about/exercising of, sexual desires. How to live as chaste singles. Or to acquire a wife (husband); and possess her (him) in a God-pleasing way to mutual benefit, 1 Cor 7:2-5; 1 Pet 3:7.

SANCTIFICATION/Holy HONOUR/Honourable- When God made man, male and female, in His image, commanding them to be fruitful and multiply, they happily lived together in this way. Sin brought self-centredness, waywardness, exploitation, but God's purpose remains, Mk 10:6-9. Chaste singleness honours God, if it's His gift, as does Marriage entered into and lived in as an appreciated gift of God. Any suggestion that avoiding marriage helps to make one Holy is a demonic lie, 1 Tim 4:1-5. Food, marriage, and the appetites involved, are part of the "all things," for us to enjoy 1 Tim 6:17, and we honour God by using, not abusing them. As Christians we're to live in the body God has given us, honouring it and its desires in thought, word, and action, nothing to be ashamed of.

If we marry we're to acquire our wife/husband and also live with them in such a way that we have nothing to be ashamed of. In Holiness- set apart for God, and His purposes. Honouring and loving, and enjoying each other, belonging to each other totally, and with life-long loyalty as "heirs together of the grace of life," 1 Pet 3:7 sharing a life of fellowship and prayer in Christ. Honourable too in the sight of mankind, living by the highest standards of the culture. Christianity was unique in honoring our body and desires, neither worshipping, nor despising them, 1 Cor 6:19. What God commands us, we're capable of as we obey.

4:5 LUST - Greek Gods were personified desires/ lusts. Zeus/ Jupiter the greatest of them seduced/raped at will. Such gods are created as a result of deliberately refusing to know the Creator, Rom 1:18-32 so setting up a spiral of increasingly shameless depravity. The behaviour of the heathen shows that they do not know God. Though surrounded by such, the behaviour of God's Children must reflect God's character. Today many Godless people choose books, films, TV programs, music, etc. with a view to inflaming passionate lust, and later satisfying it shamelessly/ irresponsibly. They corrupt, cheapen, and pervert themselves in the process to the extent that it becomes unlikely they'll be able to settle down to a stable, satisfying, unifying, caring marriage relationship.

Any of the gifts/abilities provided for us, when turned into idols, become destructive instead of creative. Ultimately boredom and misery are the result. It isn't the intensity of passionate desire that's wrong. It needs to be powerful in order to melt two independent humans into one, to live welded together, as "Cleave" can be translated.

The sin is in not surrendering the desire to the Lordship of Christ, and instead inflaming it with evil and foolish notions. A fire in the fireplace makes a home. Only a fire lights little fires around the house. The unmarried especially must be careful to control the fires, as union outside marriage is sin. Whatever our doctrinal knowledge of God may be, failure to live as He decrees demonstrates Godlessness.

4:6 DEFRAUD /wrong- Pleonekteo- To take advantage of. BROTHER- #1:4. The closeness of the Christian Community means there is a danger of sexual temptations arising (The Devil may plant sexual exploiters among us, Mt 13:25 2 Pet 2:10-14.) So the primary warning is against sinning against Brothers/ Sisters in that close circle, just as the warnings of Lev 18 and 20 centre on sexual sin within the extended family. Such sin within the circle designed to nurture and protect is an ugly, damnable betrayal of trust. To use membership in God's family to take advantage sexually of someone for whom Christ died is even worse. Yet can be the result of unwise, self-confident attempts to counsel, comfort, and help the lonely, unhappy, etc.

IN ANY /this MATTER- Thoughts, words, or actions unsundered to God, are sins, and as such readily lead to sinning against/wronging our brothers/sisters in Christ. In this area of life deep hurts can result from even unintended things. Of course we should never defraud others in business, etc. either. Sexual sin and financial greed are coupled in Eph 5:3, 5; Col 3:5; Heb 13:4-5. Both are "Social sins," involving others, exploiting them.

AVENGER /will punish- God administers even-handed justice, so all who act outside His will often reap consequences in this life, and certainly will eternally, Deu 32:35 Ps 94:1. Every sin carries built-in consequences, Gal 6:7-8. None can cut deeper than these sins as David learned in the way his sons lived, 2 Sam 12:10. Men may seem to get away with vile, violent, or inconsiderate trivial actions, but they won't, Prov 24:12, Rom 2:6; 12:18-21.

4:7-8 UNCLEANNESS/to be impure BUT UNTO- Eis= Into. See 5:24-25 HOLINESS/to live a holy life- #43- God calls us in Holiness into Holy living. He makes us Holy, to live that way. The closer we are to loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, the more naturally we love our neighbour as ourselves, and are in no danger of wronging Him, Rom 13:8-10 Gal 5:13-15. Our spiritual life is a response to GOD's call, not God responding to our efforts.

THEREFORE - Toigaroun A strong and unusual expression that shows Paul is about to sum up and conclude this section.

DESPISE /rejects this instruction- A theto- To despise, set aside, reject. Used in Mk 7:9; Lk 10:16; Gal 2:21; Heb 10:28.

NOT MAN.. GOD. In receiving a Disciple, one is receiving his Master, Mt 10:40. Here, to despise a disciple by sinning against them is to despise their Master. Or, the rejection of God's will, whoever taught it to us, is equally the rejection of God, who indwells us.

HOLY SPIRIT - The construction emphasises YOU, and HOLY. We're born again, baptised into the Body of Christ, and indwelt by God the HOLY Spirit, and that requires HOLY living of us.

4:9 BUT /how- Introducing a further aspect of living to please God

BROTHERLY LOVE - Philadelphia - An affectionate outgoing interest in others. Phileo = Friendship love. Adelfhos = Brother. As the Lord warned in Mk 10:29-30 conversion often means being cut off from our natural family. This needs to be replaced by a strong feeling of family affection and mutual obligation between Christians from varied backgrounds, previously strangers, now united as brothers/sisters by being born into God's family, Acts 2:44-47, 4:32

No NEED NOT /to WRITE - Only to point out a specific application of brotherly love, that it involves working for one's living. Brotherly love is the answer to all the problems of life together.

TO LOVE -. #1:4. Present tense, present experience God has taught us Sacrificial love by example, Jn 3:16, which shames us into forgiving and small humble services, Mt 18:32-33 Jn 13:12-17. And by putting His own nature in us, as promised, Isa 54:13 Jer 31:33-34 Jn 6:45-1 Jn 47, made effective by the indwelling Holy Spirit, Rom 5:5; 8:14. Lucian (A heathen) wrote "It is incredible to see the fervour with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first Legislator has put it into their minds that they are all brothers."

4:10 TOWARD ALL - Whatever their racial, cultural, or social background simply because they belonged to Christ. Many would pass through Thessalonica as it was a great port - and the Christians showed kindness to all by giving hospitality, etc. Christian Love, shared freely within the local fellowship, automatically reaches out beyond it.

BESEECH /urge- #211. Paul as under-shepherd calls the sheep to follow. INCREASE /to do so MORE - #39. In 41, in pleasing the Lord. Here in showing love to fellow-Christians. There's nothing small in God's love for us, or in the fellowship of love into which we've been welcomed. The Lord has brought us abundant life, and this creative life will find ever more ways of expressing itself if only we'll let Him have His way in us. Where there's increasing love, there's increasing unity, and the Lord can grant increasing blessing, Ps 133:1-3. God has put unlimited Love in credit to our account, the cheque-book is in our hands - why should we live as paupers, and fail to claim our inheritance of love and use it?

4:11 STUDY /make your ambition- Philotimeomai - Phileo = To Love. Time = To Honour. Strive earnestly /make it a point of honour.

QUIET life - Make it your ambition to not be ambitious. Lead an orderly, unobtrusive life. God's ideal for His people is that they shouldn't make themselves the centre of attention. The enthusiasm and vitality of a new life in Christ can be wasted in restless

eagerness to be something and do something for God that results in mental/emotional excitement, and meddling idleness - an eagerness to put others right, Mt 7:3-5; 2 Th 3:11; 1 Tim 5:13 OR can be disciplined/directed into useful, brotherly helpfulness

TO DO/mind- Praso- A continuous action or an as yet uncompleted one.

YOUR OWN BUSINESS- Enthusiastic excitement about the Lord's return can lead people to neglect responsibilities, 1 Tim 5:8. Eagerness to win souls for Christ before it's too late, can be twisted into an expectation that other Christians should finance our efforts that show little spiritual fruit. Love for the Lord is to be shown by quietly getting on with the normal responsibilities of life which we carry out as to Him, Mt 24:46. Not to be an ambitious workaholic fighting for business success. Not seeking a high public profile, or demanding rights, but to carry out faithfully one's responsibilities at work and at home so that they'll be a credit to God, if exposed.

OWN HANDS- Greeks were great talkers, philosophers, arguers, with wonderful solutions to all the problems of the world. Eager to put others right, but despising manual work. Our Lord was a village carpenter to the glory of God until He was 30 before going into "full-time" ministry, Mk 6:3. Paul worked with his hands, 2:9; 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Th 3:8. To give up work to devote oneself to spiritual activities can amount to becoming a parasite on the body of Christ. Honest toil and personal holiness go together in Christianity.

COMMAND ED- #42. Not merely informed, or asked you to consider.

4:12 HONESTLY/may win the respect of- Euschemonos- Gracefully, becomingly. In contrast to disorderly and shamefully. Rom 13:13. The world is watching us, and judges our Saviour by what they see in us. Pleasing the Lord, 4:1, won't always be pleasing to non-Christians, but it will always win their respect if they see us acting consistently with our profession. It will usually conform to their highest ideals and expectations of us, Mt 5:16; Col 4:5; 1 Pet 3:15-16. It won't be an scandal or a disgrace to our Lord. Those knowing nothing of the Gospel easily recognise orderly living from disorderly, empty talk from genuine caring actions.

We must avoid even good actions which might look bad, Rom 14:16. (Not like some "Musicians for Christ" who annoyed the neighbours by practising to late hours, and sleeping in till midday.) If they can't help envying and admiring our behaviour in things that we share in common with them, it's easier for them to listen to the Gospel/acknowledge unseen spiritual things - blessings, and truths.

WITHOUT/outside- A statement of fact, not an insulting term. We must show them every consideration - to reflect our Lord's attitude.

LACK NOTHING/not depend on anybody- Both are possible. Brotherly Love involves sharing, but that must not be allowed to produce spongers who prefer handouts to work - An African tribe supplied with food from USA in a famine were reluctant to plant next year as local food was less attractive. God provides for the

birds, Mt 6:26 but not without their exercising the ability He has given them to obtain it. So with us as we ask for our daily bread.

People sneer that "Professional Preachers," avoid having to work by taking up collections. Gods servants have a right to be supported, but the Gospel enthusiastically shared by ordinary working people is a vital witness. The Gospel needs to be seen to be having a good effect on people in their everyday life and work, 1 Pet 2:12-15

4:13-18 BEREAVEMENT, THE DEAD IN CHRIST & HIS COMING.

(The Lord may come at any moment, but being alive then, or having died, makes no difference. The security of knowing this frees us to concentrate on our present responsibilities.)

NOTE These verses fit neatly into the Lord's promise to come for His own, Jn 14:1-3, and Paul's assurance of the bodily resurrection of the Believer in 1 Cor 15. Commentators who accept this find no problem with it, but may assume too readily that they know the details of how it fits into the whole scene. Others ignore Jn 14, and try to fit these verses into the scene given in the Synoptic Gospels of His coming in Glory to judge the World and set up His Kingdom. This avoids the folly of too detailed dispensationalism by the folly of emptying the verses of all but the vaguest meaning.

4:13 IGNORANT - Agnoeo - To be ignorant, not understand derived from ginosko, so the ignorance arising from lack of fellowship with the source of the knowledge - God (Agnostics are deliberately ignorant in spite of the witness of Creation, Gods word, and Gods Spirit in their hearts/ minds/ consciences.) This expression is used to introduce an important clarification of the truth, as in Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8.

ASLEEP - Koimao - Used of natural sleep, Jn 11:12, and of the death of Christians, Jn 11:11; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 18; 51; 2 Pet 3:4. (Koimeterion, a rest house for strangers, became our word Cemetery.) Sleep involves being out of touch with others, so was already used by pagans and Jews as a softer word than death.

Christ Died, entering into all that death means, for us. Now we merely sleep in Him until rising with Him who is the firstfruits of us, 1 Cor 15:20. As the sleeper continues to live, so do the dead. We're welcomed home 2 Cor 5:8, into conscious joyful fellowship better even than living fully in fellowship with Christ here, in fruitful work, Phil 1:21-23. Our senses which keep us in touch with this world and each other sleep, but dreams don't need bodily senses. The feelings and ideas we enjoy in the best of dreams may give us a hint of the solid, blessed reality we'll experience while dead to this life, with our redeemed souls and spirit at home with the Lord who bought us with His blood. Death remains for the godless who are separated from earthly life, and the eternal life that they refused, because of the sin they wouldn't give up. Jn 3:17-20

SORROW/grieve - AS OTHERS/like the rest - Not that we shouldn't grieve. Our Lord did, Jn 11:33-35. Paul did Phil 2:27. It's right, natural, and necessary for us to grieve at

the gap in our life. Sorrow at the loss of fellowship in parting is inevitable. Sorrow for past failure to fellowship, is avoidable. The contrast is between the sorrow of two kinds of people, outsiders, and those in Christ

HOPE - #1:3. Soundly-based confident assurance based on accurate information. Assurance of future good and fellowship restored in the Lord's presence means that however deep our grief and loss we should not be hopelessly sad, despairing. Those who have no God, 4:5 have no hope. On an ancient grave at Thessalonica "After the grave there is no meeting of those who have loved each other on earth." Ideas of survival after death, at least of the human spirit were not uncommon, but there was no certainty, only despair. We know that Believers are better off, and we will meet again in joy. Leighton Ford, facing the death of his son at 21yrs "The problem in bereavement is to bring our Faith, and our Emotions together."

4:14 IF WE BELIEVE JESUS DIED.. ROSE AGAIN- He did. We do. (Anistemi-Rise again is used of Christ in Mk 9:9; Lk 24:46; Jn 20:9; Acts 2:24-32. As Paul uses Anistemi of Christ only here and Rom 14:9 he may be quoting a statement of doctrine already in use.)

"Jesus" is used here as a reminder of His true humanity, and identification with us. He experienced death and the consequences of sin in all its stark reality, and the reality of the resurrection. Died and Rose are both in active voice- Things that He did, events in history. What is true of Him, by His grace is now true of His own. Death is not our master. The resurrection of Christ in the past, is the guarantee of the resurrection of believers in the future. Our hope is based on our sharing with the Lord in death, resurrection and glory.

WHICH SLEEP have fallen asleep- #4:13 IN- Dia- Through. It is through Him and His work that they are in Him, and will share His resurrection. Christ died, and they died with/ through Him. He rose, and they rise through Him, and live with Him, Gal 2:20 and will do so fully at His Coming. What was stark cold death, through Jesus is now a mere sleep of the body. In dying we can resign our spirits confidently into the Father's hands, as He did on the cross.

WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM/Jesus- At death they came home to the Lord Jesus, Ecc 12:7; 2 Cor 5:8. In the will of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit they return with Him to be reunited with their bodies. Commentators determined to ignore Jn 14 etc, and fit this statement into the Lord's Coming to reign on earth, struggle with systems as ingenious and futile as the old Ptolemaic astronomy.

4:15 WORD OF THE LORD / Lord's own word- Paul was passing on an authoritative revelation of God's will. The Atoning Death, and resurrection of Jesus is the basis, and His revealed word is the assurance that this is how it will be. No such statement is in the Gospels, so presumably a later revelation such as in Eph 3:1-9. An already established credal statement? (It uses Anistemi again.)

ARE still ALIVE- Those Believers living when He Comes. Paul includes himself, knowing that the Lord might come while he still lived. 10 yrs later Phil 3:20 he said "we" but in 1:2024 saw death as a likely alternative. Critics say "Paul expected the Lord to come in his lifetime and he was wrong" In fact Paul was right to live in daily expectation of the Lord's return, as have the Lord's people in every age. The Lord commanded such readiness, Mt 24:44, Lk 12:36-37 etc.

COMING #219 NOT-By no means, not at all. An emphatic statement PREVENT /preclude THEM WHICH ARE /have fallen ASLEEP . .

4:16 THE LORD HIMSELF - What a comfort that is "This same Jesus..." Acts 1:11. Cp LXX Isa 63:9 "The Lord himself saved them."

DESCEND /Come down FROM HEAVEN. A real, historical event is described in OT and current Apocalyptic language. It's not clear how much is purely symbolic, or should be taken as physically literal. The details matter less than the fact of the Lord's return with appropriate announcement and instantaneous, irresistible, effectiveness. The world may understand no more of what is happening than Paul's companions did when the Lord revealed Himself to him on the road to Damascus, Acts 9:7.

SHOUT /Loud command- The voice of authority and purpose which is faintly pictured by a military Commander's "Fall in!" The Lord's shout which raises the dead, Jn 5:25 11:43-44 ARC HANGEL - Michael is the only Archangel in Scripture.

THE TRUMP /trumpet call OF GOD- For us the "Last Trump" assembling us to leave, 1 Cor 15:52 Paul isn't referring to the trumpet calls of Rev 8:11 (written later) which assemble no one. Silver trumpets were used for assembling Israelites for their journey, Num 10:1-2

DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST- See 1 Cor 15 for the details. Bodily resurrection was a fundamental truth among the Jews, Deu 32:39 Job 19:23-27, Ps 16:9-11; Isa 53:10-12, Dan 12:2-3; Jn 11:24 Heb 11:19. The Lord taught it Mt 17:9; Jn 21:8-21, speaking of a resurrection to Life, and one to Damnation Rev 20:12-13. Whether the statement in this verse includes OT saints is unclear. They're not elsewhere said to be In Christ. But their Salvation is possible only in/ through Him.

4:17 WE - Again Paul includes himself as he was living when he wrote. His great concern was to live life to the full, in view of the future, and as the end drew near was content that he had, 2 Tim 4:6-8.

CAUGHT UP- Harpazo- to seize, to snatch away. The Lord's action will be sudden, instantaneous, and irresistible. It's used of Phillip in Acts 8:39 Paul in 2 Cor 12:2, 4, and the male child Rev 12:5.

WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS- Clouds are associated with the manifestation of God. The pillar of fire/ cloud of God's visible presence with the Israelites. Sinai covered in cloud at the Giving of the Law. The transfiguration, Mt 17:5 etc;

Ascension, Acts 1:9, and at different phases or aspects of His Coming Again, Mt 24:30-26:64 etc. Beyond the physical cloud there would seem to be a symbolising of human incapability of seeing God in the stark reality of His being/as He is, and God in mercy accommodating what He reveals of Himself to our limitations.

TOGETHER- Sun- Simultaneously with all Believers, living & dead. See other Sun associations with Christ, Rom 6:3-11; 8:17; Gal 2:20 Col 2:12 3:4. All this in an instant

TO MEET - A pantesis- The word is used of an official delegation going out to meet visiting royalty and escorting them back to a city. To some this suggests that they return with their Lord to earth. But they're certainly not a delegation of rulers representing the world at large welcoming their King! It's the Lord coming for His own as promised in Jn 14 to take them home to be with Him in the place He's prepared, out of a scene in which they're aliens, rather than them welcoming Him to His Earthly Kingdom. We return to reign with Him in due course, entering into the victory He's won

IN THE AIR- Up where the clouds are. Our bodies will have been replaced with appropriate Heavenly bodies, Phil 3:21.

EVER BE WITH THE LORD- The Lord's Coming will be a tremendous world-changing us-changing event. But the Scriptural emphasis is not on the event, but on the Person - The Lord. His appearing, His presence forever, is what matters. It's the permanency of our being with the Lord, not the place of meeting & the destination that's emphasized. Still, Heaven is our goal. Any return to earth is later.

He is in each of us already, in invisible, personal reality. He is present in the midst in a special way when we gather in His Name. But in that day He will be present to us and our senses in the radiance of that Glory before which the Godliest of men while still in this body, faint, Isa 6:5; Dan 10 Rev 1:17. We will all be transformed, then, enabled to rejoice. We shall see Him as He is, but only because we have been made like Him, 1 Jn 3:1-3. Our responsibility is to begin that transformation here and now, 2 Cor 3:15-18

4:18 WHEREFORE / Therefore COMFORT / Encourage- #2-11. These verses are the complete answer to all the Believer's anxiety on this subject. As we remind each other of them, our hearts are turned towards the Lord, His love, and His wonderful provision for our future, and as a result the poison is drawn from past sorrow, and we're strengthened to face future sorrow. This in turn frees our minds from worrying uncertainty so that with joyful hearts we can live and work, witness and worship, moment by moment, as those who at any moment could be in the immediate, glad presence of the Lord of Glory. All our struggles over. Our opportunities of service as well as our humiliations gone for ever, and it seems the level of our eternal fellowship with our Lord finalised.

Sadly, too often our reaction to the teaching of the Lord's Coming has been that of the wicked and slothful servant, Mt 25:26 laziness and indifference. "The Lord is about to come. We can't expect anything but apostasy in these last days, why work hard, it's

useless" "It's not worth starting a new work." "I got all keyed-up about the Lord's Coming years ago, but nothing happened, so now I'm looking after my own interests." "I'm sure I'm saved, and that makes me safe whatever I do, we'll all be like Christ when He comes, so why should I trouble myself!"

How dare we be so indifferent to the fact that we'll be in His Presence! On that day, the scaffolding of our life will be down, and we'll be seen to be what we've built. It will be the pay-day of our whole life. Our unsaved loved ones, friends, and neighbours will be lost for ever. It will be the wedding day, and we will be the bride. It will be the consummation of the eternal purposes of Almighty God, for us. He is eager to give us the crown, and "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord," Mt 25:21. Should not we be eager to contribute to that Joy? Paul didn't yawn at the mention of the Coming, and the resurrection. He was eager to experience as much as possible of resurrection life in fellowship with Christ, here and now, in conforming to His death, fellowship with His sufferings, Phil 3:7-14.

****NOTE**** This passage aims at comforting those who mourn the loss of fellow-believers, and encouraging/strengthening us in our living for our Lord, confident that at any moment He may return, and it will be well. There's no mention of the Lord's setting up His Kingdom on earth. The verses that follow refer only briefly to His Judgment intervention in the world. There's nothing in it for speculation or systematisation, it's simply His Return, our rapture/resurrection, and reunion. This should warn us against any embroidering, or integrating it with other pictures that speak of His Coming in relation to this rebel world that rejected Him. We must neither dogmatise, nor debunk, using it cautiously and charitably, never to discourage, distract, divide or cut down any who differ.

Those who do not separate it from the Judgmental Return covered in the Synoptic Gospels make some points, but the difficulties they see arise because they ignore Jn 14:1, 1 Cor 15:2, 2 Cor 5:8. The fact that it mentions only Believers suggests that it concerns them alone. It is written solely with a view to removing the fear that the departed have missed out on anything, with no suggestion that they are lucky in having missed the tribulation. This fits a pre-tribulation Coming. It ends with our being forever with the Lord, not (yet) living and reigning with Him for 1000 years.

Those Christians who choose to live in pious fear, too "humble" to believe the Lord's assurance that they can know they're in Christ, and that all in Christ are welcomed home at death, can find little comfort in these words. This confirms that it is a Coming that concerns His own alone, and not a general resurrection to face the Lord as a judge and to hear whether they're sheep or goats!

CHAPTER FIVE.

5:1-11 WATCHFULNESS IN VIEW OF CHRIST'S RETURN

(Not knowing when He will come, we're to live out our lives on the brink of eternity, Phil 4:5; 1 Cor 16:22, in fellowship with Christ. This is the basis for a life that carries out normal human responsibilities in such a way as to produce the maximum good, and glorify God. Our origin and destiny is totally different from that of unbelievers, so a totally different lifestyle is appropriate.)

5:1 BUT OF NOW ABOUT. BROTHERS - marks the change to a new aspect - the coming of the Lord as Judge. This directly affects the godless while being a challenge to holy living for Christians.

TIME S - Chronos, Time of clocks and calendars. Used of duration of intervening time in, Lk 4:5; 18:4; Acts 1:21; 13:18. Of Date Mt 2:7; Acts 3:21; 7:17. How long before Coming

SEASONS/DATES - Kairos - A stage of the year or history, with its own characteristics. Eg Autumn is the Kairos to complete harvesting. The Lord would come at the appropriate time, when the world was ripe for it. Kairos is used in Mt 13:30; Lk 1:20; 12:42; Acts 14:17; Gal 6:9. Speculating about when He will restore the Kingdom to Israel and judge the nations is not our business, Acts 1:7. But signs that things are shaping towards this should encourage us to use time well. Chronos and Kairos are used in LXX, Dan 2:21; 7:2; Ecc 3:1; Neh 10:34

NEED TO WRITE - He mentions it simply as the basis for an appeal to profit in their lives by what they knew in their heads.

5:2 KNOW - #1:4. PERFECTLY /very well - Akribos - exactly, accurately as Acts 18:26. Knowing that it would come as a thief was all they needed to know, all that could be known.

DAY OF THE LORD - #1:1. The OT Prophets use local judgments as warnings of the day when the Lord will intervene and exercise His Lordship, in judgment, and blessing Joel 2:1-2, etc. Kurios is used in the NT for the LORD Jesus. He will be the Judge, dealing with sin, injustice and rebellion, establishing the rule of righteousness, closing Man's day and enforcing His will.

Calling the Church Home, (Not mentioned in OT) the Tribulation and Judgment, Restoration of Israel's Kingdom, Millennial Reign, and Final Judgment are all aspects of ONE Coming. Just as Bethlehem, Galilee, Calvary, and the Ascension, and the Church are aspects of His First Coming. In another sense ALL are aspects of "His Coming." Not to be telescoped into a single intervention that blurs their significance nor viewed in independence of each other.

As I understand it, coming to the air proclaims His Lordship in taking His own out of the way some time before bringing Judgment on the earth, and blessing Israel with the establishment of the Kingdom under the personal rule of the Lord, Isa 13:9-11; 34:8; Dan 2:34-35 4:4-5 Joel 2:31; Mal 4:5; Zech 9:14; etc. But while each of us is to be persuaded in his own mind, divisive dogmatism, and uncharitable attacking of the views of others is Satanic, and mutually destructive, 1 Cor 13:1-7; 2 Tim 2:22-26

THIEF - Kleptes- A Sneak thief, depending on people being unaware of his coming Mt 24:43 2 Pet 3:10 Those who despise the chance of Salvation will lose it. (False alarms/predicting dates for His Coming deaden consciences.)

NIGHT - Messiah's Coming is the dawn of the new day, Mal 4:1-3. In a sense this has begun for us, Col 1:13 But Israel and the World have drawn the blinds/been blinded to it, 2 Cor 3:14-15; 4:4; 1 Jn 2:8. We're challenged to alert use of our time, (not to survival,) and this fits a Pre-tribulation Coming. Those who choose to be in darkness, asleep, or drunk, will be caught unawares.

5:3 PEACE..SAFETY - "We have everything under control," will be the popular slogan. Some think such an attitude would be impossible if the Lord had taken the Church home. But proclaiming peace and safety goes with feeding the need to reassure themselves. Blunted consciences, and false prophets, reassured the Jews facing God's judgment, Jer 6:14; Ezek 13:10; Mic 3:5,

At this stage Satan has deceived them. God has left them to their love of pleasant lies, 2 Th 2:8-12 Refusing to see the moral rot in society they feel secure, 2 Pet 3:3-10. When the Parousia isn't followed by instant judgment the world may well say "Good riddance" to the annoying Christians. This fits the first half of Daniel's 70th week. The conqueror on the white horse seems to have brought peace- but the black and pale horses soon follow, Dan 9:27, Rev 6:1-8.

DESTRUCTION- Oletros Ruin, loss of what makes life worthwhile. Always in NT refers to supernatural intervention that punishes but leaves people still existing. "Wars and rumours of wars" mark a world heading for judgment. And equally, false optimism and religious false prophets of peace Jer 6:13-15. Behind the facade of sneers at the idea of God, the "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die" frivolity, lies uneasiness and the world staggers on towards judgment, Lk 21:26 Isa 22:12-14.

AS TRAVAL LABOUR PAINS- The OT warnings were viewed as the birthpangs of the coming of Messiah and His Age, Isa 13:8; 21:3; Mk 13:8. The thief image is totally negative - the loss of what one is not using. Labour Pains are negative as to the process but positive in the outcome. For the Jewish Remnant new life coming out of the tribulation. Or "The manifestation of the Sons of God" resulting from the travail of this fallen world coming to its climax, Rom 8:18-22. A pregnant woman faces an inevitable outcome. So does a rebellious world, and the unrepentant sinners in it. While inevitable, the precise date is unknown, and the onset sudden, and unexpected when it comes.

5:4 DARKNESS- Physically prevents sight, so suggests mental/ moral/ spiritual darkness, unawareness of reality, ignorance and uncertainty. Wilful darkness of rejecting the available light, Jn 3:19, preferring ignorance of God, sinfulness and judgment

OVERTAKE/Surprise- The Lord's coming as the Sun of Righteousness Mal 4:2 will bring the Light of day that exposes sin to those who prefer darkness, Jn 3:19. As the Believers have already come to Christ the light of the world, and are already living in the light of His presence, they should do so fully, and have nothing to fear.

AS A THIEF - #52 From God's Word we know that the state of this world is crying out for Judgment, that God must, and will judge. If our hearts are here it's because like Lot's wife we're refusing to listen to God's voice, and to see this world as He sees it. Worldly believers will find that the Lord's Coming sneaks up on them and robs them of all they've set a value on in this life.

5:5 ALL - is emphatic. All Believers are equally in this standing. Some may need rebuke, some reassurance, but all are appealed to as belonging to God, by His Grace and secure in His hands. Paul uses ALL in Rom 1:8; Phil 1:4; 1 Th 1:2

CHILDREN/Sons- In Hebrew Idiom= showing the moral characteristics of Light and Day, demonstrating a family likeness Sons of Abraham, God, the Devil Jn 8:39-47. See also Mt 5:9, 45; 13:38; Lk 6:35; Jn 1:12, 36; Acts 4:36; 13:10; not mere profession, Jas 2:14-25. As new creations in Christ, we have new qualities, and live in this new sphere by His Grace 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Col 1:13. Sons of light/darkness were familiar terms in the Jewish world, as seen in the Dead Sea scrolls.

LIGHT - Christ the Light of the world has called us from darkness into light Col 1:12; 1 Pet 2:9, We're Light in the Lord, Eph 5:8

OF THE DAY - The light isn't our possession, dependent on us. We live under the Sun, in its realm. So spiritually we're to live in the light of God's Word, Spirit, fellowship, 1 Jn 1:7. We have no excuse for stumbling, or continuing in uncleanness or in darkness. But can be happy for everyone to see what we're doing, and living in the light of the Lord's presence. His Coming is a joyful prospect.

5:6 THEREFORE/so then- As all this is true Paul urges us to join him in living as we should in view of the facts.

SLEEP - Kathedra - Often an indifference to surroundings or responsibilities, Mt 8:24; 13:25; 25; 26:40; 43; 45; Mk 13:35-37; Eph 5:14. We must not be asleep - unaware, unconcerned, indifferent, unresponsive to God, inevitable judgment, the Coming. It's our working shift. How dare we waste/steal our Master's time! There's nothing wrong with sleep usually, but we're in enemy territory, on sentry duty, Ezek 31:6-19.

WATCH/be alert- Gregoreuo- As the Lord urged the Disciples, Mt 26:40-41, and us, re His Coming Mt 24:34-44 Mk 13:33-36 Lk 12:37.

SOBER/Self-controlled- Nephō- Free from the influence of intoxicants, sober, clear-headed, able to act effectively. Drunkenness can produce excited enthusiastic credulity detached from reality, lost self-control, and stupefied sleep. We're to avoid them, Eph 5:18; 2 Tim 4:5; 1 Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8. Not so much by self controlling itself but our yielding ourselves to the Holy Spirit in obedience to God's Word so that He can control "self" in us.

5:7-8 SLEEP..DRUNK..NIGHT- True in both natural and spiritual senses. Sleep may be innocent unconsciousness. Drunkenness is deliberate, inexcusable loss of awareness and control, leading to sin.

LET US- Emphatic contrast. We must Sober is in present tense.

PUTTING ON- In Isa 11:5; 59:17 Messiah puts on His armour for action. Paul uses Armour to represent the spiritual resources God has provided for us, Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; Eph 6:10-18; without always associating the same item with the same resource. Here he takes up three qualities he'd praised them as having in 1:3, urging them to make full use of what they have, and they've begun to use. Cp 3:12; 4:1. Christian growth is a continuity of increasing use, not a series of disconnected additions. But deliberate actions are needed. (Note "put on," in Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10-12)

BREAST-PLATE . FAITH- #1:3 LOVE - #36- God gives them for our every need, but to be effective we must put them on. While they restrict us, obedient trust in God and His Word protects our thinking/planning, and speaking the Truth of Faith in Love is the result, and our growing up together into Christ, Eph 4:15.

Responsive love to Him and for His people, produces a consistent, Godly life that protects us from the corruption around and the judgment that must fall on it, giving confident assurance of Salvation now, and its completion at His coming. We're a danger to ourselves and others if we relax in this enemy territory and fail to put them on.

HELMET HOPE #1:3 SALVATION- Granted to those who repent and claim Christ as Saviour by Faith, Rom 1:16; Eph 1:13 etc. This has instantaneous, lifelong and awaited aspects, Rom 8:17-25.

(It is profitable to list the contrasts between Believers and Unbelievers)

5:9 NOT APPOINTED- Tithemi- To be placed with a purpose, as in Jn 1:51; Acts 13:47. God didn't put us where we are/deal with us as He has done, in Christ, in order to condemn us. Our hope is steadfast because of God's purpose, and God's action in Christ, which has created a totally new relationship between us and God.

WRATH- #1:10 Gods activity against unrepentant rebels and sinners, corrupters and destroyers of His Creation. See Rom 9:22-23

OBTAIN/Receive- We already enjoy some aspects of Salvation, but this is the full experience of it which will be ours at His Coming, as opposed to the unsaved's experience of Gods Wrath.

LORD JESUS CHRIST - That Gods purpose is Salvation in its fulness in Him, is the reason we should go all out to receive/enjoy it.

5:10 DIED- #4:14 Actively gave His life, not was killed, Jn 10:18

FOR- Hyper- On behalf of us, for the sake of, as in 2 Cor 5:14 (Also Dia, with accusative, on account of, 1 Cor 8:11; 1 Jn 2:12 Peri, concerning us, Mt 26:28 Anti- instead of, Mt 20:28 1 Tim 2:6.) His death had in view our permanent fellowship with Him, 5:10

WAKE/are awake- #5:6. OR SLEEP/are asleep- #5:7. This isn't repeating 4:13-17, as the words are different, being those of 5:6-7 where Paul warns against guilty sleep. Some say he did this absent-mindedly, as otherwise he would be discouraging Godly living. But if alert Godly living is needed to be in Heaven, works, not grace decide our fate. It does not say "Be watchful in order to qualify." OR "Watchfulness doesn't matter, you'll qualify."

God in the Gospel makes no threats that Salvation can be lost. Sorship, not slavish fear, controls us, Rom 8:15 The proclaimed Grace of God shames many of us out of grudging responses more effectively than the threat of Hell. Watchfulness gives confidence in the reality of the profession of faith, and expectation. Indifference points to an empty profession, Jas 2:14-26 Salvation is by grace alone, Rom 11:6; Titus 2:11; Deu 9:4-5. Christ's Death, and our having been justified by Faith, assures the destiny of those who are His, not our spirituality at our death, or at His Coming.

REWARD, is according to works, Rom 2:6; 4:4; Rev 22:12 World-oriented Christians will suffer loss 1 Cor 3:15; 9:27; 2 Cor 5:10 Phil 3:18-21. Our response to the grace of God, will decide the degree of our joy/shame at His Coming, Mk 8:38 2 Tim 1:8-9; 1 Jn 2:28 The measure of fellowship we have chosen to enjoy with Him, and His work, on earth, will determine the measure of fellowship-joy we will share with Him for ever -and that eternal fellowship is our reward. Threats and bribes are irrelevant. The Gospel says consistently that the Grace of God makes us sons, and equally consistently exhorts us to freely choose to please our Father in heaven by enjoying as much fruitful fellowship with Him as is possible now, and to enter into His joy equally fully in the Glory ahead, 2 Pet 1:3-11.

That watchful, working saints, or slothful self-indulgent ones will be with Him should shame us into being alert. At His Coming we enter into a new quality of life/ the life we now possess will reach its fulness, Rom 6:3-14; 8:1-39 12:1-21; Phil 3:10-21; Col 2:6-3:17. That challenges us to face Christ, and work towards being like Him, 2 Cor 3:16-18; 1 Jn 3:1-3. Note the purposefulness of Christ's death in Rom 14:9; 2 Cor 5:15; 21; Gal 1:4.

5:11 WHEREFORE/Therefore COMFORT/Encourage- #2-11. The Glorious expectation of the fellowship and joy we'll share at His Coming urges us into fuller, mutual encouragement

EDIFY/Build each other up- Oikodomeo- To be a house builder, build up As we're one body, inevitably what we do affects others. In fellowship with the Lord we're to do all we can to ensure that our contacts with others encourage and build them up in Christ-likeness 1 Cor 13:1-7. To concentrate on watching for/proclaiming the soon return is to miss the point. The Bible references concentrate on our urging readiness in others and demonstrating it in our lives.

AS YOU DO- Are doing present tense, continuous actions, 4:10 Unless there is something of this in our life we are not even HIS, but we can never grow beyond the need of growth in it.

5:12-15 GENERAL INSTRUCTION FOR LIFE IN THE CHURCH

(In relation to leaders, those in need, and each other.)

5:12 KNOW/Respect- Eldo- #1:4 Recognise/ appreciate them, and their function, so they can do their work effectively in the Lord. Cp Heb 13:7, 17. Even in the short time since their conversion, Paul expected such leaders to be becoming obvious. The Church isn't leaderless or lording over by a priestly caste, purveyors of blessings and curses. Some would begin with leadership experience in the world, or Synagogue, and put their abilities, education, buildings, and wealth at their Lord's disposal. But a Shepherd's heart towards the flock, given by the Holy Spirit, is the one essential, Acts 20:28 1 Pet 5:2-4. That Paul gives no titles reminds us that the exact form of an obedient Church might vary, and the instructions given here are readily applicable to any form of organisation which the reader may find himself under.

LABOUR/work hard- Kopiao- To work till exhausted, 1:3; 2:9; 3:5. His work as an Apostle, and that of God-given leaders, follows the Lord's pattern, Jn 13:13-15; Mt 23:10-11. Their giving themselves energetically and sacrificially to the Lord's work, and His people, distinguished them from the followers/passengers who are exhorted to acknowledge them. Not their desire to rule, 3 Jn 9

AMONG YOU- They share a common call, life, and future in Christ OVER YOU- Proistemi- Pro= Before. Histemi= To Stand So, to lead by going ahead, being out in front where others should follow - in valuing God's Word, teaching it, obeying it and saying "Come on, Let's do it!" A demanding role, and when persecution breaks out, a dangerous one. A voluntary exercise of a God-given concern, and gift, 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 3:8. The church wasn't to be organised, and expanded, as a political or business hierarchy, but to be under servant-leadership exercising the authority of the Servant-Saviour, in fellowship with Him, and is to be valued as such, Mk 10:42-45 Lk 22:24-27. Pastoral care is paternal care involving responsibility, and authority. Their selfless service deserved recognition, and, where appropriate, some financial support, 1 Cor 9:6-15 so that they could function effectively.

IN THE LORD - As His under-shepherds, 1Pet 5:1-6, they must follow Him closely, speak His words, with His attitude and authority. Each Believer has direct access/responsibility to the Lord, Rom 14:4, but that involves showing due regard to leaders, Heb 13:7-8, 17.

****NOTE**** NT leaders are referred to as Elders- A synagogue term, indicating their spiritual maturity, Acts 11:30 14:23 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 2017; 1 Tim 5:17, 19 Titus 1:5 Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1. Bishop/ Overseer- a Gentile term, indicating delegated spiritual authority, Acts 20:28 Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2; Titus 1:7. Shepherds, indicating spiritual capacity and sympathetic care, Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:2. Guides, Indicating spiritual wisdom, Heb 13:7, 17, 24. Hopefully each leader would display something of all of these qualities which are all essential to his effective working. Leaders are never said to have responsibilities to the world at large. They mediate God's will to the church, and exercise His authority within it/among those who profess to be His, under His Lordship. Such leadership grew out of the functioning of the local church, under the Holy Spirit, Acts 20:28. Someone like Paul could help, by pointing out those who were showing leadership, Acts 14:23 1 Cor 16:15-16. And by laying down guidelines by which they could be identified, 1 Tim 3:2-13 Titus 1:5-11. See "Leadership Among the People of God," booklet for further material.

ADMONISH YOU- Noutheteo- Nous= Mind, Tithemi= to put. To put them in mind of the consequences of beliefs and actions. Mainly alerting people to things that are wrong giving instruction with regard to such things, teaching and training them out of them. While this refers to the work of leaders, in their measure each Believer is involved in such mutual assistance, urging changes of behaviour as needed, Acts 20:31; 1 Cor 4:14; Col 1:28 3:16.

5:13 ESTEEM VERY HIGHLY/Hold in highest regard- Show them that you recognise the importance of what they're doing. The value we set on the Lord and the Salvation He has provided is shown by our attitude to those who lead and teach us. The Devil is ever inciting criticism and rebellion. Humility in leaders and followers is a strong weapon against him, 1 Pet 5:5-9. Love and loyalty to leaders are essential if the church is to prosper. Our mind is to think of them highly, backed up by the loving appreciation of our heart. Leaders and Led encouraging/edifying each other in Love creates a fruitful, 1 Cor 13:1-5, relationship.

FOR/because of THEIR WORK - Whether their personal qualities and the way they work are estimable, and lovable, or not, their efforts to help on the work must be so regarded, for any help to be given and received. They are, in human weakness, endeavouring to speak for God the very words of God, and to lead us in Christian action. That they are "Clay vessels" may be painfully obvious in many ways that annoy us, and make them look inadequate, but in response to the grace of God and in obedient faith they are endeavouring to pass on the Gospel treasure, 2 Cor 4:5-7, and we dare not sit back and criticise/discourage them. We will answer for our use of any intelligence, cultural or spiritual sensitivity we may have, Lk 12:48 How terrible to have used our talents in the Enemy's service as an "accuser" of our brothers, Rev 12:10 and a promoter of division by taking sides for and against leaders, 1 Cor 3:1-9, etc.

BE AT PEACE - Present imperative= Maintain the existing state of Peace Gods Grace has granted us peace with Him, and we are called to operate on that basis. Contrast 1 Cor 1:11-12 Blind following of individualistic leaders detached from following the Lord, is divisive. United leadership that functions in love, and united love and appreciation of that leadership is essential for effective witness Rom 12:10 14:19, 15:5-6; Eph 4:3; Col 3:15; Heb 12:14. Christ will be honoured, the Spirit ungrieved, the unsaved impressed, our children nurtured in the Lord, then.

5:14 EXHORT /urge- #211. Introduces a new direction. While applying to leaders, all brothers/ sisters are given these easy-to-memorise, short and sharp statements concerning three classes of problem people who need to be dealt with in any church fellowship. The ability to meet needs doesn't descend miraculously from God or begin with human recognition. Those born of God soon find that He has work for them to do and they grow up as they do it.

WARN - #512 UNRULY /idle- A taktos. Used of an undisciplined, and so ineffective army, or anyone not at his point of duty, doing his work. Those in the Church not pulling their weight, not fitting in well, not encouraging/ edifying, refusing to earn their living 4:11-12, 2 Th 3:6-13. Some may have lost their job by becoming Christians, but should actively seek work, not baf piously. Laziness and disorderliness go together. Some take pride in disagreeing with the leadership, as if their perversity was standing for the truth, Titus 3:10. Without Godly rule, and order, the Church can't function effectively to mutual upbuilding, 1 Cor 14:33-40 Eph 4:15-16; Phil 2:14-15; Col 2:5; Heb 13:17.

COMFORT /Encourage- #211. Get close to, spend time with.

FEEBLE MINDED /timid- Oligopsuchos- "Small-souled." Those who feel inadequate and diffident as they face life, not the dim-witted. Shouting at them, or bulldozing does more harm than good. Encouragement will enable them to exercise any gift they may have for the good of all. Mourning, persecution, battling to adjust lifestyle to their new standing in Christ, and concern for unsaved loved ones would all produce worries adding to natural timidity. The Lord cares for such, Isa 42:3; Mt 14:27; Jn 16:33. As He treats us we are equipped to help them, 2 Cor 1:3-4.

SUPPORT - Hold onto, hold to you WEAK - Asthenes- Strengthless. Those of our fellowship who feel like letting go giving up going back, drifting off. Some may be so psychologically crippled and weak in the faith they have to be carried all their lives. Others will learn to stand for the Lord only after much time is spent in reading Gods Word, praying, talking with them. We must not despise those morally weak, lacking assurance, weak in life or money skills, or having scruples, Rom 14:1. They need to know that there is someone who will not let them go when they feel they can't hang on. The Lord holds his own, Jn 10:28 so must we.

PATIENT - Makrothumeo- Makros= Long Thumos= Temper. To show self-restraint when provoked, not quick to retaliate, not give in under trial, but continue to hope and work. Move slowly with everyone. Don't shout at them. God delays judgment to give men the chance to repent, 2 Pet 3:9. We're expected to show the same patience, and are given it as an enabling fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5:22 1 Cor 13:4. It's all too easy to lose

patience with the worried, weak, the loafers, slow at getting their lives in order, paying bills, etc. Lack of patience while admonishing and assisting may make our action counter-productive, 1 Cor 13:1-3.

TO ALL /with everyone- Caring/ shepherding work must be done in strong patient love, reflecting the Lord's dealing with us.

5:15 RENDER /pay back- Our fallen natures instinctively retaliate, or wish to. That's destructive in the local church, leaving little inclination or ability to worship, work, or witness. The Law allowed limited retaliation, Ex 21:24 Lev 24:20. Grace gives freedom, and requires us to do only good to others, Rom 12:17-21; 1 Pet 3:9. We must watch ourselves in all our dealings, Ex 23:4-9; Prov 25:21-22; 1 Tim 4:16. Socrates, etc. advocated this; Christianity alone provides the indwelling Christ to enable all His own to put it into practice.

EVIL - Kakos- Worthless, useless, bad in character, injurious, destructive.

UNTO ANY - A total ban on retaliation to anyone, anywhere.

FOLLOW - Dioko- To go after eagerly, or persecute, Phil 3:12-14.

GOOD /kind- Agathos- Morally good, physically sound. We're to look for chances to do what is helpful/ for the good or pleasing to others. It's a present imperative as it requires deliberate, persistent effort. It won't come easy to us. Christians faced constant ill-treatment etc, but were to be people who constantly looked for and found chances to help others. Look to the Lord, follow Him, please Him, demonstrate Him, Mt 5:16; 4:44-5; Titus 3:14; Jas 1:27, 2:15-17.

AMONG YOURSELVES /to each other.. ALL MEN /everyone else- Our responsibilities start right where we are, being kind to those we're closest to. Their very nearness sharpens every contact. Persecuted minorities find it relatively easy to show love for one another, but it's natural for this to be balanced by united hatred against those outside. The Christians were to learn to exercise constant loving concern among themselves, but also to extend that to everyone with whom they came in contact, whatever the circumstances. Christ's love to them, in them, reaching out through them.

5:16-18 BRIEF DIRECTIVES FOR A GOD-ORIENTED LIFE

(Constant inner attitudes towards God, and fellowship with Him, that makes the outward life of the previous verses possible. See Rom 12:9-16; 14:1-4; 15:5-6; 1 Cor 14:26-33. Emphatic commands "Be always rejoicing," etc. as our will has a key role.)

5:16 REJOICE EVERMORE /be joyful always- Joy, and Grace come from the same stem in Greek. True joy flows from God's grace remembered, enjoyed, and lived in, whatever our circumstances. We choose to count our grudges, scars, failures, or our Lord's Grace strength, presence, and the resultant eternal blessings. Follow the good eagerly, 5:15; fellowship with Christ, Phil 3:10-16 and we'll know His joy, Jn 15:1-

11. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit who we must not quench, Gal 5:22 Knowing Christ unlocks the full potential of mind and heart God has given us, makes us fully alive, and able to rejoice in Christ, Jn 10:10 Heb 12:1-2; Paul had learned this, 2 Cor 6:10 7:4; Col 1:24 It's not playing a game of "let's pretend we're happy." Depression and sadness lighten as we think of God's forgiveness, power, and providence We see hardships in perspective, Jas 1:2-4. But in fellowship with God we also see sin, and feel the sorrow it causes more dearly.

5:17 PRAY - Proseuchomai- The general word for prayer to God in NT. It suggests a devotional, God-ward look (For 4 aspects, see 1 Tim 2:1.) Prayer is vital in all we do, as the Holy Spirit is the sole interpreter of the Word of God, and the true needs of men. Effective= In-worked-by-the-Holy-Spirit prayer seems to be the sense of Jas 5:16 Praying what He works in us, Rom 8:26-27, Phil 2:12-13 Paul sets an example, 1 Th 5:17-18.

WITHOUT CEASING/Continually- In ALL circumstances, at ALL times bring ALL our thoughts, feelings, hopes, and fears, plans, into His presence Open them to Him, share them with Him, so that our whole life may be God-oriented - that is Holiness God prompts and enables this turning away from self towards Himself, as we can only function in relation to/fellowship with God, relying on His Loving Holiness Wisdom, and Power. Living in Fellowship with Christ means constant asking, thanking, and praising never giving up praying Lk 18:1-8. Prayer is as natural to Paul as breathing, an unceasing attitude towards God in all that makes up life, not unceasingly verbalising We need set prayer times to develop any fellowship with God, but from them we're to reach out in natural growth to all things that concern us at all times, see Eph 6:18-20

5:18 IN EVERYTHING/all circumstances GIVE THANKS- All come from His hand, designed to fulfil His goodwill in us, the best He can cause to happen in view of who we are, and what He, with our consent, has chosen, Rom 8:28 Thanklessness marks the Godless, Rom 1:21-32 Israel's great sin in the wilderness was discontented unbelief, and they lost the promised land through it, Deut 28:45-48 Our Lord gave Thanks, Mt 11:25-30 15:35 Lk 22:19-20 Jn 11:41. Follow Paul through Acts 16:25 Rom 1:8; 14:6; 1 Cor 1:4; 14:16 2 Cor 1:11; 4:15 9:11, Eph 5:20 Phil 1:3; 4:6; Col 2:7; 3:15-17; 4:2 1 Tim 2:1; 4:3-5. The Lord is with us in everything, to enable us to glorify His Name in it, but we need to turn our hearts to remembering this as in Ps 103

THE WILL OF GOD- Our thankful response to His will, is His will. It takes the sting out of hurts, the pride out of success and deepens our fellowship. Parents rejoice as a child responds to their loving provision with thankfulness "Sanks" from a loved infant who had been justly spanked, once touched my heart and deepened my love!

In the Greek this applies equally to Rejoice and Pray, and all are made possible and accomplished IN Christ Jesus/ in fellowship with Him, Phil 2:13 Heb 13:21. All three - rejoicing praying being thankful - are expressions of our sanctification, 4:3. Even in trials, 1 Pet 3:15-16 To do the will of God is to yield to His commands, and the promptings of His Spirit, or as intelligent, appreciative "Sons" apply the principles they have taught us to the practical decisions we make, Phil 3:13 Heb 12:1-13

Understanding His will, we are to do it from our heart, Eph 5:17; 6:6. Seeing something of His will being worked out in/around us encourages us to trust God to do the same in all things.

CONCERNING/for- Eis- into YOU - Reaching out to be active in us.

5:19-22 PRINCIPLES FOR CORPORATE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

(Emphatically stated. An orderly, fruitful freedom in the Spirit.)

5:19 QUENCH/put out THE SPIRIT's fire- Used in LXX of quenching love, Song 8:7; anger, Jer 4:4; 21:12 In NT of lamps going out Mt 12:20 25:8, or fire quenched, Mk 9:48 Eph 6:16; Heb 11:34 The Holy Spirit is the Light that reveals Christ to us, enables us to understand spiritual things, Jn 14:26 16:8-15; 1 Cor 2:6-16 and empowers us to shine as witnesses Acts 1:8. Apart from the purifying aspects of fire it warms us - and God's love pours into our hearts by Him, Rom 5:5. If we quench Him we will soon be stumbling along in the dark, shivering in the cold, cold-hearted.

He is in every Believer, 1:5; 4:8; Rom 8:9-16 He alone can give victory over our sinful self, Rom 8:1-4; Gal 5:16-26 assurance of Salvation, and enable us to live up to the responsibilities of adult sonship, Rom 8:12-17. His activities in all these must be gladly responded to, not quenched. He gives each spiritual gifts/capacities, 1 Cor 12:4-11; 28:31; Rom 12:6-8, which must not be neglected, 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10 Whatever our attitude is towards what are known as "Charismatic Gifts," we should encourage those beginning to show concern about, and interest in teaching, evangelising etc and not pour cold water on them and their situation, quenching what may be a work of the Spirit in them.

As the Holy Spirit was then revealing foundational Church truth pieced through prophets, Eph 2:20 2 Pet 1:20 21, this may also be a specific warning against refusing to allow such revelations of God's will, and so frustrating the Spirit's work. Cp Num 11:26 29 Jer 20:9, Amos 2:12 Micah 2:6. Apart from this letter, and memories of Paul's teaching, they had only the OT Scriptures.

The Spirit is also the guiding enabling power in all that God does within the local fellowship, in witness work, and worship. Congregations today quench the Spirit by insisting on strict conformity to church traditions, and man-made rules. An orderly liberty is needed. Pride, disunity, a critical spirit, or any sin, quenches the Spirit so we must continually be on guard against them, and be quick to repent/be cleansed, Cp Eph 4:30 Acts 7:51; Mt 12:24 32

5:20 DESPISE/Treat with contempt- To ignore as irrelevant. Used of heathen judges having no role/standing in the Church, 1 Cor 6:4.

PROPHECYING/Prophecies- Prophetia- Pro= forth. Phemi= to speak. To speak forth publicly the message God gave in the power of the Spirit, as John did in Rev 1. It was

a gift of the Spirit, Acts 2:17; Num 11:29; It might start a new work, Acts 13:1-3; unfold new truth, 2 Pet 1:21; foretell events, Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11; Rev 1:3; 10:11. More often a revelation to bless, edify, comfort, and encourage the hearers or readers, 1 Cor 14:3-4; 25 Eph 4:11-16. Our response is vital, Ezek 33:13-16; Rev 1:3; 22:7. Prophets, having completed their work by providing us with the NT, passed away 1 Cor 13:9-10. But it also applies to the teachers that succeeded them, (2 Pet 2:1 warns that False Teachers will compete with Teachers God raises up, as False Prophets competed with the True Prophets,) who glean messages from the word of God, and by the Spirit, give new insights appropriate to our times.

We despise prophecies when we can't be bothered reading God's Word, thinking about it, doing what it says. This quenches the voice of the Holy Spirit, its author, 2 Pet 1:20-21. When His servants try to speak God's Word to us - Read, explain, teach, apply it - unless we ignore the faults/ likable features of their personality and presentation, and set our hearts to listen to God with a view to doing what we learn, we're despising prophecies. Whether we praise it or criticise it, unless we honour it by obedience we're treating the preaching as an entertainment, Ezek 33:30-32.

Generally God doesn't speak to us directly, but chooses to use frail fellow human beings, weak in various ways, who we may easily dismiss as "Too Old-fashioned, Modern, Dogmatic, Wishy-washy, etc. The Devil will suggest to us that it's a reason for us ignoring what is said! Even when God incarnate, came down to live perfectly, teach perfectly the life-giving truth of God, the Scribes, etc found "Good reasons" for despising Him and His message, and damned themselves forever. If we, like them, in our measure despise what is spoken to us in the name of the Lord we will in that measure Quench the Spirit's voice to us. If we fail to obey vs 13 our children will learn to despise those through whom God would have spoken to them. His people will be divided and scattered, leaving only a handful to struggle on. Pride may blind us and, like those who crucified our Lord and persecuted His servants, we may imagine we've been serving God all the time, Jn 16:2.

To suppress Gospels in favour of Epistles, or vice-versa, rational understanding of Scripture in favour of emotional Spiritual devotion, adaptation to current needs in favour of conforming to Godly tradition, Or vice-versa, is despising prophecies. "Charismatic Revival" Christians may accuse others of quenching the Spirit by not listening to their "Prophets." Others may accuse them of despising the Scriptures which contain the genuine prophecies of Scripture by treating modern froth as their equivalent, or supplanting what God has spoken to us, 2 Pet 1:21. Each must search his own heart before God to ensure that he is not despising any of God's Word.

5:21 PROVE Test - #24. Test with a view to being able to approve as being from God, so as to do what we believe is His will, Acts 17:10-12; Jn 4:42; Rom 14:23. We honour God's servants by taking what they say seriously, eager to hear the Lord speak through them, hopeful of finding help, but testing it. We're not to be credulous Preacher-worshippers, or biased towards fault-finding. Billy Bray rebuked those who hadn't the sense of his ducks, who when fed went for the wheat and ignored the husks, Mt 23:23-25.

There's a human element in all speaking for God, and the possibility of a Satanic one, so it must be tested by hearers, 1 Cor 14:29 Even such gifted and Godly spokesmen as Moses and Peter could say what their human nature prompted, Num 20:10-12 Mt 16:16-23 If a message comes from God it will grow naturally out of what He has already given us, proving itself by conforming to Scripture, 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21. It will be seen to come true, lead people closer to God, not away from Him, and bring forth fruit to His Glory in speaker and hearer alike, Deut 13:1-5; 18:21-22 Mt 7:15-27, 1 Jn 4:1. It won't pervert the Gospel, Gal 1:6-9, but honour the Lord, and His Lordship, by urging obedience to His Word, Jn 15:7-10 1 Cor 12:1-3.

While some were given a special gift of recognising that a message was from God, 1 Cor 12:10 all Believers have the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth, Jn 14:26 16:13 1 Cor 2:13 1 Jn 2:20-27. 1 Cor 14 gives several tests: Does it conform to reason/make sense to the hearers? edify them? Invite ridicule? lead to disorder?

ALL /Everything- is neuter, the messages are to be tested, but the speaker must accept responsibility for what he says, 1 Cor 14:32

****NOTE**** It seemed most helpful to handle this in terms that apply to all messages which in any way involve speaking for God. Even in NT times Phenomena resembling "Charismatic Gifts" arose from either natural, or demonic activity. Those who believe modern claims of "Prophesying" by the Spirit particularly need to test as above. The Mormons, SDA's, JW's come from such claims, and even groups involving Godly, Bible-honouring people have their "Lunatic fringe" people and ideas. At the opposite extreme, dull orthodoxy and Rationalism, has just as great a need to test everything.

HOLD FAST /on.. GOOD- Obey, follow what is proved to be genuine, by passing the test, Lk 8:11-15 1 Cor 11:2; 15:2; Heb 3:6, 14; 10:23 Testing what is taught isn't despising it, if it has in view holding fast to revealed truth. Energy, and a will ed effort are needed, Heb 21:2. (THE Good- a single entity.)

5:22 ABSTAIN/avoid- Refuse to have anything to do with it.

ALL APPEARANCE /forms- Eidos- Used only in Lk 3:22 9:29 Jn 5:37, 2 Cor 5:7 (sight). The outward forms in which evil manifests itself are designed to appeal to the natural desires, of all sorts of people. Evil is deceptive in its variability. Truth is solid, Falsehood free to adapt, and appeal to the flesh. The Devil doesn't mind which alternative to God's will we may choose to follow/be taken in by. Sometimes it has very pious forms, 2 Cor 11:13-15 Here, in 1 Th 5:22 it doesn't mean something that might seem to be evil but actually isn't - you find that in Rom 14:16

EVIL - Ponerous- Evil that causes labour, pain, and sorrow. From Ponerous= Heavy Labour. It's used of demons, Lk 7:21, etc. It may refer primarily to false prophecies/ teachings, demonic-inspired error, 1 Tim 4:1, presented in an attractive way, 2 Cor 11:13-15

False doctrine isn't merely worthless, but actively corrupting. The worst forms of wickedness are perversions of the truth, "half-truths."

5:2324 PAUL'S CONFIDENT WISH /PRAYER FOR THEM

(Vs 14-22 taped up a heavy list of things that we must do. But just when we might sink under the load, Paul lifts his heart to God, and reminds us that our responsibility rests within that of God who never fails. All exhortations would be useless if we're to carry them out in our own strength, but they are His will, and the power to carry them out is His, as we trust and obey, Rom 8:1-4. "May God sanctify you," balances, "Sanctify yourselves," 4:3.)

5:23 GOD/Himself- Each is under His personal concern and care.

PEACE - #1:1 refers to the peace God gives. Here we're reminded of the character of the One who gives us Peace because He is our Peace Eph 2:14. In the OT God is revealed by His dealings with people, as the God of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah etc. In the NT He is fully revealed in His Son, but this revelation is spelled out in aspects such as God of Love, Hope, Patience, Glory, Comfort, Grace and God of Peace Rom 15:33 16:20 Phil 4:9, Heb 13:20 and here. His inexhaustible Peace is shared with us in all our struggle against the pressure of the world, flesh, or Devil, persecutors from outside, and trouble-makers within the church.

External conflicts rob men of peace but those within can be worse still. Conflicting desires, and the frustration caused by unfulfilled hopes and potentials. God is THE Whole, Holy, Fulfilled, Balanced, Self-consistent Person. God is perfect in Himself. All He does is Perfection. He has set us apart for Himself so that we may be in His image. He's bringing many sons/daughters to Glory to be like His Son for ever, 2 Cor 6:17-7:1; Heb 2:10 That's what "Sanctified" means. He will achieve this Wholeness/Holiness in us in the measure in which we co-operate with Him.

SANCTIFY - Hagiazō - Cause to act in a Holy way, as one set apart by God for fellowship with Himself. We ARE holy, in Christ, so must strive after holiness which only God can complete in us.

WHOLLY/through and through- Holoteles- Holos= Whole. Telos= An End, Complete. So wholly attaining the goal which God had in mind when He set us apart for Himself before Creation, Eph 1:3-6. The purpose He confirmed in Creating us, Gen 1:27, and again in Redeeming us, Rom 8:29-39. At conversion we were united with Christ and that sanctification was applied to us, Acts 2:6, 18; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 2 Th 2:13; Heb 10:10, 14. This doesn't eradicate sin from us, but calls us to put ourselves

totally/ responsive in His hands, Rom 12:1, so that our obedience to God's Word in response to His Holy Spirit in us, Jn 17:17; 2 Cor 3:18 makes us more and more truly His in our experience/ more Christ-like, 2 Tim 2:21. Total conformity to/ fellowship with Christ, is the Goal to which we're committed. It will be ours when He Comes, 1 Jn 3:1-3; Phil 3:7-21. Tragically many Christians hinder this, preferring to exclude some aspects of their lives.

WHOLE - Holokleros- Holos= Whole. Kleros= A Lot All that's allotted to us, our inheritance Ps 139:13-18 Each part perfected in itself, and in relation to the rest, in its proper place and proportion intended when granted. We must be content with nothing less than perfection in every aspect of our lives. See Jas 1:4.

SPIRIT - Pneuma- The God-conscious inner man who thinks, chooses, and rules our being and worships. This comes first in God's purposes, and should be our first concern. Man's spirit was separated from God by the Fall, but renewed by the new Birth into a spirit of sonship. It's our Spirit that God witnesses with Rom 8:15-16 Our spirit needs to be preserved from defilement, so we can relate to God and worship Him, Jn 4:23 Rom 8:10 2 Cor 7:1; Col 3:1-17.

SOUL - #28 Man in relation to himself. The self we're aware of in our thoughts, feelings, desires, etc, Jn 1:27 (KJV is correct). These need to be purified, Mt 15:18-19, Eph 2:3; Titus 1:15; Heb 12:15; 1 Pet 2:11. Soul and spirit are blurred in our thinking, but God's word can enable our spirit to take God's side/choose against our whole natural inclination. We may feel we'd "cease to be me" by obeying God, yet are enabled to do so to His glory, Heb 4:12-16

BODY - Soma- The house in which we live, 2 Cor 5:1, and by which we relate to the world and people around us. Its senses bring us information, and we use it to express ourselves and interact with things and people. It's frail, mortal, but not in itself the source of sin in us, Mt 15:19-20 Mk 7:21-23 etc. But in union with our soul forms our flesh-nature, inherited from Adam, prone to temptation and sin. It's to be kept from defilement and evil uses, 4:3-8; Rom 6:19, 1 Cor 6:13-20 so that Christ can be manifested in it 2 Cor 4:10 The Lord came to this world in a Body prepared for Him, Heb 10:5. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, Mk 14:34 At the last he breathed out His Spirit to God, Lk 23:46

The body being sanctified/holy would be a new idea to Greeks, (and modern Eastern religions) who thought of it as being animal. Man can and will exist without the body when it's laid in the grave. But as the means by which we express ourselves, and have fellowship with others, it's an essential feature of our blessed future when clothed with a resurrection body like our Lord's Phil 3:19-21.

Body-Soul-Spirit isn't meant to be a scientific or theological statement, as Paul often refers simply to the inner man, and body. God through Paul is here emphasizing that Salvation includes the totality of man's being, which will be brought to perfection at Christ's Coming. Not the cold bankness of a monkish Nirvana that negates humanity, but a glorious purpose to which He is working in all that we experience in this life, Rom 8:15-30 and in which He seeks our co-operation in the exhortations already given. We must never be content to be unsanctified, out of fellowship with God in any area of our lives as God isn't content that we should be.

PRESERVED/kept- We are, 1 Pet 1:3-7; securely held in His hands, Jn 10:28-29 guaranteed by His oath, Heb 6:17-20 and sealed as His, by His indwelling presence Eph 1:13 Col 1:27. But we need to actively place ourselves in His hands in all our living, witnessing and worshipping. And by His enabling seek to keep ourselves from all that would defile us/ hinder His work in any way, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, or bodily, Jude 20-25

BLAMELESS- #210- Free from deserving any blame. A life at which there's no reason to point an accusing finger, LXX Job 18.

UNTIL/AT THE COMING- #219 Lit In/at the presence of. His work in us will be completed at His coming, when suddenly our wholeness in Christ will be displayed. What Christians have tried to be, and do in obedience to the Lord/ His Word - attempted in response to the Spirit, in fellowship with God (little or much) will be seen in the perfection He has made of it. It will be permanent and perfect then, when we're displayed in the joy of His likeness

****NOTE**** As a Master Potter may inspire pupils to attempt to imitate him, guide their hands as they work, and at the end, with their approval, by a few deft touches remove blemishes and bring out the perfection towards which they worked, before making it permanent by firing, so it will be at His Coming. We shall see Him as He is, and at His Judgment seat see ourselves as we were. And gladly, fully and finally, allow Him to complete all that He has begun to do in us. We will receive it to rejoice in with Him as a triumph of His Mercy, Ps 17:15; Phil 1:6; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Jude 24. Only God, in the perfection of His Holy, wise, and powerful Love, could take up the treasure which each has laid up in Heaven, Lk 12:33 and render to each according to his works in perfect justice Rom 2:5-7; 1 Pet 1:17, so that we reap what we sow, Gal 6:7-10. Yet in triumphant Grace and patient Mercy display us as vessels of mercy, worthy of His sacrifice for us, Rom 9:21-24.

LORD JESUS CHRIST - Jude 24-25 speaks of this, and the only adequate response we can make as we face the truth - to wonder, worship, to acknowledge. Our whole life is to be lived with our eye on our being present with the Lord at His Coming/ His Judgment seat, 2 Cor 5:6-10. The full title again reminds us who He is, all He is.

5:24 FAITHFUL - Reliable, loyal. God is what He was seen to be in Christ, and will do what He has said He will do in Scripture. Vs 23 isn't impractical idealism, but a confidence resting on the revealed nature and activity of God Himself. It has been His purpose all along. God tells no lies. He is Truth. God makes no mistakes. He knows all. He's never unable to complete. He's Omnipotent. And never loses interest. He's Love.

HE THAT CALLED US - His intervention was His idea and He is totally involved, and committed to His purpose for us. Faithful to His Purposes in calling us, and so faithful to us.

HE WILL DO IT - God completes, accomplishes, what he begins. We must never ignore our responsibilities as His people, but we must never let them dominate our lives. We will fulfil them only as we look off to Him who has made us His responsibility, thinking of Him and His work, His promises, His faithfulness. It is in Him, and in our thinking of Him that the power for living lies.

5:25-28 CLOSING REQUEST AND GREETING

(Probably a postscript in Paul's own writing.)

5:25 Brothers.. PRAY - Paul showed a constant awareness that he stood in a fellowship of all God's family. And of our need to be continually talking to the Lord about each other, meeting at the throne of Grace. Paul was a man of prayer. They were his dear brothers and sisters in Christ and he wanted them to pray for him and with him.

FOR - Peri- about US. Present tense- Be continually praying. See Rom 15:30-33 2 Cor 1:11; Phil 1:19, Col 4:3; Philm 22. In all his giftedness, zeal, etc he needed God's help and men's prayers and fellowship to achieve anything. He felt uncertainty and self-doubt as we all do, 2 Cor 7:8. He'd just been praying for them.

5:26 GREET ALL - As in Rom 16:16 1 Cor 16:20 2 Cor 13:12 Give each other my greetings/goodwishes/express unitedness

A HOLY KISS- Kiss of friendship, used between persons of the same sex. Mt 26:48 Lk 7:45 expressing affection and identification with other members of God's family. (In their culture Lips were kissed sexually, cheeks, brow, or shoulder in family greeting, feet or hands in loyalty to a superior.) A Holy Kiss expressed Holy fellowship between God's Holy-to-Him people. Women were probably seated separately from men, as in the synagogue, and still today in some countries. Justin Martyr (150AD) speaks of a formal exchange of kisses between men, and between women, after prayers and before bread and wine brought in, proclaiming their oneness before remembering their Reconciler.

Kissing, except between women, isn't helpful in our culture. Instead a hearty hand shake expresses impartial affection to all in Christ, without undue familiarity, and free from any erotic association.

5:27 CHARGE - Enorkizo- To put on oath. Paul deliberately stands them with himself before the Lord and puts himself and them on oath to read the letter to all, is the meaning in Greek. Why so emphatic? Paul was aware that in this letter he was doing all he could to be personally present with them all. He was aware that it was an important letter, and perhaps that he was establishing a precedent for all his future letters, or at least those that were Scripture. God's Word is intended to be for all to hear, evaluate, apply to their own lives, and respond to/obey. The OT Scriptures were read to all, Ex 24:7; Deu 31:11-12; Josh 8:33-35; 2 Ki 23:2; Neh 8:1-10 so should the NT be. This was its first book and he may have been aware that what he is writing is God's Word. The Lord had commanded that we should not emphasise our statements by oaths, but Paul was writing God's statements on His behalf.

READ - Anaginosko- Ana= Again, Ginosko= to Know, by fellowship or experience To really read goes beyond the mere scanning of words into having fellowship with the material read, and with Christ when He is the Person it concerns. Public reading - many of the Saints would have been illiterate. That the OT was read aloud in the Synagogue, and this was to be read aloud in the church, in effect asserts its place as a Holy Scripture.

ALL - They were all equally set apart by God for Himself, to be His family. God speaks to all His people, not to an elite only. The whole counsel of God should be declared, Acts 20:27, and God relied on it to make it effective in the congregation as a whole. It is a serious sin to keep the congregation in ignorance, Lk 11:52. What God said through Paul was for them all to hear fully, not filtered at the discretion of any leadership. They were to see that all received its message just as it was written, so that all would know what was said relevant to each, and in its setting/conveying Paul's attitude.

5:28 GRACE - Paul's letters are full of daunting challenges, rebukes, etc. It's appropriate for them to begin and end with reminders of God's Grace. A reassurance that God's enabling is given us fully and freely in Christ Jesus, and so we can triumph in our circumstances whatever they may be, 2 Cor 12:8-10

AMEN - God's Amen= It is so/will be so, Faithful, Deu 7:9 is Amen. His statements are sure/Amen, Ps 119:7. Jn 3:3 etc is Amen, Amen. In response to what God says, we say Amen= Let it be so, Deu 27:15; Neh 5:13

E. Read 25.9.94 Revised 14.7.97 (Criticism/Correction/Addition is welcomed.)

Other Booklets

Listening to the Lord:- Habakkuk, Ruth, Haggai; Romans 1-4; 5-8; 9-11; 12-16; 1 Corinthians 1-4; 5-7; 8-11; 12-14; 15-16; 2 Corinthians 1-4; 5-9; 10-13; Colossians; 2 Thessalonians; 2 Peter & Jude; Revelation parts 1 and 2.

Looking to the Word of God- Guidance, Abortion Protests & Lessons from Sodom; Outline of Pre-Reformation Church History; Reformation towards the New Testament Pattern - A N Groves and the Early Brethren. Leadership among the People of God.

Copies of these are gladly supplied free from:

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