

1 Thess. 5:21 But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;

1. "But examine every carefully" - Lit "prove all things."

- a. "examine" is from "dokimazo" [dah kee **mah** zoh] meaning "to test, prove, examine."
- b. This admonition sets forth faith is not based on feelings or convictions that are not based on scriptures.
- c. This admonition shows it makes a difference what one believes.
- d. Christians are not to be gullible, but are to "examine everything *carefully*."
- e. This testing is not based on the following things.

Human logic	What is popular
Traditions of men	The uninspired writings of men
View of the majority	Feelings or human judgment
Myths, fables, dreams, visions	Human hierarchy and counsels
The law of Moses	That is the way we have always done it

f. This testing is based on God's inspired word equips one for "every good work" and "everything pertaining to life and godliness." (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2 Tim. 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Pet 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

g. Here are some examples and admonitions Christians need to keep in mind.

1) Christians should follow the example of the Bereans. (Acts 17:11).

Acts 17:11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.**

2) Jesus gave this warning against false teaching. (Matt. 7:15).

Matt. 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

3) Paul gave this warning about being deceived by those who appeared to be "angels of light." (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

2 Cor. 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

2 Cor. 11:14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

2 Cor. 11:15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

4) The apostle John gave this warning showing the need to “prove all things.” (1 Jn. 4:1).

1 Jn. 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

5) Walking “in the light” and being “children of light” demands one be able and committed to determine right from wrong.

h. Here are some things we hear today, but do they agree with the scriptures?

1) The church is not important. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23, 25).

2) Baptism has nothing to do with salvation. (Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26,27; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21).

3) Faith alone saves. (Jas. 2:17, 20, 24, 26; Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Gal. 5:6).

4) Jesus was a good man, but not Deity. (Matt. 1:23; Jn. 10:30; 14:9; Phil. 2:5-8; Jn. 20:30-31; Col. 1:15; 2:9).

5) Believers should compromise with the world to gain more members. (Rom. 12:1,2; Jas. 1:27; 1 Jn. 2:15-17).

6) One cannot fall from grace. (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3:12; 6:4-6; Jas. 5:19,20).

7) Peter gave instructions on how to avoid falling from grace. (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

I. In context this admonition may relate to the words “do not despise prophetic utterances.”

1) It is the antithesis of the provision rejecting prophetic utterances. (1 Thess. 5:20).

2) “Prophetic utterances” must be accepted and used when dealing with false teachers.

3) Paul was likely urging them to use the spiritual gifts that gave one the ability to discern [test] genuine teaching. (1 Cor. 12:10; 14:29; 1 Jn. 4:1).

4) They were not to accept everything that someone claimed to be a prophetic utterance.

5) They were to examine the Scriptures and listen to those who had the power “to discern the spirits [false teachers]. (1 Cor. 12:10).

1 Cor. 12:10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

2. “hold fast to that which is good” - “hold fast the good”

a. Christians are always instructed to pursue what is good. (Rom. 12:9; 1 Pet. 3:10, 11).

Rom. 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

1 Pet. 3:10 For, "The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.

1 Pet. 3:11 "He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it.

b. It is essential that Christians "hold fast the good" because it is so easy to drift or turn away from it.

c. They were to "hold fast" to prophecy [teaching] that was genuine, that is, proved to be from God.

1 Thess. 5:22 abstain from every form of evil.

1. The word "abstain" is from "apecho" [ah **peh** koh] meaning "to void, abstain." See word "abstain" - 1 Thess. 4:3.

2. It is not enough to "hold to the good" if abstaining from every form of evil is not diligently and faithfully followed.

3. Christians certainly need to read Psalm 1 and 2 Corinthians 6. (Psa. 1:1; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Psa. 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

2 Cor. 6:15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

2 Cor. 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "*I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*"

2 Cor. 6:17 "Therefore, *come out from their midst and be separate,*" says the Lord. "*And do not touch what is unclean;* And I will welcome you.

2 Cor. 6:18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

4. Paul gave this warning against the false teachers who denied the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:33).

1 Cor. 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

a. It is dangerous to closely associate with those who deny the resurrection.

b. This logically leads to an immoral life because it implies there is no hereafter and accountability of one's sins. (1 Cor. 15:32).

1 Cor. 15:32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, *let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*

5. There has been a lot of discussion about the word "form" or "appearance."

a. This word comes from "eidōs" [**ay** dahs] that can be rendered "form" or "appearance"

1) Paul is commanding there must be the abstinence of evil in all its forms

2) It also means they are to avoid or abstain from false prophecy, but are to hold fast to good [true] prophecy.

b. It seems best to interpret it with the idea of "form."

c. Though Christians must be cautious, it is impossible to avoid every appearance or semblance of evil.

- 1) Jesus gave the appearance of evil when He ate with sinners (Matt. 9:11), but He did not participate in the evil of these men.
- 2) When one attempts to convert a sinner, this may give the appearance of evil but this is far from the truth!
- 3) Working with unbelievers might give the appearance of evil that may or may not be the case.
- 4) Living with an unbelieving spouse or family could give the semblance of evil.
- 5) One must have contact with the world to reach lost souls.
- 6) To avoid all contact with evil doers one would have to leave this world. (1 Cor. 5:10).

1 Cor. 5:10 I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

6. It is vital that a Christian mature in faith that he/she may be able to discern good from evil. (Heb. 5:11-14).
7. Christians must not see how close they can get to evil, but must avoid it in all its forms.
8. Christians must seek the help of God and believers to be victorious. (Matt. 6:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7,8; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 3:13;10:24).

Paul's Concluding Matters

1 Thess. 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely"
 - a. Paul used the words "God of peace" in other writings. (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 2 Thess. 3:16).
 - b. God is the source of true and genuine and lasting peace.
 - c. One can never have peace until he/she is at peace with God.
 - d. "Sanctify" is from "hagiazō" [hah gee **ah** zoh] means "to set apart." McCord translates "completely set you apart."
2. "and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete"
 - a. This phrase is very difficult.
 - b. Man is usually presented as being a dual being having a body and a "soul" or "spirit."
 - c. The word "spirit" comes from the Hebrew "ruach" and the Greek "pneuma" [**pn**yoo mah]. The word "spirit" can have a variety of meanings depending on the context.
 - 1) God the Father. (Jn. 4:24).
 - 2) The Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:16; 28:19).

3) Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:45). Lit. "the last Adam a life-giving spirit."

4) Angels. (Heb. 1:14).

5) Mental attitude. (Prov. 14:29; 16:18; Matt. 5:3).

6) Men and animals (Eccles. 3:9, 21).

7) Demons (Lk. 9:39; Mk. 5:2).

8) Movement of air, the wind (Gen. 8:1; Exod. 10:13; 1 Kgs. 19:1; Jn. 3:8; Heb. 1:7).

9) Breathe of mouth (2 Thess. 2:8; Psa. 33:6).

10) Breathe of life (Gen. 6:17; Rev. 11:11).

c. The word "spirit" can also refer to the immortal part of man. (Eccles. 12:7; Lk. 23:46; Jn. 3:5-7; Acts 7:59; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Cor. 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 6:18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Heb. 12:9,23; Jas. 2:26; Phile. 1:25).

Eccles. 12:7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Lk. 23:46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, *into Your hands I commit My spirit.*" Having said this, He breathed His last.

Jn. 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and **the** Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Jn. 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of **the** Spirit is spirit.

Jn. 3:7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Acts 7:59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

1 Cor. 5:5 *I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Cor. 7:34 and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may **be holy both in body and spirit**; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

2 Cor. 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Gal. 6:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen

2 Tim. 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Heb. 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Heb. 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Jas. 2:26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Phile. 1:25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

d. The word “soul” comes from the Hebrew word “nephesh” and the Greek “psuche” [psoo **kay**]. “Soul” can have a variety of meanings depending on context.

1) Breathe of life (Acts 20:10).

2) Animal life. (Gen. 1:20, 24, 30; Rev. 8:9).

3) God (Matt. 12:18; Heb. 10:38). “Soul” does not mean God is flesh and blood (Matt. 16:19), but has the idea that God’s heart or mind. His righteous feeling or attitude is pleased or not pleased.

4) Heart (Eph. 6:6). Doing the will of God from the “soul” has the meaning of “heart.”

5) Feelings (Exod. 23:9).

6) Corpse, a dead body (Num. 6:6).

7) Human beings (including body and spirit). (Gen. 2:7; Matt. 2:20; 6:25; 20:28; Acts 2:41; Rom. 13:1).

e. The word “soul” can also be used to refer to the immortal part of man. (Matt. 10:28; Mk. 8:36; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:9; Heb. 10:39; 13:17; 6:19; Rev. 6:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:11; Jas. 5:19, 20; 3 Jn. 1:2; Rev. 20:4).

Matt. 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Mk. 8:36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? See also Mark 8:37.

Heb. 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

Heb. 10:39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Heb. 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Jas. 1:21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Jas. 5:19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,

Jas. 5:20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins

1 Pet. 1:9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

1 Pet. 4:19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

3 Jn. 3:2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

Rev. 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

e. Here are some possible meanings of this three-fold division.

- 1) Some believe Paul did not intend that a big distinction be made of these words he used to describe the whole man. There is overlapping in the words of the great commandment. (Matt. 22:37).
- 2) Others believe the word “spirit” designates the immortal part of man, but “soul” is used to designate the life force that animates the body. When God formed man out of the dust of earth, He breathes into him the breathed of life and man became a living , breathing creature. (Gen. 2:7).
- 3) Some hold the word “soul” is used here as the seat of human emotions and feelings as the word is sometimes used.

3. “without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- a. With God’s blessings he wants them to live in such a way that they be found without blame at Christ’s coming.
- b. Paul gave the these instructions on how to be faithful. (Gal. 5:16, 22-23).
- c. Peter gave these instructions on how to be found blameless. (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
- d. John is a very precise way revealed what is required to be found blameless at Christ’s coming. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).

1 Thess. 5:24 Faithful [dependable, trustworthy] is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

- NIV has “and he will do it” – Lit “who indeed will do [it]”
1. God who calls men through the gospel is absolutely faithful. (2 Thess. 1:8, 9).
 2. God will not fail us. (1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 13:5; Jas. 4:7).
 3. One will be blameless when Christ comes again if he/she will by new birth become a part of God’s family and seek His will.

1 Thess. 5:25 Brethren, pray for us

1. Prayer is powerful.
2. Paul coveted the prayers of these saints and all brothers.

1 Thess. 5:26 Greet all the brethren with a holy [sacred] kiss.

1. The “holy kiss” is mentioned several times in the New Testament.
 - a. “Holy” is from “hagios” [**hah** gee ahs] meaning “holy, sacred.”
 - b. It is used several times in the New Testament in reference to the word “kiss.” (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14).

Rom. 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

1 Cor. 16:20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Cor. 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Pet. 5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

2. Greeting others with a kiss was customary in those days. It was not a custom originating with Christians.
3. Paul appears to be asking them to “greet all the brethren with a holy kiss” in his behalf as he was unable to do that personally.
 - a. “All” is significant.
 - b. There was to be no distinctions or respecters of persons.
4. “Holy kiss” designates it was a kiss expressing Christian love - not a kiss of passion.
5. Greeting one another with a kiss is still practiced in some countries apart from any association with Christianity.
 - a. It was and is, in these places, merely a way of greeting.
 - b. It may or may not denote love and affection for the person or persons.
6. In those countries Christians may also follow this custom with greeting one another especially when they meet together and when they encounter one another at other times.
7. It is certainly not wrong to greet one another with a holy kiss, but this will likely not be welcomed by most outside the brotherhood and by most people one does not know very well who are believers.
8. The firm hand shake, a hug are other warm ways of greeting one another.
9. It is questionable Paul was making this a universal commandment applying in every situation in all ages.

Note:

1. The kiss of Judas rather than being “a holy kiss” was a kiss of betrayal and treachery. (Mk. 14:44).
2. The critics and enemies of Christ failed to give Him a kiss of greeting. (Lk. 7:45).
3. Jesus praised the sinful woman for her conduct of kissing his feet over and over again. (Lk. 7:45).

1 Thess. 5:27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren [brothers and sisters].

1. Paul again used the word “all.” See 1 Thess. 5:26.
2. This was not a private letter, but Paul wanted it “read to all the brethren.”
3. It was very important that every member hear the words of this letter from Paul.
 - a. He used the words “I adjure you.”

- b. This comes from the word “enorkizo” [eh nahr kee zoh] meaning “to adjure, charge, to put under oath.”
 - c. The NIV has “charge” and the NRSV has “I solemnly command.”
 - d. McCord “I am putting you under oath before the Lord.”
4. It was his strong desire that “all” hear his words of praise, encouragement and instruction.
 5. One should keep in mind that each member did not have a copy of the scriptures and none would have a copy of this letter.
 - a. Many books of the New Testament had not been written at this early date.
 - b. There were very limited copies of the books or letters of the New Testament in about A.D. 50 to 52.
 - c. Copies of this epistle would emerge and be circulated over a period of time.
 - d. Many Christians could not read based on the number of illiterate people at that time.

1 Thess. 5:28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

1. Paul concludes by expressing a desire that “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” be with each one of them.
 - a. Paul often used this language. (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 2 Thess. 3:18; Phile. 1:25).
 - b. Many scriptures speak of God’s grace. (Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 5:12; Acts 11:23; 2 Cor. 1:2; 6:1; Eph. 2:8).
2. He dearly loved these brothers and sisters and wanted the unmerited favor of Jesus to be with all of them.

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