

Additional Admonitions

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Lesson 5c

Part 1

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

1. "But examine everything 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, examination is not based on the following things.

Human logic	What is popular in culture
Traditions of men (Matt. 15:9).	The uninspired writings of men
View of the majority - Exod. 23:2	Feelings or human judgment
Myths, fables, dreams, visions	Human hierarchy and councils
The law of Moses (Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:4).	That is the way we have always done it

- f. This testing is based on God's inspired word that equips one for "every good work" and "everything pertaining to life and godliness." (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3). See also Deut. 4:2

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.

Deut 4:2 "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

- 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.**

- They did not follow what they wanted to hear, but daily examined God’s holy word.
- Every Christian should search and examine the Scriptures daily for the truth and refuse to accept teachings not found in Scriptures.

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.

- Those pretending to be “angels of light” are:

Likable	Preach what you want to hear
Persuasive	Pretend to be interested in you.

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 [false teachers] to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- “spirits” were false teachers who claimed to be guided by the Holy Spirit.
- We still have those who claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit, but must be rejected because their teachings conflict with the Scriptures.

5) Walking “in the light” and being “children of light” (1 Jn. 1:7; Eph. 5:8). 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).

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood.**

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, **He Himself {being} the Savior of the body.**

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,**

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).

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, {being} by itself.

James 2:20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

James 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works [of faith] and not by faith alone.

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

Rom 1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about {the} **obedience of faith** among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

Rom 16:26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, {leading} to **obedience of faith**;

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, **but faith working through love.**

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).

2 Pet 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in {your} moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Pet 1:6 and in {your} knowledge, self-control, and in {your} self-control, perseverance, and in {your} perseverance, godliness,

2 Pet 1:7 and in {your} godliness, brotherly kindness, and in {your} brotherly kindness, love.

2 Pet 1:8 For if these {qualities} are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet 1:9 For he who lacks these {qualities} is blind {or} short-sighted, having forgotten {his} purification from his former sins.

2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

2 Pet 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

i. In context this admonition in verse 21 may relate to the words “do not despise prophetic utterances” in verse 20.

- 1) Rather than rejecting or despising prophetic utterances, they were to test everything and embrace the good and reject what was false.
- 2) Real “Prophetic utterances” [inspired teaching] 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).

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.

1 Cor 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.

1 John 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.

- 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 this pleases God and leads to eternal life with God.
- c. It is essential that believers “hold fast the good” because it is so easy to drift or turn away from it.
- d. Drifting can be a slow process and it is not always recognized until it is too late.
- e. They were to “hold fast” to prophecy [teaching] that was genuine, that is, proved to be from God.
- f. We must do the same today.
- g. We must hold fast to the Scriptures and not add or take away from them.

1 Thessalonians 5c

Part 2

1 Thess. 5:22 abstain [avoid] from every form [kind] of evil.

1. The word “abstain” is from “apecho” [ah **peh** koh] meaning “to avoid, abstain.”

a. See word “abstain” - 1 Thess. 4:3-4.

1 Thess 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; {that is,} that you **abstain** from sexual immorality;
1 Thess 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

b. Believers were to avoid “fornication” [immorality] that was a strong temptation then and now.

c. Paul taught Christians to “flee” “fornication.” (1 Cor. 6:18).

1 Cor 6:18 Flee immorality. Every {other} sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

1) Some temptations are so great that the divine mandate is to “flee” from them.

2) This is what Joseph did to keep himself pure when seduced by Potiphar’s wife. (Gen. 39:10-14).

3) Those who allow themselves to remain or to be put in tempting situations are in real danger of succumbing to fornication.

4) Heaven alone knows how many people, young or old, who have become fornicators never intended to commit fornication.

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

a. Things that **seem innocent** or **not too bad** can lead to a relaxing of the admonition “hold to the good.”

b. Many or most Christians now accept and practice things they used to abhor.

c. A sinful culture slowly or quickly leads many of God’s people to cease abhorring sin and even to practice or tolerate it.

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!

- **Sin is progressive.**

- It is easy to gradually accept things that lead us to accept and practice things we would never do in the beginning.

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?

- Being “bound together with unbelievers” is dangerous in every kind of association.
- It is also dangerous in marriage.

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.*"

- It is important that we keep ourselves, as much as is possible, separate from those who practice evil and unclean things.
- It is sad that often children and young people are stuck in a sinful environment and cannot escape it.
- Some are able to overcome this sinful environment and pursue the Lord, but most are not that strong.

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 of Christ and the general resurrection of mankind occurring when Jesus comes again.
- b. Denial of the resurrection 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 “eidos” [ay dahs] that can be rendered “form, kind” or “appearance”
 - 1) Paul is commanding there must be the abstinence of the appearance of evil in all its forms
 - 2) It also means they are to avoid or abstain from false prophecy [teaching], but are to hold fast to good [true] prophecy [teaching].
- b. It seems best to interpret it with the idea of “form” or “kind.”
- 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. 9:11-12), but He did not participate in the evil of these men. He was called “a friend of tax-collectors and sinners” because He would eat with them and teach them. (Matt. 11:19).

Matt 9:11 When the Pharisees saw {this,} they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

Matt 9:12 But when Jesus heard {this,} He said, "{It is} not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

Matt 11:19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

- 2) When one attempts to convert a sinner, this may give the appearance of evil but this is far from the truth!
 - 3) Paul gave the appearance of evil when he entered the Synagogues and had fellowship with those who rejected Christ as the Messiah
 - 4) Paul did not compromise the truth, but he used the Scriptures to teach them Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.
 - 5) Many were converted to Christ because Paul had the love and courage to meet with them and teach them.
- His conduct might appear to be a violation of what he was teaching in this epistle, but this is far from the truth!
 - He was an inspired apostle and teacher who did not enter the Synagogue to compromise the truth of the gospel, but to convert Jews to Christ who is the One and Only Savior of the world.
- 6) **Working with unbelievers might give the appearance of evil** that may or may not be the case.
- In a sinful world it may not be possible to always work with Christians.
 - Though this does not seem to always be possible, Christians must be cautious that their employment does not weaken or destroy their faith.
 - It is so easy to tolerate evil, gradually accept it, and then embrace it.
- 7) **Living with an unbelieving spouse or family could give the semblance of evil.**
- See instructions to wives with unbelieving husbands. (1 Pet. 3:1-2).
- 1 Pet 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any {of them} are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,
1 Pet 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
- Note believing wives were not taught to leave their unbelieving husbands, but to be “submissive” to them.
 - This is the general rule, but this general rule would have a few exceptions.
 - A Christian wife would be forced to leave her unbelieving husband if forced her and her children to practice sin.

- A Christian wife would not be forced to live with her unbelieving husband if he demanded she give up her faith in Jesus.
- A man was not content to live with a believing wife if he forced her to practice evil or give up the faith. (1 Cor. 7:12-15).

8) **One must have contact with the world to reach lost souls.**

- **God does not expect His children to live in a spiritual bubble.** (Matt. 5:13-16).

9) We are not to withdraw from the world, but we must exercise great caution not to be corrupted by it.

10) 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 to discern good from evil. (Heb. 5:11-14).

Heb 5:11 Concerning him we have much to say, and {it is} hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes {only} of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

- a. Those who are mature in faith draw closer to God and His Son.
- b. The mature in faith have their senses trained to discern between good and evil, and are not as easily led into sin.
- c. The more mature a person becomes in the faith he/she sharpens his/her ability “to discern good and evil.”
- d. Those mature in faith recognize the devil never gives up and he attacks Christians in a host of ways.
- e. If one way does not work, the devil simply employs a different way until he finds one that works.

7. **Christians must not see how close they can get to evil, but must avoid it in all its forms.**

- a. Avoidance of evil is for the spiritual benefit of the believer.
- b. This also keeps believers from leading weaker Christians into evil.
- c. Often those who believe they are strong and are not easily led into sin influence weaker Christians to succumb to evil.

8. Christians must seek the help of God and believers to be victorious. (Matt. 6:13; Jas. 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7,8; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 3:13;10:24).

Matt 6:13 'And do not lead us into temptation [trials], but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]

- See James 1:13.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

- The holy God never tempts us to do evil.
- The meaning of Matthew 6:13 is we should pray that God will not allow us to be tempted or tried beyond our ability to remain faithful.

1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- The devil is powerful, but he is not all-powerful and he can be resisted.
- To keep the devil away one must "draw near to God" and He "will draw near" to us.

Gal 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is {still} called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

Heb 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging {one another;} and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

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