DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



TEXT SUMMARY

In our text, <u>1 Thessalonians 5:19-28</u>, Paul concludes his first letter to the fellowship in Thessalonica:

- A conclusion of his ethical exhortations (v. 19-21)
- Closing: benediction and greetings (v. 22-28)

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

- 1. Of the several exhortations in our text (v. 19-22), which ones are negative and which are positive?
- 2. Key in on the modifiers in the benediction paragraph (v. 23-24):
 - How thoroughly will we be sanctified?
 - What portion of our spirit, soul, and body will be kept blameless?
 - What precious character trait of God guarantees that He will carry out all the good Paul speaks of?
- 3. Notice who is doing the action in the sentences in Paul's benedictory closing (v. 23-24).

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

Is there a gentle rebuke in v. 21? Paul had praised the Thessalonians for their enthusiastic response to the declaration of the gospel (see 2:13), but Luke's account of the next place Paul worked (Berea) says that the Bereans were "more noble than those in Thessalonica" (Acts 17:11).

According to Luke, what did the Bereans do with Paul's message that the Thessalonians apparently failed to do?

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SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

We have not finished reflecting on Scripture until we begin to employ first-person pronouns. Here we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.

- The sermon focuses on the role of the Word in our spiritual formation. In that context, we see two negative exhortations from Paul.
 - What does it mean to "quench the Spirit" when we are engaging with Scripture?
 - What does it mean to "despise prophecies" when we are engaging with Scripture?
- 2. Paul's two positive exhortations to "test everything" and "hold fast to what is good" mean that we should never fail to engage our biblically-informed minds when we hear someone teach or preach. What are some basic issues to keep in mind as filters as we hear teaching and preaching? (e.g., concerning the nature of God, of His Word, of Jesus, etc.)
- 3. God is the active force in our sanctification; He has committed Himself to sanctify us completely and keep us blameless at the coming of Christ (v. 23-24). This is good news, of course, that our sanctification like our salvation doesn't depend on our own feeble efforts. If God has assumed such comprehensive responsibility for our sanctification, what is there for us to do? We can no more sanctify ourselves than we can save ourselves, so does this mean we just "let go and let God"?

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