"WHOLLY HOLY"

I THESSALONIANS 5:23, 24

4-22-2026

*** ONLY GOD CAN MAKE US WHOLLY HOLY!**

(In verses 23 and 24, we find a prayerful desire for God to do for us what we cannot do alone)

I. GOD'S PART IN OUR BEING WHOLLY HOLY IS A <u>NECESSITY</u> (v. 23)
(We <u>need</u> God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves)

A. WE MUST DEPEND UPON GOD TO <u>SANCTIFY</u> OUR <u>ENTIRE BEING</u> (v. 23a)

B. WE MUST DEPEND UPON GOD TO <u>PROTECT</u> <u>EACH ASPECT OF OUR BEING</u> (v. 23b)

II. GOD'S PART IN OUR BEING WHOLLY HOLY IS A <u>CERTAINTY</u> (v. 24)
(We <u>know</u> that God will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves)

A. OUR CONFIDENCE IS BASED UPON GOD'S <u>FAITHFULNESS</u>

B. OUR CONFIDENCE IS BASED UPON GOD'S <u>CALLING</u>

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INTRODUCTION:

After Paul expressed our need to have spiritual discernment (and separate ourselves from every shade of evil - v. 21, 22), he now expands and shows us that in actuality God must be the One who separates us from all evil.

Paul expresses a hopeful prayer that God would make us "wholly holy" (v. 23, 24).

ILLUS: As children become more and more independent of us as parents, they are quick to learn the phrase: "I can do it." You try to help them and they respond: "No, let me do it."

Even as adults we are that way. We don't like being told how to do things. We often refuse help because of pride.

This independent spirit about us is due to our pride.

Our pride, however, deceives us into thinking we can do some things that we actually cannot do.

There are some things we can do and some things we cannot do.

Man has the potential to do virtually anything in the natural realm. He can invent, fly to the moon, build skyscrapers, etc.

Man cannot, however, save himself from death or hell, or remove his sin and condemnation before God. Praise God - God can do this for us.

We know salvation is all of God, not of our works, etc. But somehow we are deceived into thinking that we can manage our sanctification without God.

We know God has no other plan for men to be saved than to totally yield to and depend on Christ. But we fail to remember that God has no other plan for our practical every-day holiness than to totally yield and depend on Him!

Our salvation is all of God, and our sanctification is all of God.

All our efforts to live holy (separated) lives are futile without God!

*** ONLY GOD CAN MAKE US WHOLLY HOLY!**

(In verses 23 and 24, we find a prayerful desire for God to do for us what we cannot do alone)

I. GOD'S PART IN OUR BEING WHOLLY HOLY IS A NECESSITY (v. 23)

(We need God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves)

A. WE MUST DEPEND UPON GOD TO SANCTIFY OUR ENTIRE BEING (v. 23a)

KJV - "And the very God..."

Greek - "Now may the God of peace Himself..."
(the word "Himself" is emphatically placed first in the sentence to put the emphasis on God)

Our holy living is in a sense our work ("Be ye holy for I am holy"0.

cp. II Cor. 7:1 - "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

NOTE: When we keep ourselves pure, it is God giving us the desire and ability to do so (Phil. 2:12, 13)

Our holy living is ultimately God's work -
Jesus sanctifies His church - Eph. 5:26, 27
The Holy Spirit sanctifies His church - Rom. 15:16
Now God the Father is sanctifying His church

"Wholly" means "entirely and completely."

The request is that God may do a thorough job of separating us from sin, and that God may do a complete job (a finished job) of separating us from sin.

When God does a work, He does it right, and He finishes it! We are foolish not to yield to Him daily for sanctification.

How many of us remember to ask God daily to sanctify us (set us apart from sin unto Himself)?

According to Jesus, this should be our prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One" (Mt. 6:13).

Do you think God would do it? Sure He would, because this is His will! (I Thes. 4:3, with I Jn. 5:14-15).

God's will is our sanctification from sexual immorality (4:3-8).

Everything that is God's will for us, He is with us to accomplish it (cp. 3:13).

No area of our life should go untouched by God.

No door in our life should be closed to the hand of God.

Don't be satisfied with some parts of your life being holy, while being worldly in others.

Let God have control of everything!

God does not want part of you but all of you!

You can't say:

"God took away my whiskey . . . God doesn't mind my beer"

"God freed me from drugs . . . It's okay to smoke."

You can't be satisfied with God saving you from:

Idolatry . . . but hold on to covetousness

Thievery . . . but still be materialistic

Sexual immorality . . . but still have a lustful thought life.

B. WE MUST DEPEND UPON GOD TO PROTECT EACH ASPECT OF OUR BEING (v. 23b)

While the first word "wholly" referred to the whole self collectively, this word "whole" looks at the parts that make up the whole.

Does man have 3 aspects to his nature (trichotomous) or 2 (dichotomous)?

Scripture clearly reveals man to:

be physical and spiritual
be material and immaterial
have that which is seen and unseen

The Bible describes us as being "body and spirit" (Ja. 2:26; II Cor. 7:1), and "body and soul" (Mt. 10:28).

But here we are said to have body, soul, and spirit.

The question is: "What is the difference between soul and spirit?" -- "Is

there a difference?"

1. Yes, there is a difference. Proof:

   a. God does not use words without purpose (especially in this detailed context).

   b. The conjunction "and" in between each noun is the same -

   c. The word "whole" describes the parts or portions that make up the whole.

      = entire, whole
      = portion, assigned part or lot

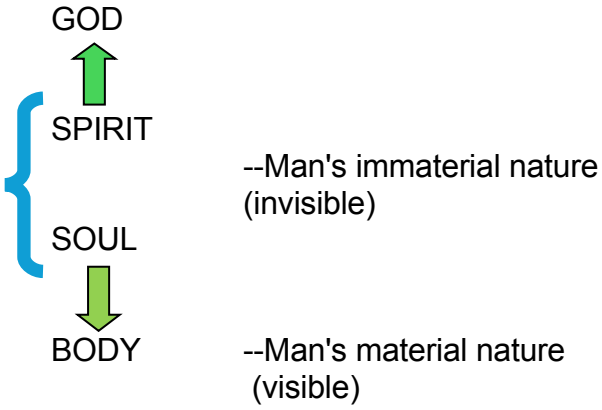
   d. God divides "soul and spirit" in Heb. 4:12 and I Cor. 2:14-15 and 15:44.

2. What is the difference?

   The "Spirit" is the immaterial (invisible) part of man that can relate to <u>God</u> (the spiritual realm).

   The "soul" is the immaterial part of man that relates to <u>this life</u> (the natural realm).

   The order (1. spirit 2. soul 3. body) is significant. The <u>highest</u> aspect of man is his spirit, the <u>lowest</u> is the body (which is corruptible - I Cor. 15).



   The word "spirit" does <u>not</u> refer to the Holy Spirit but to our spirit. God does not need to <u>keep</u> the Holy Spirit sanctified and preserved.

Some wrongly believe that man does not have a spirit until he is saved. This is not true (SEE Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9).

All would be dead if they didn't have a spirit (Jms. 2:26).

All unsaved do have a spirit, the problem is that it is not working in relationship to God.

Our human spirit (since the fall when Adam died spiritually) is dead in its relation to God, but alive in its relation to man (to the natural realm) (SEE I Cor. 2:11).

In other words, an unsaved man can communicate and understand the thinking of another man, via his spirit. But only an saved man who has had his spirit brought to life in relation to God by the Holy Spirit can communicate and understand the thinking of God.

The word "soul" refers to the natural life of man. In the N.T. 40 times it is translated "life," 3 times mind, one time heart (in the KJV).

Our soul thinks, feels, and desires (Lk. 1:46, 2:35; Heb. 12:3). Our soul controls our desire to do things (it is closely related to our mind and heart; cp. Mt. 22:37; Eph. 6:6; Acts 4:32).

Our soul seems to be like a mediator between the spirit and body, receiving information from our spirit, responding to it, and then sending impulses to our body.

SPIRIT -- Our power to know and communicate with God
[NOTE: the "spirit" of unbelievers is “dead” in relation to God; whereas the believer’s spirit has been made alive in Christ and can now know and communicate with God]

SOUL -- Our life with its ability to think, feel, and choose (intellect, emotion and will). The “mind” operates here.

BODY -- Our material vessel that moves and responds to the impulses of the soul

The spirit controls the soul and the soul controls the body.

Note: Theologically man’s “heart” is the inner core of his being (the “control center”) from which the spirit/soul in combination operate.

1) What does it mean to have a sanctified and blameless spirit?

It means that nothing should be allowed in our life that would defile (dirty) our spirit, that would keep the Holy Spirit from talking to us via our spirit.

The Holy Spirit can "bear witness to our spirit" (Rom. 8:16).

When we sin, it has an affect on our spirit. It dulls our spiritual perception and our ability to understand Scripture.

Our only channel to God is through our spirit, so don't block the channel!

2) What does it mean to have a sanctified and blameless soul?

It means to let God set apart and protect our internal life (our ability to think, feel, and do). It is God controlling our motives, our thoughts, and our wants (desires).

God commands us to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11).

3) What does it mean to have God sanctify and preserve our body?

It means for us to rely upon God to keep us from fornication (I Cor. 6:18), and from anything that would do damage or harm to these temples that belong to Him (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Why should we be holy and blameless in spirit, soul, and body?

Our wedding day in the clouds is coming. We are expecting our Groom, Jesus Christ.

Just as a groom has every right to a virgin (pure, chaste) bride at the wedding altar, Christ expects the same!

A beautiful parallel:

Just as it is a father's responsibility to do all in his power to keep his daughter(s) sanctified and preserved for their future husband (I Cor. 7:36-38), God (our heavenly Father) has taken it upon Himself to keep us pure before our wedding day with Christ at His coming!

II. GOD'S PART IN OUR BEING WHOLLY HOLY IS A CERTAINTY (v. 24)

(We know that God will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves)

A. OUR CONFIDENCE IS BASED UPON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Paul showed a similar confidence when he said to the Philippians: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6)

God is faithful to those He saves. Those whom He saves He makes persevere.

This does not mean we don't commit acts of sin from time to time (I Jn. 1:10); nor does it mean that we don't do battle with our old nature and sometimes lose (Rom. 7).

What it does mean is that a true believer when knocked down by blows of sin gets up again. He does not deny his faith! He does not return as a dog to its vomit or a pig to its mud (II Pet. 2:22).

B. OUR CONFIDENCE IS BASED UPON GOD'S CALLING

NOTE: Paul did not say that he was sure that God would sanctify the Thessalonians because he had prayed for them, but because of God's calling!

Those whom God calls out, He keeps out!

Jude closes his epistle with a similar statement about God: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 24-25).

(cp. Rom. 16:25)

CONCLUSION:

Only God can make us wholly holy!

1. God's part in our being wholly holy is a necessity.

2. God's part in our being wholly holy is a certainty.