

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
October 28, 2016

Daniel 5:1–6:28. Daniel is delivered from the lion’s den.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–28. Concluding exhortations to the church family.

Job 41:10–20. God’s words that finally got through to Job.

COMMENTS.

Daniel 5:1–6:28. Chapter 5 contains King Belshazzar’s feast. Belshazzar abuses the gold and silver cups from the Jerusalem temple. He calls for them to be used at a drunken feast for toasts to the gods of Babylon. This is not only a frivolous bit of fun. He is seriously mocking the God represented by the goblets, as though God is powerless and defeated. Suddenly, at the high point of the revel, a finger appears and writes some letters on the wall. When the wise men and enchanters fail to interpret the signs, the king calls for Daniel. Daniel reads and interprets the markings on the wall: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. Mene, Tekel and Parsin are three coins: a mina, a shekel and a half-shekel. Each is smaller than the last. This alone tells Belshazzar that his kingdom is counting down to its end. Daniel explains that each coin has a root meaning: ‘Mene’ means ‘numbered’. The days of Belshazzar’s reign are numbered. ‘Tekel’ means ‘weighed’. Belshazzar has been weighed and found to be short in God’s judgment. ‘Peres’ (a single parsin) means ‘divided’ or ‘Persia’. Belshazzar’s kingdom is going to be divided between the Medes and the Persians. So, God’s judgment falls on Belshazzar’s outrageous behavior. That night the king is killed and Darius the Mede takes over his realm. We know nothing of Darius other than what the Bible tells us. History shows that the Medes and Persians joined forces around 500 BC and took over the old Babylonian empire. Some scholars suggest that ‘Darius’ may be the throne-name for the first Persian king—Cyrus. **Chapter 6: Daniel in the lion’s den.** Daniel is arrested for refusing to pray to the king. He is sentenced to death in the lion’s den, but God protects him by shutting the lions’ mouths. King Darius, like Nebuchadnezzar before him, realizes the power and majesty of the ‘God of Daniel’.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. Several times a day for many years, Daniel had prayed, given thanks, and made supplication (**6:10–11**), which is the same pattern Paul instructed us to follow (Phil. 4:6–7). No wonder Daniel had such peace and courage! Daniel had that kind of faith. He had walked with the Lord for more than eighty years and knew that His God wouldn’t fail him. Had he not been a man of faith, courage, and love, Daniel could have compromised and found excuses for not maintaining his faithful prayer life. He might have closed his windows and prayed silently three times a day until the month was over, or he could have left the city and prayed somewhere else. But that would have been unbelief and cowardice; he would have been scheming just like the enemy. The most important part of a believer’s life is the part that only God sees, our daily private time of meditation and prayer. Most of the world begins the day looking toward the world and hoping to get something from it, but the Christian believer looks to the Lord and His promises and enters each new day by advancement in faith, hope, and love.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–28. In this reading, we have concluding exhortations regarding responsibility to pastors (12-13), to each other as a church family (14-15), to the spiritual life and God (16-22).

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. This section is filled with rich spiritual life truths: **(1) Respect spiritual leaders (pastors), 5:12-13.** They are to be appreciated, accepted, loved, and obeyed (see Heb. 13:17); **(2) Respect fellow believers in the local church, (5:14-15).** Believers are to minister to each other with honesty, respect, and love; **(3) Live joyfully (5:16).** “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). God wants us to be happy and filled with joy. Of course, God does not want us to look for happiness and joy in evil like the godless. There is nothing like life in God *by proper knowledge and by love* that allows us to appreciate the gift of life on both temporal as well as spiritual levels. You will not find doom and gloom in the life of the believer who lives with God by love. **(4) Live prayerfully (5:17).** Regular prayer is vital to a healthy relationship with God. Prayer is to be honest communication to God. It is not mere utterance, but the vital communication necessary to have a true 2nd person relationship with God. So much of our daily cares and distractions would take on a whole new perspective if our lives were suffused with prayer about those things. Prayer is one way of building up oneself in the faith, see Jude 20. **(5) Live thankfully (5:18).** Paul tells us in Philip 4:4 to “rejoice in the Lord (Jesus Christ) always.” Christ just is the foundation and source of all gladness. To rejoice in the Lord demands that one’s identity and sense of self-esteem are wrapped up in the Person of Jesus Christ. Those who dwell with Christ by faith, hope, love, obedience, imitation, aspiration, and enjoyment gain a joy that is pure and incurable and transcends the temporal circumstances of life. **(6) Live in the Spirit (5:1).** The command here not to “quench” the Spirit speaks to the importance of not damming up the wonderful ministry of the Divine Spirit who comes with gifts of enlightenment, enablement, and teaching. He enables us to “get it.” Recall Christ’s emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. Moreover, He is the *Holy Spirit*, which speaks of His ministry to “set us apart to God.” The command not to “quench” Him is a command not to resist His enlightening ministry by ignoring or rejecting the Word of God or His sanctifying ministry by chasing the various apples the world offers. **(7) Test all things and hold to the good (5:21).** Every believer is to have discernment to test everything and hold to the good, thus every believer is to have proper knowledge. **(8) Abstain from evil (5:22).** This, of course, speaks of the importance for proper knowledge of God and His plan to avoid the various apples the enemy throws in our paths. **(9) God’s promise (5:23):** “the very God of peace will sanctify you,” which speaks of His grace “in setting us apart.” **(10) The importance of reading the Word of God (5:27).** Paul ends with another reminder that the Word of God is the important thing in the local church. The Word of God is to be read in the local church. The Word must govern our conduct and guide our lives. We are to read the Word of God personally on a regular basis to gain *proper knowledge and proper love* of God and His Truth as such.

Job 41:10–20. We have a continuation of God’s description of leviathan’s mighty limbs, fierce teeth and strong jaws, and impregnable covering (12–17). There is even mention of fire and smoke from its mouth like a dragon (18–21).

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. These were among the last words of God that led to Job finally getting it by enabling him to break through into the sunshine of *proper knowledge and love of God*. His previous knowledge of God that had been merely “hearsay” was now like direct sight (42:5). This is what it means to move into 2nd person relation with God: direct, full, thrilling consciousness of God. The lesson for us all is to get closer to God. When we realize His presence our problems will be resolved. Moreover, like Job, instead of possessing an angry disposition, we will bow in love, and with love submission, and with submission peace, and with peace happiness.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don