

Don Hargrove  
Faith Bible Church  
9-23-13

<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

### Personal Study through the Bible-24 (1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:13)

In the last couple of lessons, I provided the biblical basis for personal bible study from Deuteronomy 6:6-9 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17. I would like for you to reread 1 Timothy 3:14-17. From this passage we have noted the importance of consistent study of the Word of God and the wisdom that the Scriptures impart to those who are serious students of God's Word. Let's note the passage again and a few more of its gems:

2 Timothy 3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

*God-breathed* (16). Although many bibles translate this term with something like "inspired of God," the term more precisely means "God-breathed." This refers not to something that God breathed "*in*," but something He breathed "*out*." Rather than "inspiration," the correct idea is "expiration." This points to the origin or source of Scripture. What Paul is saying to Timothy is that the Bible comes from God. He is its Ultimate Author; it carries the weight of all that He is. The Bible does not find its ultimate source in John, Peter, or the Apostle Paul. Every single word of Scripture was expired to the human author. Read 2 Peter 1:21, which shows both the divine source and human element in the Word of God.

*Scripture is profitable for teaching* (16). Paul mentions teaching first because it is to be the priority. It is teaching of the Word of God that preeminently *profits* us. While we may moved to joy or tears by passages are that very evocative, the greatest area of profit is always in being instructed in the nature and ways of God. The teaching of the Word of God is very profitable; it is assigned worth and significance by God Himself because it is in the teaching of the Word of God that we really come to *understand* the nature of reality, God, and ourselves. Many Christians say things like, "Why do I need to study doctrine or theology, when all I need to know is Jesus and His love for me?" The problem is that apart from consistent and systematic understanding of the Word of God, the person cannot know who Jesus is. Every Christian is to be a philosopher and a theologian. As a matter of fact, every Christian already is a philosopher and theologian. The only question is if he is a good one or a bad one. The idea that the Bible can only be understood by professional theologians, who are then to *simply* turn around and give believers "spiritual principles" to live by, is evil and shows total lack of respect for believers' ability to understand God. It is reminiscent of the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. The believer should never be treated as if he is a stupid peon who cannot understand His God and only cares about "getting by" with a list of dos and don'ts. A peon who is kept happy and stupid by only telling him what to do—just the mechanics. We will touch on other gems from this

passage in our next lesson on the biblical basis for personal study of the Bible. Let's get back to our through-the-Bible study in Thessalonians.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, again. A normal reading of this passage shows that the Rapture, including the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the translation of the living believers in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 comes before the day of the Lord in chapter 5. In contrast to the Rapture, by which Paul was correcting their ignorance, Paul states with regard to the day of the Lord that he did not need to instruct them concerning "times" and "epochs." Again, after the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18), the day of the Lord will come (1 Thess. 5:1-11) on the earth.

Note Paul's use of the different pronouns in his discussion of the day of the Lord in 5:1-11: "we," "us," "you," and "they." In verse 3 the day of the Lord is pictured as coming on unbelievers, the "*they*," like travail on a woman with child so that they cannot escape, just as a woman cannot escape birth pangs. This verse also tells us that destruction will come at a time when they are saying "peace and safety." This fits the time of peace in the initial days of the Tribulation, but not the time of war at the end of the Tribulation when the nations of the world are gathered against Israel.

After the Rapture, the whole world will be declaring "peace and safety," all the while having no idea of the coming destruction in the following tribulation days. In verses 4-5 Paul makes it clear that believers do not belong to that day of darkness. The implication is that church age believers are in a different period of time: they belong to the day that precedes this day of darkness.

Note how Paul touches on the virtues of faith, hope, and love in verse 8. These virtues are scattered throughout the Word of God and have very deep implications regarding the healthy spiritual life, the life of progressive sanctification. One way to examine the health of our spiritual lives is to take a look at these in our own lives. Year by year, we should be increasing in our faith, hope/confidence, and love—love for God, fellow believers, and unbelievers. Note other virtues that Paul teach that should be in all believers: alertness, soberness, encouraging, edifying to others, and appreciation for the pastor-teacher (6, 8, 11, 12-13). In light of verses 12-13, I would like to express my appreciation of how you have demonstrated your love for God and the Word of God by your respect and value for me as pastor-teacher. The fact that you greatly esteem the pastor-teacher is a testimony of your own love for the Word of God. True love for God always translates to love for the Word of God which always translates to love and respect for those who *labor* to bring you the Word of God. Thank you, you are a blessing.

In verse 9 of chapter 5 Paul explicitly declares that God has not destined the church age believer for wrath, a wrath which contextually refers to God's wrath on planet earth in the day of the Lord as prophesied throughout the OT and NT. In this verse, the believer in Christ is assured that his appointment is not to this time of wrath. The Rapture view fits perfectly with this verse and the context: since the church is raptured before this time of great trouble; i.e., the period of wrath, the day of the Lord's terrible judgments, will not overtake the church as a thief because the church will not be on earth. It would have already been raptured as Paul noted in the previous chapter.

A plain reading of 1 Thessalonians 4-5 indicates that while no can determine the time of the Rapture or the day of the Lord, this really is of no *concern* to church age believers because they have not been appointed to this earthly wrath in the day of the Lord, but rather the salvation that is ours in Christ. We will see further confirmation of this view when we move into 2 Thessalonians 2, where the day of the Lord is introduced again, but this time in a context in which the Thessalonians misunderstood and needed correction.

*In 'Ehyeh,*

*Pastor Don Hargrove*