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Faith Bible Church  
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

### **Personal Study of the Bible-43 (1 Thessalonians 5:16 – categorical/doctrinal studies )**

I have revised the six fundamental principles for personal Bible study of Paul's epistles by adding an additional principle:

1. Read the epistle *straight through* at one setting;
2. Notice the setting of the epistle;
3. Study the introduction of the epistle;
4. Notice the outline of the epistle from the introduction;
5. Make a *verse-by-verse* study of the epistle;
6. Do a categorical/doctrinal study of a word/concept.
7. Meditate upon and *digest* the *results* of your study.

In our last verse-by-verse look at 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22, we noted eight virtues (rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophetic utterances, examine everything carefully, hold fast to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil).

We have also been looking at the concept "rejoice." We noted the three levels of reality, and then I listed several passages for you to look up and formulate a doctrine of happiness; this is going from step 5 to 6. It is in step 6 where you gain a *personal* biblical/doctrinal view of a concept. I suggested that you familiarize yourself with the passages on happiness as if your neighbor was going to pay you a visit and ask you what God says about happiness. In case you have not completed this exercise, I have made it easier for you by listing the passages below.

It is going from looking at the concept in a verse-by-verse study to its theme throughout the Word of God that gives you the doctrinal view (as long as your presuppositions/framework is grounded in metaphysical realism). The next step, 7, is when you meditate upon the passage. This is when you really grasp the power of the Word of God where it transforms your attitude into a more virtuous one. Unfortunately, what often happens is that the believer fails to digest and meditate on the results of his or the pastor's study. Apart from meditation you will only cheat yourself by not moving into a personal understanding of God's Word, which is required for all growth in spiritual virtue. Believers often think that they could never glean many principles out of a passage for themselves. I beg to differ, any believer can get untold riches out of passages if he spends *time* with them. If you doubt me, try it. Take my challenge: read through the following passages on happiness and take one of the passages that particularly resonates with you. Write it down and over the next few days I want you to start adding principles to it from your own life a few times a day, even if it is only first thing in the morning and a couple of times before you go to bed. I guarantee you will be surprised at how much you can unpack from any passage, and it will be on a very personal level so you will see for yourself how the living and powerful Word of God can change your life. Gaining this skill can be very liberating as you will

find yourself renewed by the Word of God by your own study of the Word and not so dependent upon someone else to tell you what is true.

- Ecclesiastes 9:9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.
- Psalm 84:12 O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in Thee!
- Psalm 97:12 Be glad in the LORD, you righteous ones; And give thanks to His holy name.
- Psalm 100:1 A Psalm for Thanksgiving . Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. 3 Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. 5 For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, And His faithfulness to all generations.
- Psalm 112:1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.
- Psalm 119:1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD. 2 How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.
- Psalm 128:1 A Song of Ascents . How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.
- Psalm 144:15 Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.
- Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.
- Proverbs 23:24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who begets a wise son will be glad in him. 25 Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.
- Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law.
- Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

- John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.
- Acts 2:28 'Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.'
- Romans 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
- Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
- Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
- 1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content
- 1 Peter 1:8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
- James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
- Hebrews 13:5 Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"
- 1 John 1:4 And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

In last evening's Bible class, I used "gossiping" as an illustration in an attempt to distinguish between a person with spiritual virtue who is not by nature a gossip (but who may not be totally gossip free) and a person who by nature is a "gossip" because they have no spiritual virtue: they are by nature a gossip because a person becomes what they do. I used the illustration of gossip because some believers erroneously think that gossip is OK. I could have used

“fornication” or “adulterer,” but I have yet to meet a Christian who thought that such activity is OK. I am hoping that Christians have a whole lot more trouble with gossiping than fornication and adultery.

After hearing what I said about “gossip,” you should be able to look into the Word of God for yourself to see what God says about gossip. To grasp the metaphysical reality of gossiping does not require knowing the original languages. You can see what God Himself says about gossip by looking at what He says in His Word. Below are some passages on gossip. Read them and reflect on God’s viewpoint of gossip. By doing this you will enhance your understanding of the nature and dangers of gossip whether you have a problem with it or not. But the knowledge itself will not determine whether you are by nature a gossip or not. What determines that is your actions. Even if you know gossiping is evil from studying the Word of God, that is not going to keep you from becoming a gossip by nature. The only way not to become a gossip by nature is to stop gossiping. Only by living out the Word of God does a believer grow in the virtue and become a virtuous person, who alone has unconditional happiness of soul.

What does God say about gossip? Prov. 11:12-13; 16:28; 18:7-8; 20:19; 21:23; Rom 1:29-32; 1 Tim. 5:12-13;

Now to move into some of the metaphysical realities of the essence of “gossip,” check your English dictionary. Remember what I have been teaching in philosophy of language: words only point to realities, they do not determine reality. The same reality of “gossip” which Hebrew and Greek words point to is the same reality that we point to when we use the English word “gossip.”

Consider how examining both resources for yourself has helped you understand gossip on a biblical and metaphysical level. This does not mean that you will not have questions. But you gained an understanding for yourself, which is what God desires for every Christian.

**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.**

*In ‘Ehyeh,  
Pastor Don Hargrove*