

BIBLE SMASH!

Prelude to the Bible SMASH: This lesson was put together to help us evaluate our current behavior as Christians as the United States sits on the edge of a large scale war, possibly a global battle or the next World War.

Study: 1st Thessalonians 5:1-24
(key verses 15 and 23)

Memorize: Psalm 55:22

Notes:

Analyze: The background information...

Topic: Preparation for the second coming of Christ

1st Thessalonians 5:1-24

Part 1 - Don't worry about the "end times"

Here Paul is writing to the churches in Thessalonica about the day that Christ will return. These churches were spending their time trying to figure out when Christ was going to return so that they could be ready. They were consulting prophets and others to try and gain this information. They were so caught up in the "When will Christ return" that they didn't spend much time on "What to do until Christ returns". They were of the attitude that it was going to happen soon so they spent their time preparing themselves personally and not sharing the gospel of Christ to others. They were worried about what would happen when Christ returns.

Paul writes to remind them that no one knows when Christ will return (Jesus himself made this very clear - Matthew 24:36) He is not writing in a manner of "It will be bad - the world will come to an end" but rather "Be ready and be excited. It is a good thing for us who follow Christ." There were those that were "false teachers" that were preaching men should act with peace and kindness with each other and that everything would be okay... as in, "we do not need God for peace if we have each other" and "we will have peace

with our neighbors if we just act like our neighbors". Paul clearly states that these people will be in for a surprise on that day... and don't listen to them! Peace only comes from a relationship with God. If we are sons of the light (Christians) we have nothing to fear. Paul talks about the pains of a pregnant woman to mean that these false prophets will bear a pain that they can not escape. (You can not have a painless child birth - at least not with the intervention of drugs that did not exist at the time.)

Paul then starts to set their minds at ease by letting them know - don't worry, you are not in that category of people that will be punished. You are true followers of Christ. (v. 4-5) Because we are not like them we should not act like them. Paul talks about being drunk in the night and not being prepared. Persons that are drunk can not stand straight, can not walk straight, can not think straight, and usually sleep so deep that they are unaware of what is happening around them. Paul urges us to stay sober (both morally and spiritually). If we were physically drunk at that point at which Christ returns is that the state you would want to be found in by Christ? Being spiritually sober means that we are constantly aware of our surroundings and ready at all times.

In the Old Testament God is described as a God of war that literally fights evil. Paul is letting us know that the armor God once used to fight evil is not ours to fight evil with. (v. 8) God did not create us to suffer but to be saved through

Jesus. We should not be spending our time fighting each other but lifting each other up. He lists some of our pieces of armor... (a) self-control, (b) faith, (c) love and (d) hope.

In verse 11 Paul is probably referring to something similar to a group of individuals who have agreed to be accountability partners. This would have been a relatively new concept to them back then. This was done to encourage and help each other in their walk with Christ. Today, Accountability groups usually consist of about 4-5 people that are the same gender, they can trust each other, can share anything at all, and meet on a regular basis, such as once a week. It is not a Bible study, they just meet to share with each other how things are going with their walks with God. It usually involves sharing and prayer.

Part 2 - How to behave towards each other and others

A) Towards the Ministers: In verse 12-13 Paul is talking about talking care of and showing proper respect for those that in the church above you (the clergy).

- 1) The clergy **WORK FOR YOU** (for your spiritual well being - not as in they receive a paycheck from you). When Paul means they work for you he means they labor for you.
- 2) The clergy **CARE FOR YOU**. You are not property to ministers but fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. They are doing what they can to help you spiritually and in many

cases physically and mentally.

- 3) The clergy **ARE YOU**. They are of no greater importance to God than you or I. We are all the same - take care of each other with love. Care for them as they care for you.

B) Towards each other as fellow Christians: The end of verse 13 and all of verse 14 instructs us to:

- 1) Live in peace with each other.
- 2) Encourage/warn lazy Christians to "get off their rear-ends and do something for God".
- 3) Encourage those that are shy to speak up.
- 4) Help the weak. (we do not know for sure who "the weak" are but it is believed that Paul is referring to those that are spiritually weak. Those that need guidance in their walk with Christ.
- 5) and BE PATIENT WITH EVERYONE.

[The rest of the verses are fairly straight forward in meaning]

Psalm 55:22

This psalm was written by David. It is believed to have been written while he was in hiding from King Saul, who was once one of his best friends - but Saul had strayed from the ways of the Lord and also

tried to kill David. Saul had sent soldiers out to find David and kill him.

Many translations of the Bible use the word “sustain” in this verse. Here is the American Heritage dictionary definition for the word (you may choose to use some of this for the Question portion of the lesson).

Sustain:

1. To keep in existence; maintain.
2. To supply with necessities or nourishment; provide for.
3. To support from below; keep from falling or sinking; prop.
4. To support the spirits, vitality, or resolution of; encourage.
5. To bear up under; withstand: can't sustain the blistering heat.
6. To experience or suffer: sustained a fatal injury.
7. To affirm the validity of: The judge has sustained the prosecutor's objection.
8. To prove or corroborate; confirm.
9. To keep up (a joke or assumed role, for example) competently.

Share: Is there anything that you have learned that you would like to share with others or anything that have learned from listening to someone else share? Write it here...

Honor: (Prayer and thought)

Jesus said this is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

He then added:

For if you forgive men when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men their sins,
your Father will not forgive your sins.

(Matthew 6:9-15)

**How much do you forgive those
that sin against you?**

Leader's Guide: Questions for discussion...

1st Thessalonians 5:1-24

- 1) What do you think the “end of the world” will be like?
- 2) Do you think there are “signs” that tell when this will happen? What are some of these signs, or what do you think they are? Do you look for these signs or know anyone that does?
- 3) Do you think the end of the world is a bad thing or a good thing? How do you think it will affect you?
- 4) Did you ever think that you should spend time encouraging other Christians as a way to spend your time preparing for the second coming of Christ? (read verse 11) Do we encourage each other in our youth group? (or are there those in our youth group that you find it encouraging to be around - if yes, why?)
- 5) Who are the ministers in your church? (not necessarily those that are ordained) What do you think they do? (it is okay to talk about individuals in your church and their individual roles as God uses them... from the Janitors to the Sunday School teachers up to the Pastor) ...make sure you cover the 3 points that they work for you, care for you, and are you from the Analyze section.
- 6) How do you think they should be treated? How do we actually treat them? Are there any changes you can think of that need to be made in our attitudes about them and what they do for us?
- 7) Talk about specific situations where you felt you needed to get even or be the person that was right no matter what. Ask the kids to share similar stories. It is very common among teens, and adults, to get even with those that wrong them. Why do people have a need to always get even, or get the “last laugh”? (a feeling of satisfactions, acceptance, or need to be right?)

- 8) Read out loud verse 15. How can we show encouragement towards one another (from verse 11) or live in peace (verse 13) if we are constantly getting even?
- 9) Verse 18 asks us to be thankful in all circumstances. Why do you think Paul instructs us to do this? Try to think of positive things that can come out of bad times? (These may not be good examples - use what fits your youth group: It's not a child out of marriage, it's a new child of Christ. It's not losing friends by moving but gaining new ones in your new home. Many trials cause us to grow closer to God for strength and answers)
- 10) Why do you think many people turn to God in bad situations? (looking for answers... looking for someone to blame) Why do you think many people that do not believe in God blame him when bad things happen? How might life be different if people stayed close to God when times were good and not just when times were tough?
- 11) In the last Bible SMASH we talked about being Holy. How does verse 23 tie in to:
- A) Being Holy
 - B) The second coming of Christ
 - C) How we treat other

Psalm 55:22

Spend time with your small group rewording, in your own words, this verse. It can be a contextual translation - it does not need to be a word for word translation.

Key concepts:

- 1) Give God our ...
- 2) God will "sustain" us
- 3) the righteous will never "fall".

Credit

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