

Love for the Lord's Appearing

Introduction:

1. In addition to being "people of faith" (Hebrews 10:38) and "people of hope" (1 Peter 1:3), Christians are to be "people of love" (Ephesians 5:1-2).
2. According to 2 Timothy 4:8, "the Lord's appearing" is included in the objects that His followers are to love.
 - a. In vs.8a Paul mentioned the "*crown of righteousness*" that the Lord would give him at the judgment.
 - b. (vs.8b) The Lord will give the same reward to all who love His appearing.
3. In our lesson we are studying the instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22.
4. The context (vs.2-6, 23) shows that these instructions relate to the Lord's return.
5. Our approach to these instructions will show our love for the Lord's appearing.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.16) REJOICE EVERMORE
 - A. Similar admonitions are given in Philippians 3:1a; 4:4.
 - B. Most people are able to rejoice when things go well in their lives; however, Christians are to rejoice "*evermore.*"
 - C. The Christian's joy is an inner peace of mind that he experiences because he has a right relationship with God -- it is not based on external circumstances.
 - D. One thing that will help us to rejoice evermore is to . . .
- II. (vs.17) PRAY WITHOUT CEASING
 - A. To help us understand what this means, consider Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2.
 - B. We must be like Jesus who prayed often.
 - C. Prayer shows that we depend upon God and not on ourselves.
 - D. As we pray we must remember to . . .
- III. (vs.18) GIVE THANKS IN EVERYTHING: FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD
 - A. God is the source of the many blessings we enjoy (James 1:17).
 - B. We must express our gratitude to Him (Ephesians 5:20).
- IV. (vs.19) QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT
 - A. (Ephesians 6:17) The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.
 - B. (Hebrews 3:7) The Spirit speaks through the Scriptures.
 - C. We quench the Spirit if we turn a deaf ear to what He says.
 - D. Rather than quench Him, we must "*be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18).
 - E. Closely related is the next admonition.
- V. (vs.20) DESPISE NOT PROPHECYINGS
 - A. Prophecyings: messages from God
 - B. We must not despise messages from God because they were given for our benefit (2 Timothy 3:16).
 - C. We must not blindly accept what we hear -- we are to . . .
- VI. (vs.21) PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD
 - A. All things are to be put to the test.
 - B. The Bible is the standard by which we determine what is good or bad.
 - C. If something is proved to be good, we must hold fast to it.
 - D. If something is proved to be bad, . . .
- VII. (vs.22) ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL
 - A. According to 2 Corinthians 5:10, we will be judged on the basis of our works.
 - B. We must be sure that our works have been good and not evil.

Conclusion:

1. One day Jesus is coming back.
2. For those who love the Lord's appearing, that will be the greatest day of all.
3. Our approach to these instructions will determine whether we really love the Lord's appearing.