

Constancy - cont.

... and they will avoid ingratitude which leads to other sins. Paul also wrote “giving thanks for all things always” in Ephesians 5:20.

Always Testing (v. 21)

Sixth, Paul wrote “prove all things”. Today, all human philosophies, religions, beliefs, etc., are considered equally valid. Everyone has their own “truth” that they follow. As a result, many are gullible and follow error. So, it is important that everything and everyone be tested (examined) with the truth of God’s word, including self. When Paul wrote to “hold fast that which is good” in this verse, he meant to hold to the standard of the “good” word of God.

Always Abstaining (v. 22)

Last, Paul wrote “abstain from every form of evil”. Mass evil in our world today desensitizes people to the consequences of sin. But the Christian will stay away from every evil and the various forms it takes (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Friend, God is constant and consistent in his care for you. How constant and consistent are you in your obedience to him? - *Chris Reeves*

- Word of the Week -

“Covenant” (Gr. *diatheke*) includes the “will” of a person who dies. Jesus died and established his new “covenant” or his new “will” (Hebrews 10:9-10). It must be remembered that Jesus has a “will” for us as Christians. It is his “will” that we live by, not ours. It is his “will” that is contained in the gospel, not ours. Let us be determined this week to live by his “will”, not ours.

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

Website
wbcoc.org

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Everyone Is Welcome!
For More Information Call
(931) 647-1324

Published and Edited By
Chris Reeves
(615) 389-3250
chrisreevesmail@gmail.com
TheGoodTeacher.com

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Christian Constancy and Consistency

Some Christians today are just not constant and consistent in their service to God. Sometimes they are faithful and at others times they are not. Sometimes they are active and at other times they are not. Like Jesus said in the parable of the sower, they, “in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13; Hebrews 4:1-2).

Friend, Christianity is not a “Sunday morning religion”. It is not something we wear on Sunday and put away the rest of the week until the following Sunday. Being a Christian is “24-7” as we say. Christianity is more like a marathon than a 100-yard dash. It is a service to Christ that is to be with us all throughout our life.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22, the apostle Paul wrote an admonition to the Thessalonian Christians to be faithful in their daily living. In this text, Paul used the words “all”, “always”, “everything” and “every” to emphasize the fact that their Christian behavior was to be constant and consistent. Let’s take a look at some things that Christians are to have and do regularly in their life.

Always Longsuffering (v. 14)

First, Paul wrote to be “longsuffering toward all”. Our culture today promotes a quick-temper approach to people and things. Many people “fly off the handle” as they manage life. However, the Christian is to be “longsuffering” (Gr. *makrothumia*). This refers to a steady, never-yielding spirit. The Christian is to always practice patience in dealing with difficult people or circumstances (like Noah), or be willing to suffer personal insult or injury (like Jeremiah, Jesus, or Paul). Paul also wrote about “all patience and longsuffering” in Colossians 1:11.

Always Good (v. 15)

Second, Paul wrote to “always follow after that which is good ... toward all”. Much evil, violence, corruption, injustice and immorality exists in the world today; and, sadly in some cases, in the church. Revenge and retaliation are tempting, but wrong. There are challenges in always seeking good, but it can and must be done. We must discern good from evil and always practice good (Romans 12:21).

Always Rejoicing (v. 16)

Third, Paul wrote to “rejoice always”. Our society associates happiness with material things. But true happiness is found in having a right relationship with God. The

Christian is to rejoice when times are good and when times are bad. True happiness depends not upon outward circumstances, but upon an inward relationship with God. Circumstances change, but God and Jesus do not (Malachi 3:8; Hebrews 13:8). Paul wrote elsewhere, “rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4).

Always Praying (v. 17)

Fourth, Paul wrote to “pray without ceasing”. Prayer is often used by some for “special occasions”, but they do not otherwise pray regularly. The faithful Christian will pray when times are good and bad. They will not miss an opportunity for prayer. They will not engage in vain repetition, but they will engage in unceasing prayer. Continual reliance upon God in prayer is a must. Paul also wrote “praying at all seasons” in Ephesians 6:18.

Always Thankful (v. 18)

Fifth, Paul wrote “in everything give thanks”. Our materialistic and covetous world robs many of thankfulness. Christians, however, will be thankful for much and for little. They will be content with what they have. They will look for the good in every situation ...