

The Glory and Benefits of Wholeheartedness (2 Thes. 1:11-12)

I. WHOLEHEARTEDNESS: WALKING WORTHY OF JESUS

- A. Paul prayed for believers to be inspired by the Spirit to respond to Jesus in a way *worthy of Him*—in wholeheartedness—and connected this with the ability to *fulfill all of God’s will* for our lives.

¹¹We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹²that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of God... (2 Thes. 1:11-12)

- B. ***Grace***: The Scriptures connect *grace-empowered wholeheartedness* to being equipped to walk in the fullness of God’s purpose in our lives corporately and individually.

- C. ***Fulfill all***: The fullness of blessing is in context to responding to God with wholehearted love.

- D. ***With all our heart***: The Lord promised to release a greater measure of the Spirit’s activity in our lives (Joel 2:28) in context to turning to the Lord with all of our heart (Joel 2:12).

¹²“...Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”¹³So rend your heart...return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious...and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm...¹⁷Let the priests...say, “Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach...”²⁸And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... (Joel 2:12-17, 28)

- E. We were created by a God who loves *us* with all of *His* heart and strength *to love God* with all of *our* heart and strength, as we were created in His image. We were created to love Jesus in the same intensity that Father does (Jn. 17:26). Because of who He is, this is the only worthy response.

- F. ***If we don’t have something to die for, then we don’t have anything to live for***. The resolve to love God with all of our heart is exhilarating and powerful—we must give ourselves to God in a wholehearted way to be emotionally strong. Many seek in vain to enjoy peace and contentment in Christ without seeking to be fully committed to His leadership. The lack of wholeheartedness results in living spiritually bored which, in turn, makes people far more vulnerable to temptation.

- G. ***Growing in grace***: Our full acceptance in God’s family and kingdom is *freely given* to all on the basis of Jesus’ finished work on the cross. We can do nothing to deserve it, but receive it by faith. Indeed, the measure of our partnership with Him in the work of the kingdom is determined by our responsiveness to His leadership. Our experience of God’s grace is meant to grow and multiply (2 Pet. 1:2; 3:18); He offers *more grace* to any seeking to cleanse themselves (Jas 4:6).

¹⁷...beware lest you fall from your own steadfastness...¹⁸but grow in grace... (2 Pet. 3:17-18)

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God...(2 Pet. 1:2)

⁶But He gives more grace...⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands...and purify your hearts...¹⁰Humble yourselves...and He will lift you up. (Jas. 4:6-10)

II. RESPONDING IN A WAY THAT IS WORTHY OF THE LORD

- A. Paul was praying for God to strengthen them so that they could respond in a way that He esteemed as *worthy of Jesus, thus enabling them to walk in mature partnership with Him*.
- ¹¹***We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹²that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of God...***
(2 Thes. 1:11-12)
- B. Being worthy has two applications in Scripture. First, by the blood of Jesus we are made worthy to be accepted into God's family by receiving the free gift of salvation. Second, our wholehearted commitment is esteemed worthy of Jesus' leadership unto walking in full partnership with Him.
- C. ***Worthy of this calling***: In this context, God *counting believers worthy* speaks of God esteeming their life choices as being in agreement with His leadership and, thus, worthy of Jesus. By asking God to count them worthy, Paul was in essence asking for an increase of the Spirit's activity in their lives to inspire them and also lead them to the optimum circumstances of blessings and pressures resulting in wholehearted responsiveness—a response worthy of full partnership with Jesus.
- ¹²***...that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.***
(1 Thes. 2:12)
- D. The measure of our partnership with Jesus is determined by the measure of our responsiveness to His leadership. We cannot do anything that earns us the right to be in God's family, but we are called to respond in a way that is worthy of Jesus and of partnering with Him (Mt. 3:7-8; 10:37-38; Lk. 21:36; Acts 5:41; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10-11; 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 1:5, 11; Rev. 3:4).
- E. ***Fulfill all the good pleasure***: Our vision is to walk in the *fullness of all that God has ordained* and not be content with any less. It is God's pleasure to give His people the kingdom; thus we can contend with confidence for the *full release* of His purposes—corporately and individually. We desire that the benefits that Jesus accomplished on the cross be fully expressed in our lives.
- ³²***“Do not fear...for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Lk. 12:32)***
- ²²***“...I have found David...a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.” (Acts 13:22)***
- F. ***Work of faith***: God's work is released in fullness as His people respond in “partnership of faith.”
- G. ***Name of Jesus may be glorified in you***: We pray that God would put Jesus' glory on display through His people so that Jesus may receive His inheritance and the glory due His name.
- H. ***That you are glorified in Him***: Believers are glorified in Christ in two ways. First, in this age, the Spirit of glory enables people to walk in the fullness of God's purpose. Second, in the age to come, they will have resurrected bodies and will live in His presence in the New Jerusalem.
- ¹⁴***If you are reproached for the name of Christ...the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.***
(1 Pet. 4:14)