**Abound More and More**

*1 Thessalonians 4:1-2*

**Introduction**

1. The Thessalonians had come a long way in their spiritual growth:
   1. **1 Thessalonians 2:13** – received the apostolic teaching as the word of God, not men – effectively worked in them.
   2. **1 Thessalonians 1:9** – came out of idolatry to serve God.
   3. **1 Thessalonians 1:7-8** – good examples and active in spreading the word.
   4. **1 Thessalonians 2:14; 3:1-9** – persecuted for their faith, yet not moved.
   5. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10** – active in love for each other.
2. Yet, Paul still called them to ***“abound more and more” – 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2***
3. It matters not how much we have come since our conversion to Christ. There is the expectation and requirement by God for us to continue progressing in the faith.
4. The Exhortation to Abound More and More
5. The Danger of Complacency
   1. The call to abound more and more is a preventative measure against complacency.
   2. Complacency – a feeling of smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
   3. Paul’s rebuke of the Corinthians for their complacency and arrogance – **1 Corinthians 4:6-13**
      1. **(v. 6)** – The discussion concerned the party spirit in Corinth. **(cf. 1 Corinthians 1:12)**
      2. **(v. 7)** – The divisions were not without meaning, but they acted as though their party made them better than those who differed.
      3. **(v. 8)** – They had a mindset of having achieved the goal – as if they had made it to the finish line to receive the crown, AND THAT BEFORE THE APOSTLES.
      4. **(vv. 9-13)** – The very men they followed in a partisan fashion were not as “blessed” as the Corinthians claimed themselves to be.
      5. The Corinthians had an attitude that they had achieved all there was to achieve, as if they had finished their race. Such is a dangerous thought.
   4. **Proverbs 1:32-33** – complacency destroys. (Speaking of those who turn away from Wisdom’s call.)
      1. Complacency – *šalwâ*; security, meaning self-confidence. (HALOT); (genuine or false) (Strong).
      2. **(v. 33)** – but true peace and security is in the company of wisdom – in that there must be continual growth.
6. The Forward Press of the Christian
   1. The Christian should have the understanding that as long as they are in the body, they have not finished their race – **2 Corinthians 5:6-9**
      1. While desiring the spiritual habitation, and to be with the Lord there is the understanding that such is not yet the case.
      2. Therefore, Paul is diligent in pressing onward to continue pleasing God.
      3. ***“of good courage” (vv. 6, 8; NASB).***
   2. Paul, as far as he’d come from being a persecutor to an effective soldier of Christ, pressed on – **Philippians 3:4-7, 12-14**
      1. **(vv. 4-7)** – he had come far in regard to what he had given up for Christ.
         1. This he did to gain Christ and know Him.
         2. He wished to attain to the resurrection.
      2. **(vv. 12-14)** – as far as he had come, he did not grow complacent. He pressed on.
   3. Time is God’s way of allowing us opportunity for further establishment to be ready for judgment – **2 Peter 3:14-15, 17-18**
      1. If that time is not utilized for forward press – improvement – then there is inevitable regression.
      2. EX: **Hebrews 5:12** – by this time you ought to have been…
   4. **2 Corinthians 4:16** – this daily renewal of the inward man is that progression to maturity in Christ without an end.
      1. If there is not progression, there is not renewal.
      2. If there is not renewal, there is the inward perishing just as the outward perishing.
      3. TO FAIL TO PRESS ONWARD IN CHRIST IS TO ALLOW YOURSELF TO WASTE AWAY SPIRITUALLY TO DEATH WHEN WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE TO DRINK FROM – this is a shame.
7. There is room to grow…
   1. The standard is Christ – **Ephesians 4:13** – growth to maturity.
   2. If Christ is the standard, we will always have room for improvement.
8. Abound More and More in…
9. Joy
   1. Christians are commanded to rejoice always – **Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16**
      1. Always – comprehensive – at all times.
      2. How? – The cause for rejoicing is independent from any earthly circumstances, good or bad. (Joy is a state of well-being – it does not necessarily denote a giddiness.)
   2. Why is such commanded? – It can be easy to be affected by the sorrows and struggles of this life.
      1. **Cf. 2 Corinthians 2:6-11** – one of Satan’s devices is sorrow – man disciplined to be received after repentance.
      2. We cannot allow ourselves to be swallowed up with sorrow, and the way we prevent such is constant rejoicing.
   3. “In the Lord” – **Philippians 4:4** – this is the area of constant rejoicing.
      1. **Ephesians 1:3** – because of the spiritual blessings in Christ.
      2. **2 John 9** – because of fellowship with God.
   4. Rejoicing in hope – **Romans 12:12**
      1. The hope of heaven is constant for one in fellowship with God. It cannot be taken away. THEREFORE, THERE IS ALWAYS CAUSE TO REJOICE.
      2. Regardless of what we go through we need to seek the eternal perspective which will always lead to rejoicing.
      3. **Romans 5:3-**5 – the rejoicing in hope will translate to practical situations of trials and tribulation.
      4. **James 1:2-3** – counting it joy when we fall into trials.
      5. Rather than viewing these situations pessimistically we should view them through the spiritual lens and rejoice.
   5. Rejoice with others – **Romans 12:15**
      1. Sometimes it is a challenge to be happy for others when things are not going well for yourself.
      2. But Christians are supposed to be happy for each other.
      3. Especially in spiritual matters – **Acts 11:22-24** – Barnabas (son of Encouragement) being glad for Hellenists who had obeyed the gospel.
10. Peace
    1. Peace with God
       1. Enmity with God – **Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 5:10**
       2. Peace with God – **Romans 5:1-2, 10; Ephesians 2:16-18**
       3. This peace with God is foundational to all other forms of peace. Therefore, it must be nurtured!
    2. Peace with Others
       1. **Romans 12:18** – we are to seek peace with all people at all times with as much as is in our power.
       2. **Romans 14:19** – we are to pursue peace. (Which means matters of indifference to God should not divide us at all.) (**v. 20** – should not destroy a brother for the sake of exercising liberty)
       3. No peace with brethren = no peace with God
          1. **1 John 3:10, 14-15** – have no life if hate brother.
          2. **Matthew 5:23-24** – our worship will not be accepted by God without peace with brethren.
    3. Inner peace
       1. There is a subjective peace which Christ offers:
          1. **John 14:27** – in connection with His leaving and sending the HS – not a troubled mind because of the HS direction.
          2. **John 16:33** – same context – as they carry out their apostolic work in conjunction with the HS there will be trouble, but the knowledge they have through Christ should bring the peace.
       2. This peace is a tranquility of mind despite any trouble experienced without. It rests in the knowledge of fellowship with God in Christ, and the hope of the eternal reward. NO TROUBLE THEN IS WORTH WORRY, FOR THESE SPIRITUAL MATTERS CANNOT BE TAKEN FROM US.
       3. This peace comes from:
          1. Prioritization – **Matthew 6:25, 28, 31, 33** – making the spiritual priority.
          2. Simplification – **Luke 10:41-42** – don’t have too many irons in the fire but narrow it down to the most important.
          3. Faith – **Matthew 6:30** (little faith produces worry); **John 14:1-4, 27** (gives the way to the Father, mansions waiting) – trust in Jesus’ promises, and follow Him.
          4. Prayer – **Philippians 4:6-7** – cast all your cares upon Him **(cf. 1 Peter 5:6-7).**

**Conclusion**

1. In all things commanded by God we are to abound more and more – **1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**
2. We should fight complacency and press on to the goal.
3. A constant battle we face is the negative experiences of this life which seek to rob us of our joy. Joy must be worked on, and in Christ we can abound more and more.
4. Peace is something threatened by all the cares of this life, but if we maintain peace with God, our brethren, and fellow man we can have a peace which surpasses all these cares.