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LEADERSHIP DURING DIFFICULT DAYS
WALK AS CHILDREN OF THE DAY
1THESSALONIANS 5:8

*Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ **But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.** ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.*

WALK AS DAYLIGHT PEOPLE

1. Let us be sober – (be sober, unintoxicated) refers to having *presence of mind* (clear judgment), enabling someone to be *temperate* (self-controlled). Sober (*νήφω*, uninfluenced by intoxicants) means to have "one's wits (faculties) about them," which is the opposite of being *irrational*.

As believers we are to live experientially (like Christ) in conformity with who you are positionally (in Christ). Paul gives a similar admonition in Ephesians reminding the Gentile believers...

EPHESIANS 5:8-9 "FOR YOU WERE FORMERLY DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD; WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS IN ALL GOODNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH).¹

The idea of sobriety in this context includes spiritual stability, stability we need in Christ, in the Spirit, to withstand the onslaught of the darkness. As the return of Christ draws near, and the temptations of the darkness intensify, it is absolutely crucial for believers to have a cool, collected, mind of Christ attitude toward temptation.

In Mark 13:33-37 and Luke 21:34 spiritual sobriety is seen in synonyms of paying attention, being alert, giving heed, taking heed, be on guard, be aware, cleave to. Devote yourselves to the practice of attentiveness.

The sober-minded believer knows the future is secure because he knows the One Who holds the future and is enabled to live calmly and obediently. On the other hand, if a Christian falls into patterns of sinfulness, he loses assurance, loses confidence, loses hope and may fear that he will get caught in the Day of the Lord.

2. Let us be Clothe-with the truth that will protect. It is not if but when the onslaught of testings/trials come into our lives.

a) Having Put on the BREASTPLATE of Faith and Love

This putting on is a past completed action and includes the idea that this action was decisive. This transpired the moment they confessed Christ as Lord and Savior (Ro 10:9-10) and were by grace through faith born again (Jn 3:3, Titus 3:5) as new creations in Christ (2Co 5:17) at which time they were delivered from the domain of darkness ruled by Satan (Ac 26:18, 1Jn 5:19) and transferred into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col 1:13). It means to clothe oneself with something, in this case the clothes worn by the "new man" who is clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness (1Co 1:30, Is 45:24-25, 2Co 5:21, Philippians 3:9), which includes the breastplate of faith and love.

Don't pass over this truth -- because the truth is that it is your responsibility to now live out the fact that you have put on this breastplate.

Every believer has put on the breastplate of faith and love "positionally" at the moment of salvation, but now in the process of daily (even moment by moment) sanctification (growth in holiness or Christ-likeness) believers have the privileged obligation to live out experientially what is true positionally. And we can do this because God has provided everything pertaining to life and godliness according to a true knowledge of Him Who called us, but we have to avail ourselves of this true knowledge (2Pe 1:3), working it from our head (head knowledge) and into our heart (heart transformation). God's desire for us as day people is not to be "smarter sinners" but to be becoming more like the Savior.

The commentator Hiebert writes...The breastplate is pictured as being double or having two sides. Faith denotes the proper inner attitude of the believer toward Christ as his Redeemer and Lord, while love is the proper outward expression of the Christian life toward the saints. Constable remarks, "Faith in God protects inwardly and love for people protects outwardly. These two graces cannot be separated; if one believes in God, he will also love other people" (cf. 1Thes. 1:3; 3:5).²

As believers, our breastplate is "faith and love." "Faith" is our trust in Christ and reliance upon Him, while "love" is the character of Christ we manifest in our relationship with other believers.

The believer is not only a watchman but also a warrior. He must not only be alert and self-possessed but also equipped to resist the onslaught of the enemy. While awaiting the return of his Lord, the believer must be on his guard, for he waits in a hostile world.

b) Having Put on the a HELMET - the Hope of Salvation

Wakefulness and sobriety do not exhaust the demands made upon the Christian. He is also to be on his guard. "Put on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." While waiting for

the Lord's coming, the Christian waits in a hostile world. He is exposed to assault from spiritual enemies who aim at nothing less than his life, and he needs to be protected against them. In the very beginning of this letter we came upon the three Christian graces; the Thessalonians were commended for their work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. There they were represented as active powers in the Christian life, each manifesting its presence by some appropriate work, or some notable fruit of character; here they constitute a defensive armour by which the Christian is shielded against any mortal assault.³

Sobriety deals with our mental state of preparedness and being clothe deals the necessary protection to guard our minds and survivability.

Our "helmet" is "the hope of salvation." As believers, we are to be "looking for the blessed hope" (Titus 2: 13) which is the appearing of the glory of our Savior Jesus Christ.

The truth is clear: as believers, we are to be putting on our armor through our faith and reliance on Christ and His Word, and manifesting love for other believers with our hope fixed on Christ's coming. This is what is meant by being an "alert" child of God.

¹ you were formerly darkness (Not just "in" darkness, but were the essence of darkness!), **but now** you are Light in (the sphere of) the Lord; walk (not a suggestion but a command based on the empowering truth of the fact that believers are now in Christ and His enabling Spirit is now in them Rom. 8:9) as children of Light (when we sin [moral/ethical darkness] we are living like night people, whose only haunt is moral/ethical darkness.) (and then Paul gives an overview of what the life of day people looks like writing that) the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

² (Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996).

³ Denny: Expositor's Commentary