

# 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Analysis

**And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**—autos de ho Theos tēs eirēnēs hagiasai hymas holoteleis, kai holoklēron hymōn to pneuma kai hē psychē kai to sōma amemptōs en tē parousia tou Kyriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou tērētheiē (αύτὸς δὲ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου ὑμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθείη). Paul prays for comprehensive sanctification. Ho Theos tēs eirēnēs (ὁ Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, 'the God of peace')—God who gives peace (not anxiety), makes peace (through Christ's blood, Col 1:20), and is Himself peace.

Hagiasai hymas holoteleis (ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, 'sanctify you completely')—holotelēs (όλοτελής) means 'complete, entire, through and through.' Sanctification must be total, affecting the whole person. Holoklēron hymōn to pneuma kai hē psychē kai to sōma (όλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα, 'your whole spirit and soul and body')—holoklēron (όλόκληρον, 'complete, intact, whole') modifies the threefold human nature. This isn't technical psychology (trichotomy vs. dichotomy debates) but comprehensive statement: God must sanctify your entire being. Amemptōs (ἀμέμπτως, 'blamelessly') looks toward parousia (παρουσία)—sanctification prepares believers for Christ's return.

## Historical Context

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Paul concludes with prayer for comprehensive sanctification—not partial reform but total transformation affecting spirit (relationship with God), soul (mind, emotions, will), and body (physical actions). This holistic soteriology contrasts with Greek dualism (which despised body, exalted spirit) and modern reductionism (which denies spirit, exalts body/mind). Biblical anthropology sees humans as unified beings—spirit/soul/body integrally related, all needing redemption. Sanctification must address the whole person, preparing entirely for Christ's return. This prayer summarizes the letter's theology: God sanctifies (divine work, v. 23) believers who pursue holiness (human responsibility, vv. 14-22).

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What does sanctification affecting 'spirit and soul and body' teach about holiness's comprehensive scope?
2. How do you pursue sanctification of your whole person (not just external behavior or internal thoughts alone)?
3. What does 'preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord' teach about sanctification's goal and motivation?

## Interlinear Text

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Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς  
the very And G3588 God G3588 of peace sanctify you  
G846 G1161 G2316 G1515 G37 G5209

όλοτελεῖς καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ  
wholly and whole I pray God your spirit and G3588  
G3651 G2532 G3648 G5216 G3588 G4151 G2532 G3588

ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ  
soul and G3588 body blameless unto G3588 the coming G3588  
G5590 G2532 G4983 G274 G1722 G3952

κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθείη  
Lord of our Jesus Christ be preserved G5083

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jude 1:24** (Parallel theme): Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

**Hebrews 4:12** (Spirit): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

**1 Peter 5:10** (References Jesus): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

**1 Thessalonians 3:13** (References Jesus): To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

**1 Peter 1:2** (Spirit): Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

**Philippians 1:10** (References Christ): That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

**Philippians 1:6** (References Jesus): Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

**Leviticus 20:8** (References Lord): And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.

**Hebrews 2:11** (Parallel theme): For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

**2 Peter 3:14** (Peace): Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.