“Church Life” | September 8, 2012 | Order Info

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28; Matthew 5:43-48; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 4:4; John 15:4-6.

School begins this week for many students and an inevitable part of education is testing. After teachers impart instruction, pupils are tested to see if they assimilated learning. In this week’s Sabbath school lesson, Paul educates the members in Thessalonica with 17 final points before closing his letter. It’s sort of a summary of what will be on the “final test” in the school of Christianity and church life. If you were to undergo rigorous testing to qualify for this institution, would you pass?

U.S. News and World Report publish rankings of colleges and universities each year and one list is called “The Top 100 – Lowest Acceptance Rates.” In other words, these are some of the hardest schools in the nation to be accepted into. Here are the top 10 with percentages of application acceptance rates: Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Pa. (4%), Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, Ken. (7%), Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. (7%), Stanford University in Stanford, Calif. (7%), Cooper Union in New York, N.Y. (8%), United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. (8%), Yale University in New Haven, Conn. (8%), Brown University in Providence, R.I. (9%), and Princeton University in Princeton, N.J. (9%).

The most difficult institution at the top of the list is the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Of every 100 applicants, less than four students qualify. This private school was founded in 1924 and has a total undergraduate enrollment of 123. The mission of this school is to educate and train exceptionally gifted young musicians for careers as performing artists on the highest professional level. Do freshman students usually stick with the program? The retention rate for new
students is an amazing 97.8%. Interestingly, this school provides full-tuition scholarships to all of its students, ensuring that admissions are based solely on artistic promise.

So, would you qualify for the school of heaven? Before you become fainthearted, none of us will ever have the academic skill of our own to make it into the kingdom of heaven. But through the atoning work of Christ, we can be made ready. After listing 17 final admonitions to the church in Thessalonica, Paul says, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Preparation for heaven begins in the school of life here on earth, especially in our relationships in the church. But we can never be ready without the help of the Lord. Thank God that Jesus offers a full-tuition scholarship to all, ensuring that admission is not based on our works, but on the merits of our Heavenly Teacher.

~ cr

1. US News
2. Curtis

How to Order Sharing Scripture

1. Order this week’s Sharing Scripture study guide for $1.49, click here.
2. Order the entire electronic 3rd Quarter Sharing Scripture for $8.75, click here.