

Tech Talk

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In recent years the term firewall increased its prevalence in conversation. We hear of firewalls in regard to Windows XP and security products from companies such as McAfee and Symantec.

A "firewall" in building construction reduces the spread of fire from one area in a building to another. Similarly, a firewall is a component in a computer network or on a PC that controls access to other network resources, whether on the local network or the Internet.

In many businesses firewalls exist as standalone machines in the network. Rules are defined that permit specific traffic to pass through to the next destination in the network. Examples of such rules include permitting access to certain "well-known" applications such as the World Wide Web. If an access attempt is made that is not explicitly allowed the firewall could be configured to deny the request.

Firewalls do not necessarily prevent malicious software such as viruses or worms. They also do not prevent unauthorized email (spam). Activity by viruses, worms, spam or other "malware" is not prevented because it often is embedded in "acceptable" traffic. For instance, a virus may spread by downloading software using a standard connection to a server on the World Wide Web.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us a firewall as well. It is His Word, the Bible. In His Word the Lord provides rules that tell us what we should "permit" or "deny". Reflect on what the Psalmist stated in Psalm 119:97-98, "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my mediation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies..." (NKJV). His commandments help us act and react. We need to make them an integral part of our day. We can only do so by prayerfully studying His Word.

The Psalmist continues in verse 117, "Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually". When we seek Him in personal study of His Word, we grow in our relationship with Him. We understand not only what He says but why He said it.

Verse 118 warns, "You reject all those who stray from Your statutes". In other words, when we reject God's rules we are blocked by His "firewall". Compare this with that spoken of those who obey Him in verse 116, "Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope." We have life when we seek the Lord through His Word. We have hope for a future in eternal Glory.

We serve an Almighty God! He is a Righteous Judge. Yet He is also full of compassion and grace. He longs to lead us, teach us and care for us. After all, He sent His only Son to pay our penalty while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). We are not perfect. Yet He lovingly receives us into His arms, welcoming us home. Take time today to not only get to know the "rules" God placed in His firewall but to understand and know Him as Your Personal Lord and Savior.