

Studies in the Book of 1 Thessalonians
Lesson 9 – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28
Hope for a Hopeless World

Holy Living

Rejoice, pray, and give thanks sound like ordinary encouragements; The Christian who walks with the Lord and keeps in constant communion with Him will see many reasons for rejoicing and thanksgiving all day long. “*Pray without ceasing*” does not mean a constant mumbling of prayers. True prayer is the attitude of the heart, the desire of the heart. When our hearts desire what God desires, we are praying all day long as the Spirit intercedes for us and in us.

“Prophesying” in the early church was the immediate work of the Spirit: the prophet would give the message from God. But Satan is a counterfeiter, so it was necessary to test the messages. The danger was that the believers would “go overboard” in emotional abuses or, the other extreme, quench the Spirit by rejecting His revelations. “*Test all things, hold fast that which is good*” is the encouragement we must obey whenever we hear or read a message from the Word.

“*Appearance of evil*” means “every form of evil.” Of course, no saint should allow anything in his life that others could misunderstand and criticize. God is faithful to build us up in holiness if we just submit to Him. Prayer, brotherly love, and attention to the Word of God will sanctify us and keep us ready for Christ’s return.

Paul ended with another reminder that the Word of God is the important thing in the local church. The Word must govern our conduct and guide our lives. We are to read the Word personally, but we also need to hear the Word in the fellowship of the local church, for the one experience helps balance the other.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28 and answer the following questions

1. What should characterize us according to 5:16? For more on Christian joy, note the following verses: Matthew 5:12, Acts 15:31, Romans 5:2, 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, Philippians 3:1, 4:4. What do these verses point to in regards to Christian joy?

2. Verses 16-24 contain some final instructions from Paul to the Thessalonians. What do you think Paul's purpose is with sharing these instructions?

3. How does Paul describe how we should pray? (See 5:17).

4. Paul urges the Thessalonians "*in everything give thanks.*" What is the importance of Paul using the word "in" instead of "for"?

5. As a cross reference, read Romans 8:28. What insight does this verse give you in your understanding of Paul's encouragement here in 5:18. Explain the sense in which we can always be thankful?

6. What instruction is given in 5:19-20? Explain how people might be guilty of doing this?

7. What should we do when we determine something is good? (See 5:21) What does that look like for us today?

8. What should we do when we determine something is evil? (See 5:22) what does that look like for us today?

9. Paul often refers to God as “*the God of peace*” (See 5:23). A few examples in his other letters are: Romans 15:33, 1 Corinthians 14:33, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 4:9. Notice that these references always appear toward the end of each of these letters. Why do you think he does this?

10. What request did Paul make in 5:25? Why is it important to pray for those who preach the gospel?

11. Why do you think Paul wanted this letter “*read to all the holy brethren*”?

12. Paul always ended his letters with a blessing of grace. Why do you think he did this?

God's Grace

6 Ways to Understand Its True Meaning

Salvation Grace: The best grace is that God purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave all our sins. This immeasurable gift was given to you when you believed. You didn't work for it and you didn't even deserve it. If He stopped there it would have been enough, but He continues to give us even more grace, kindness, wisdom, and understanding.

Numerous Grace: I have sinned, I sin, and I will sin. I always seem to do what I don't want to do and not do what I want to do, even though I want to do right all the time. Yet God will forgive me each time if I repent. All sins, past, present, and future are forgiven after you believe in Christ.

Forgiveness Grace: Not only are all of my sins forgiven when I repent but I also gain a supernatural ability to forgive others of offenses they commit. God helps me to forgive little offenses, big offenses, and even previously unforgivable ones.

New Grace: Each morning I have the glorious chance to begin again. If I made mistakes yesterday, I can start over with a clean slate. Every new day, hour, and breath is a chance for me to act better and display more of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Freedom Grace: Grace gives me the freedom to forget about other people's opinions. I just need to be faithful to the One who created me, and He already loves me, so I have nothing to prove.

Future Grace: God promised to be with me at all times. He is with me in each present moment and those moments lead to a glorious future. Even when I go through trials, and I will, He is there to help me get through them and make the environment around me better. Always remember that grace is a gift. You can't earn it, but you get a lot of it. It's free and abundant.