

“Do Not Quench The Holy Spirit”

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

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Teaching Aim: To recognize the special role the elders have as the spiritual leaders of the local church. To realize how important it is for all Christians to work toward keeping the unity and the bond of peace within the church body. To recognize how quickly we can quench the Holy Spirit when we allow sin to enter the camp. To understand it is the will of God in Christ Jesus for every true believer to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The importance of respecting the elders in the local church (1 Thess. 5:12-15)

1. The word “*those*” in **verse 12** most likely refers to the elders or leaders of the church at Thessalonica. What did Paul urge the congregation to do (**vs. 12**)? Why is it important for believers to recognize the spiritual leaders of your church? The very comment from Paul in **verse 12** seems to indicate there was some disunity within the church body. What are some ways that disunity can injure the testimony of a local church?

2. God’s design for the church is that it be governed by a plurality of elders. (See **Tit. 1:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:17**) What are some of the responsibilities church elders are called to fill? (See **1 Pet. 5:1-5; Eph. 4:11-12**) What characteristics are required for an individual to serve as an elder? (See **1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9**) Note: The elders are also responsible to implement church discipline when needed.

3. Occasionally conflicts arise within the local church and apparently that is what had happened in Thessalonica. It appears that the conflicts had resulted in a lack of love and respect for the spiritual leaders of the church. What instruction did Paul give to the Thessalonian believers in **verse 13**?

4. The word “*esteem*” means to respect or to look up to (**vs. 13**). Why is it essential for members of the local church to respect and look up to their elders? Even if there is a particular elder that you struggle with, should you respect him (**vs. 13**)? Why?

5. In the High Priestly prayer of Jesus, He prayed for unity within the church. Why? (See **John 17:20-21**) What happens when we are not unified and instead are fighting each other?

6. The “you” in **verse 14** most likely refers to the elders or spiritual leaders of the church. What four exhortations did Paul give to the church leaders in **verse 14**? Why is it important to reach people where they are at? What seems to have been a major problem in Thessalonica? (See **2 Thess. 3:6-12**) What made their action so wrong?

7. Have you ever heard someone say, “I don’t get made, I just get even.”? Why should Christians never get angry and take revenge on others? (See **Matt. 5:38-39; Rom. 12:17-21**) What can we learn from the example set by Jesus Christ? (See **1 Pet. 2:21-24**)

Part II: God’s will for your life as you walk in the light (1 Thess. 5:16-22)

1. What, if any, difference is there between “joy” and “happiness”? In **Phil. 4:4** Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” How can we “rejoice always”; especially in the difficult times (**vs. 16**)? Have you experienced joy in times of trial?

2. What did Paul mean when he commanded the Thessalonians to, “pray without ceasing” (**vs. 17**)? Did Paul mean we should be uttering prayers 24/7? Charles Spurgeon said, “To pray without ceasing means to be in an atmosphere of prayer.” What did he mean?

3. In **verse 18**, Paul said, “...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you.” Did Paul mean that we are to give God thanks “for” everything or “in” everything? What is the difference? What are some things that you can thank God for today? (See **Rom. 8:28**)

4. What can a Christian do to quench the Holy Spirit (**vs. 19**)? (See **Psa. 66:18**) William MacDonald said, *“To quench the Spirit means to stifle His work in our midst, to limit and hinder Him.”* Have you ever stifled the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? How? In what areas of ministry have you not followed the Spirit’s leading?

5. Why do you think some of the Thessalonian Christians were despising prophecies given to them? Is it possible the Thessalonian Christians had quenched the Spirit (**vs. 19**) by despising prophecies God had given to them (**vs. 20**)? What should we learn about the gift of prophecy from **Rom. 12:6**? Prophecy is used primarily two ways in Scripture: 1) Foretelling; and 2) Forthtelling. What is the difference between the two?

6. As Christians, it important for us to test everything we are taught against the canon of Scripture (**vs. 21**)? Note: In this context *“canon”* means *“measuring rod.”* *“The Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are the authority for what we believe”*; the Bible is our guidebook for life. How much time do you spend studying the Word of God each day?

7. According to **verse 21** we are to test everything and hold fast to what is good. **Verse 22** goes on to say that Christians are to abstain from every form of evil. Why? We live in a world filled with evil today. What are some challenges Christians face daily as we live in this evil world? As Christians, we also need to be careful not to cause our brother or sister in the Lord to stumble. Why? (See **Rom. 14:12-13; 1 Cor. 8:9**)

Part III: Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians and final instructions (1 Thess. 5:23-28)

1. What is the only way a person can have *“peace with God”*? (See **Rom. 5:1**) Paul’s prayer is for the God of peace to sanctify the Thessalonians and believers of all time completely. What two kinds of sanctification do we find in the Bible? Which kind of sanctification is Paul referring to in **verse 23**? What does the word, *“sanctify”* mean? (See Dictionary)

2. Why is it important for believers to be preserved blameless at the “*Parousia*” or “*coming*” of Jesus Christ (**vs. 23b**)? Blameless means to be “*innocent; free from blame or guilt.*” What is the only way for a person to become blameless? (**Eph. 2:8-9; 1 John 1:9**) Why is it important for us not to be living in a lifestyle of sin when the Lord returns? Note: This is the fourth mention of the “*Parousia*” in **1 Thessalonians**. (See **1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23**) Are you anxiously awaiting the return of Jesus? Why or why not?

3. What kind of “*call*” is Paul referring to in **verse 24**? (See **Rom. 8:29-30**) What is the meaning in theology of “*God’s effectual call*?” (Hint: Google it) Salvation is of the Lord. Why should this truth be an encouragement to every believer? (See **Phil. 1:6**) What is the only way that we can have assurance of our salvation? (See **John 10:26-29; 1 John 5:11-13**)

4. Once Paul had prayed for the believers in Thessalonica, he then requested that the Thessalonian believers pray for him (**vs. 25**). Why? Why do you think prayer is so difficult for many believers? Have you ever struggled with your prayer life? What was the biggest obstacle? On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your prayer life today?

5. Paul ends his letter by encouraging the believers to greet one another with “*a holy kiss.*” Was this a common practice for Christians in Paul’s day? (See **Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14**) What are some ways that we greet in our culture today?

6. What unusual move did Paul make in **verse 27**? (See Commentaries) What made this move so unusual? Why do you think Paul took this step to ensure every believer heard his letter?

7. Paul begins and ends his epistle with the grace of God (**vs. 28**). What does the word “*grace*” mean? (See Dictionary) What made this word so important to Paul? What makes “*the grace of God*” so important to you and your salvation today? (See **Rom 3:23; Tit. 3:4-7**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Christians are to recognize the elders and esteem them in love for their work's sake.
- Christians are to live in peace with one another to the glory of God.
- Christians should never render evil for evil but pursue that which is good instead.
- Christians should rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.
- As born-again believers, we should never quench the work of God's Holy Spirit.
- Christians should test what they hear against Scripture, holding fast to that which is good and abstaining from every form of evil.
- Paul's prayer was that our whole being be sanctified and preserved as we wait for the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ.