

Being Ready for the Lord's Return  
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-23)

Introduction:

1. This morning we showed from 1 Peter 1:15-16 how God's children are to be holy.
2. According to 1 Peter 1:13-14, being holy plays a vital role in being ready for the Lord's return.
3. This evening we are studying some instructions written by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-23 that will help us to be ready when Jesus returns.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.16) *"REJOICE EVERMORE"*
  - A. Similar admonitions are given in Philippians 3:1a; 4:4.
  - B. Most people are able to rejoice when things go well in their lives; however, Christians are to rejoice *"evermore."*
  - C. Our joy is an inner peace of mind that we experience because of our relationship with God -- it is not based on external circumstances.
  - D. One thing that will help us to rejoice evermore is to . . .
- II. (vs.17) *"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"*
  - A. To help us understand:
    1. (Luke 18:1) *"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."*
    2. (Ephesians 6:18) *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication."*
    3. (Colossians 4:2) *"Continue in prayer."*
    4. We must be like Jesus who prayed often.
  - B. Prayer shows that we depend upon God and not on ourselves.
  - C. As we pray we must remember to . . .
- III. (vs.18) *"IN EVERY THING GIVE THANKS: FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS CONCERNING YOU"*
  - A. God is the source of the many blessings we enjoy (James 1:17).
  - B. We must express our gratitude to Him (Ephesians 5:20).
- IV. (vs.19) *"QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT"*
  - A. (Ephesians 6:17) The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.
  - B. (Hebrews 3:7) The Spirit speaks through the Scriptures which are described for us in Hebrews 4:12.
  - C. If we turn a deaf ear to what He says, we quench Him.
  - D. Rather than quench Him, we must *"be filled with the Spirit"* (Ephesians 5:18).
  - E. Closely related is the next admonition.
- V. (vs.20) *"DESPISE NOT PROPHECYINGS"*
  - A. Prophecyings: messages from God
  - B. Messages from God must not be despised because they are for our benefit.
  - C. As we are taught we must not accept what we hear blindly -- we are to . . .
- VI. (vs.21) *"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD"*
  - A. All things are to be put to the test.
  - B. The Bible is the standard for determining whether something is good or bad.
  - C. If something is proved to be good, we must hold fast to it.
  - D. If something is proved to be bad, . . .
- VII. (vs.22) *"ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL"*
  - A. When Jesus returns we will be judged by our works (2 Corinthians 5:10).
  - B. We must be sure that our works have been good and not evil.

Conclusion:

1. In closing, let us examine Paul's request in 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
2. In essence, he asked that the Christians in Thessalonica would be holy and remain holy until Jesus returns.
3. Are you ready for that great day?