

## **God's Will, Word and Power for Your Life**

### **1 Thess 5:16-28**

As Paul finishes this letter, he addresses what should mark their inner lives. But this will also shape their public worship.

#### **God's Will for your Life**

Despite all these young Christians were facing, Paul says they are to 'rejoice always'. How can he say that? He can say it because there is a joy in God that is deeper and higher than happiness built on our circumstances.

When we know that God is always good, we will know true joy in whatever we face. And that joy will shape our worship services. When we understand all that Jesus has done for us, it has to.

The Paul says we are to pray without ceasing. We are to cultivate a sense of dependence on him in everything. Looking to him throughout the day. He knows our needs, and he has the power to meet them. If we are praying people we will also pray in our gatherings. But Paul also asks for prayer for himself. When we ask for prayer it is an acknowledgement that we are weak. It makes us vulnerable. This opens the door to God's power in our lives.

Then Paul says we are to give thanks in all circumstances – not 'for' all circumstances. When things are going badly, we can sink into a downward spiral. Thankfulness lifts us out of that dark spiral. And thankfulness breeds more thankfulness.

So it's no wonder that Paul says 'this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.' And which of us would say 'no' to a joy-filled, prayerful, thankful life?

#### **God's Word for Your Life**

Paul says 'do not quench the Spirit'. It seems that in speculation about the Lord's return there had been an overflow of prophecies. In stamping out the bad you can also smother the good. Rather than despise it, Paul says we are to test everything: whether it is a preacher claiming to speak God's word, or someone coming with a word of encouragement. How can we test such things?

Firstly, look at the known character of the person. Secondly, does it do what it says on the tin? Does it do what prophecy is supposed to do (which is to build up and convict of sin)? Thirdly, does it glorify Jesus? Fourthly, is it wise? Fifthly, does it conform to Scripture? Scripture is our supreme authority. We know it is the word of God. It is our plumb-line. Everything gets tested by this word of God. That is why Paul says they are to have this letter read in the church. Every time we turn to God's word, we know it is him speaking to us.

But where can we find the power and ability to listen to God's word, not quench the Spirit, rejoice, pray and be thankful?

#### **God's Power for Your Life**

In Paul's closing prayer he says it is God who sanctifies and preserves us. It is looking to him to work in our lives that he changes us to be more like Jesus. He has the power, he is faithful, and he will do it.