

## Day Thirty-One

*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; -1 Thessalonians 5:16-19*

### Praying Without Ceasing?

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For the second time we visit this passage that Paul addressed to the Church at Thessalonica. As we conclude our devotionals it is hoped that we all have a deeper appreciation and knowledge of prayer. But, this is not just an intellectual exercise of the mind to have spent thirty-one days in devoted study to prayer. It is hoped that this is just the beginning of our journey in fervent prayer daily to God.

We have not spoken yet of asking God for specific items. We have not spoken of how to teach little children or for family prayer time. We haven't covered public prayer versus private prayer. There is much that has been left to private study and what we have covered on the previous subjects is by no means a thorough study by any means. As with all things of the human attempt, we must prove these things to be so and leave room for the grace and mercy of God. Be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so.

It is hoped that the impression left in these studies is not the rigidity of prayer, but rather the freedom found in prayer to God. How often should one pray? Should we say 'morning, noon and night' would we be usurping authority where none is given? I would think so! Yet, Paul's directive to Thessalonica is to us as well. For he also gave sound directives to the Church at Rome; *rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, -Romans 12:12*, which he also gave to the Colossians, *Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; -Colossians 4:2*, even as he admonished the Church at Ephesus, *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, -Ephesians 6:18*.

On and on we could go quoting the inspired writers that urged the readers to pray. David said, *Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous ordinances. -Psalms 119:164*. If we go to God from compulsion or any reason that is not

sincere, we may find ourselves to be no better than those Jesus warns us of in His Sermon on the Mount, *"And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. -Matthew 6:7*

The apostle John speaks of a confidence we can have in our prayers, *Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight* 1 John 3:21-22.

Now, this confidence that John speaks of, we might also call faith. This is the faith that Jesus said would move mountains. Is that the faith you and I have? It is the faith we should ever strive to have. It is the faith that will seek God's will and not our own selfish desires. James speaks quite plainly on this, *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. -James 4:3*.

From the very beginning of our study we looked at verses that told us that whatever we wanted we could have, IF, and that's a BIG IF, we believed. With that belief is the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that is revealed in God's Word that we seek His Kingdom and His righteousness. James goes on to say in chapter four, *Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." -James 4:15*. The very premise of prayer is to seek God and to know His will in all things.

Our challenge now is, when we pray, that our prayers be led by the Holy Spirit, which we find manifested in the Word of God. *(And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. -Ephesians 6:17)* By searching the Word of God, we will find out what the will of God is. This is a lifetime of seeking. One will never reach the point in this lifetime where we know completely what God's will is. But, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, He shall help us.

Our prayer life will speak volumes about our spiritual growth. It is hoped that this study has set us well on our journey to a richer relationship with our Father in heaven. *Prayerful Thoughts: Father, we seek Thee to guide us in all things. Hear us when we pray. Let us all say, Amen and Amen.*