

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24^v

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

^vAbout 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Today's reading comes from the earliest New Testament writing, written probably about AD 50-51. Paul has dealt with several questions relating to the expectation of Jesus' imminent return (5:1). He closes his letter by reminding the Thessalonians that a strong and loving community life, not speculation and anxiety, is the proper environment for awaiting the Lord. God desires that their lives be characterized by joy, prayer and thanksgiving.

The Thessalonian Christians are to welcome the charismatic gifts, but with discernment. In speaking of spirit, soul and body, Paul does not intend to divide the human person into separate components. Rather, in Hebraic style, he describes to the human person in the threefold components of relation to God, of present vitality and of physical body. God both wills and works the sanctification of the total person.