

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “A HEALTHY CHURCH FAMILY, PART 2”

DATE: October 19, 2025

SPEAKER: John Mark/Frank

SERIES: 1 Thessalonians

PASSAGE: 1 Thessalonians 5:19–28

## Family Dinner Table

### Octavius Winslow

Octavius Winslow (1808–1878) was a prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century English preacher and author as well as a contemporary of J.C. Ryle and C.H. Spurgeon. Born into a family deeply rooted in Christian faith, Winslow experienced certain challenges of his early life and ministry with remarkable trust in God. He served in England and later in the United States, where his pastoral care and preaching emphasized the practical outworking of faith in everyday life. Winslow deeply valued the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. He understood that true spiritual knowledge was not a product of human reasoning but a divine gift imparted by the Spirit: “All that we spiritually know of ourselves, all that we know of God, and of Jesus, and His Word, we owe to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and all the real light, sanctification, strength, and comfort, we are made to possess on our way to glory, we must ascribe to Him.”<sup>3</sup> For Winslow, vibrant Christian faith depended not on intellectual assent but on the Spirit's ongoing guidance, teaching, and illumination. His devotional writings continue to inspire believers to rely wholly on the Spirit for understanding and growth in faith.

- How does having a faith that is Spirit-empowered challenge the way you approach studying Scripture, prayer, and daily Christian living?

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

PCA Rural Church Plant,  
supported church plant ministry

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Brian and Connie Shepson,  
missionaries with Aviation Fellowship

For individual study or group discussion

The final verses of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians describe the deep, familial relationships a healthy church should reflect (5:12–22). In 1 Thessalonians 5:19–28, Paul highlights the final key characteristics of a **healthy church family** but emphasizes that fostering these bonds of faith is only possible through the power of the Spirit's work.

**A healthy church family is marked by following the Spirit's leading in our lives. (vv. 19–22)**

In verses 19–20, Paul exhorts the church not to “*quench the Spirit*” or “*despise prophecies*.” Just as fire brings warmth and energy, the Spirit brings life and power to the church. Suppressing spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, dampens the Spirit's work. As one author states, “*Paul's exhortation is a warning to all of us lest we become part of the contemporary bucket brigade that stands ready to douse his activity with the water of legalism, fear, and a flawed theology that, without biblical warrant, claims that his gifts have ceased and been withdrawn.*”<sup>1</sup> Yet Paul also warns that not everything labeled “*spiritual*” is from God. The church must test all things, holding on to what is good and rejecting every form of evil (vv. 21–22). This call to discernment ensures that spiritual activity strengthens the church and glorifies God, rather than causing confusion or harm.

- Read Galatians 5:22–23. How can the church foster an openness to the Spirit's work?
- In what ways might you be “*quenching the Spirit*” in your personal life or church community (cf. Galatians 5:16–21)?
- Read 1 John 4:1–6. Describe John's method on how to be discerning. Read Acts 17:10–12. Why is discernment essential?

**A healthy church family is marked by rejoicing in God's faithfulness in our sanctification. (vv. 23–24)**

Paul ends with a prayer that God would sanctify the Thessalonians completely, so that they may be found blameless at Christ's return. This transformation into Christlikeness is not something we achieve on our own. It is God's work from start to finish, grounded in his unchanging faithfulness. Our pursuit of holiness is sustained by this promise (v. 24). John Calvin comments, “*When the Lord has once adopted us as his sons, we may expect that his grace will continue to be exercised towards us.*”<sup>2</sup> God will finish what he has begun (Philippians 1:6). Let us rejoice and be glad!

- What does it mean to be sanctified “*completely*”? (See Hebrews 10:11–14.)
- In Galatians 3:1–6, Paul asks, “*Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?*” How were the Galatians seeking to be sanctified (and justified!) that prompted Paul to openly rebuke them?

**A healthy church family is marked by relating to one another out of God's abiding grace (vv. 25–28)**

Paul ends his letter to the Thessalonians the way he begins it: by wishing them grace. As we live in dependence on the Spirit, trust in God's work of sanctification, and extend his grace to one another, we become a healthy church family that reflects Christ to the world.

- Why do you think Paul, an apostle and spiritual leader, humbly asked the Thessalonian believers to pray for him (v. 25)? What does this reveal about mutual dependence in the body of Christ?
- Paul felt very strongly that his letter be read publicly to all believers (v. 27). What does this tell us about the authority and communal nature of God's Word?

<sup>1</sup> Storms, Sam. *Seven Ways to Quench the Spirit*. April 29, 2018, Desiring God.org. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/seven-ways-to-quip-ench-the-spirit>

<sup>2</sup> Calvin, John. *Commentary on 1 Thessalonians*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom42/calcom42.vi.vii.v.html>

<sup>3</sup> Winslow, Octavius. from *The Octavius Winslow Archive*. <https://octaviuswinslow.wordpress.com/new-to-octavius-winslow/>