

(Bible used = NIV 1984 translation)

Way in: What are the elements that comprise joy? Is it the same as happiness? If so, can you explain this?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5: 12 - 28

Question 1 Verses 12-13. The believers in Thessalonica are new Christians, of no more than one year along their faith journey, most likely less, yet they apparently already have leaders.

- a. What, if anything, does this say about the requirements for Christian leadership?
- b. Paul needs to gently remind them that, although leadership sometimes needs to 'admonish', nevertheless the leaders are to be supported and loved. Would you always agree?

Question 2. Verses 14-15. There's a sense here that it is not just doing good and avoiding trouble, but of actively pursuing what good can be done for both fellow Christians and everybody.

- a. Whose role is this? Is this for you to organise or the church?
- b. Do you think 'the church' is seen by the general public as doing this?
- c. Is St James the same or different from 'the church' in this? If so, how?

Question 3. Reflect on verses 16-18. There is much to consider!

Question 4 Verse 19. 'Do not put out the Spirit's fire'.

- a. Is it really possible to extinguish the Spirit's fire?
- b. What might reignite the fire?
- c. Do you need the Spirit to burn brightly within you, or are you okay with just the 'pilot light' on?

Question 5. Verse 21. Against what are we to 'test everything'?

Question 6. Verse 24. Reflect on this verse. It is one of Paul's major themes throughout all his letters.