

May 21, 2017

## “How to Treat Each Other”

### Focal Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 (NASB)

Cross References: Romans 12:17; 15:1; 1 Corinthians 13:4; 14:29-33; 16:15-18; Ephesians 4:30; 5:25-27; Philippians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-22; 1 Peter 3:8-18; 1 John 4:1

**Lesson Idea:** We are called to esteem those who labor in the Lord and to love those who walk with us in Faith.

#### BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

May 14 2 Chron 13-17	May 15 2 Chron 18-20
May 16 2 Chron 21-24	May 17 2 Chron 25-27
May 18 2 Chron 28-31	May 19 2 Chron 32-34
May 20 2 Chron 35-36	May 21 Ezra 1-3

**Background:** As Paul concluded his first letter to the Thessalonians, he gave them several short commands teaching them how to treat others within the church. These exhortations remind us of the daily need to love one another and walk in the holiness of the Lord.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

*12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. 16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.*

*23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*

*25 Brethren, pray for us.*

*26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.*

*28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

#### DISCUSSION:

- v 12-13. Who are “those who diligently labor among you?”
- Who is supposed to “have charge over you in the Lord,” and how should they do that?
- v 13. Why should you “esteem them very highly in love?” (see 1 Corinthians 16:15-18; 1 Timothy 5:17-22; Hebrews 13:17) Why are we instructed to live in peace with one another?

**NOTE:** from David Guzik, *1 Thessalonians*:

**Recognize those who labor among you:** Christians are to **recognize** their leaders, and leaders are described in three ways.

i. **Those who labor among you.** Leaders are recognized not by their title but by their *service*. A title is fine; but only if the title is true and if the title describes what that person really is before God and man.

ii. **And are over you in the Lord.** Leaders are recognized as being “**over**” the congregation in the sense of ruling and providing headship, as a shepherd is **over** the sheep. This describes a clear and legitimate order of authority.

iii. **And admonish you.** Leaders are recognized as those who **admonish** the congregation. To **admonish** means “to caution or to reprove gently; to warn.” Morris says of this word, “While its tone is brotherly, it is big-brotherly.”

iv. “The Greek construction is three participles united under one article, thus indicating that they are not three distinct groups but one class of men discharging a threefold function.” (Hiebert)

**Esteem them very highly in love:** Christians are to **esteem** their leaders, and to **esteem them very highly in love**. They should do this **for their work's sake**. They don't deserve esteem because of their title, or because of their personality, but because of their labor on behalf of God's people.

“Christian ministers, who preach the *whole truth*, and *labour* in the word and doctrine, are entitled to more than *respect*; the apostle commands them to be esteemed, *abundantly*, and *superabundantly*; and this is to be done *in love*.” (Clarke)

**Be at peace among yourselves:** With this simple command Paul said Christians should simply put away all their squabbles and arguments. This is a great way to **esteem** and **love** the leaders of your church.

- v 14. How do you accomplish the things that Paul urged the believers to do: (see 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Romans 15:1; 1 Corinthians 13:4)
  - admonish the unruly
  - encourage the fainthearted
  - help the weak
  - be patient with everyone

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

**Now we exhort you:** To **exhort** is to tell someone what they must do, but without sharpness or a critical spirit. It is not rebuke or condemnation, but neither is it merely a suggestion or advice. It is urgent and serious, but associated with comfort.

**Warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all:** Paul told the Thessalonians - the people, not only the pastor and leaders - to minister in a variety of ways, depending on the state of the person who needs the ministry. So if someone is **unruly**, the duty of the Christian is to **warn** them. Others need **comfort**, others need to be upheld.

i. The **unruly** are those who are *out of order*, using a military word that describes the soldier that breaks ranks or marches out of step. This is the self-willed person who simply demands to hold their own opinion or preference. These must be warned.

ii. The **fainthearted** are those who, literally, are *small-souled*. By nature or experience they tend to be timid and lack courage. These need comfort - in the sense of assisting strength - to be brought to them.

iii. The **weak** must be upheld, and assisted with an eye to building their own strength instead of perpetuating their weakness.

iv. Some see Paul addressing these three groups in earlier passages of 1 Thessalonians. If so, they provide good examples of how to speak to individuals from each category.

· **Unruly:** The idlers of 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

· **Fainthearted:** Those anxious about their departed loved ones in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17.

· **Weak:** Those suffering under temptations to lapse into immorality in 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8.

**Be patient with all:** Though different approaches must be taken with different people, Christians must be **patient with all**. This is because true Christianity is

shown by its ability to love and help difficult people. We do not look for only perfect people to minister to and to minister with.

- v 15. How does Paul say we should respond to people's evil treatment of us? Why should we seek what is good for each other and for all people? (see Romans 12:17; 1 Peter 3:9)
- v 16. When are the times that it is hard to rejoice always?
- v 17. How do you pray without ceasing?
- v 18. How can you give thanks in everything? What about the disappointments and distressed of life? Why would this be God's will for you in Christ Jesus?

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

**Rejoice always:** Not only rejoicing in happy things, but in sorrows also. The Christian can **rejoice always** because their joy isn't based in circumstances, but in God. Circumstances change, but God doesn't.

**For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you:** After each one of these exhortations - **rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks** - we are told to do them because it **is the will of God**. The thought isn't "this is God's will, so you *must* do it." The thought is rather "this is God's will, so you *can* do it." It isn't easy to **rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks**, but we can do it because it is God's will.

- v 19. How do people "quench the Spirit?" Why would Paul need to instruct believers against that? (see Ephesians 4:30)

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

**Do not quench the Spirit:** We can **quench** the fire of the **Spirit** by our doubt, our indifference, our rejection of Him, or by the distraction of others. When people start to draw attention to *themselves*, it is a sure **quench to the Spirit**.

" 'Quench' properly applies to the putting out of a flame of some sort, as that of a fire (Mark 9:48), or a lamp (Matthew 25:8). This is the only place in the New Testament where it is used in a metaphorical sense." (Morris) Thomas says that the phrase could be more literally translated, "Stop putting out the Spirit's fire."

- v 20. Why would anyone "despise prophetic utterances?"

- v 21-22. After telling them not to despise prophetic utterances, why does he then tell them to “examine everything carefully?” What does he say we should do with the good? (see 1 Corinthians 14:29-33; 1 John 4:1)
- v 22. How do you “abstain from every form of evil?”

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

**Test all things; hold fast what is good:** Evil and deception can show itself even in a spiritual setting, so it is important for Christians to **test all things**. When the **test** has been made (according to the standard of God’s Word and the discernment of spirit among the leaders), we then **hold fast to what is good**.

Between the time Paul last saw the Thessalonians and the writing of this letter, he had spent time in Berea (Acts 17:10-12). There, the Christians were of a noble character because they heard Paul’s preaching and diligently searched the Scriptures to see if what he said was true. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to have more of the heart and mind of the Bereans.

**Abstain from every form of evil:** When the testing is made, any aspect of evil must be rejected. This includes evil that may come with a spiritual image.

“The term *form (eidous)* literally means ‘that which is seen,’ the external appearance. It points to the external form in which evil presents itself . . . They are to shun evil in whatever form or appearance it may present itself.” (Hiebert)

- v 23. What does it mean for God Himself to “sanctify us entirely?” How does God sanctify His people?

**NOTE:** from Guzik:

**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely:** The idea behind the word **sanctify** is “to set apart” - to make something different and distinct, breaking old associations and forming a new association. For example, a dress is a dress; but a wedding dress is *sanctified* - set apart for a special, glorious purpose. God wants us to be *set apart* to Him.

The emphasis here is on **completely**: “The adjective (*holoteleis*), occurring only here in the New Testament, is a compound of *holos*, ‘whole, entire,’ and *telos*, ‘end.’ Its basic connotation is ‘wholly attaining the end, reaching the intended goal,’ hence has the force of no part being left unreached.” (Hiebert)

**Himself sanctify you:** Paul made it clear that sanctification is God’s work in us. He puts this emphasis

in the words **Himself**, in **be preserved**, in **He who calls you is faithful**, and in **who will do it**. This emphasis completes Paul’s previous exhortations. In all that he told the Christian to *do* in 1 Thessalonians 4:1 through 5:22, he never intended that they *do* them in their own power. More Christians are defeated on account of self-reliance than on account of Satanic attack.

- What needs to happen for your spirit and soul and body to be preserved without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? (see Ephesians 5:25-27; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 3:8-18)
- v 24. Why can we always count on the Lord?
- v 25-28. What can we learn about our relationships in the church by Paul’s closing comments?

**APPLICATION:**

- ✓ Who are the people you need to esteem for their work in the Lord?
- ✓ How do you treat others in the church? How do you let love guide you as you seek to admonish, encourage, help, and endure others?

Lesson by Bro Stan

Dear Family of Faith,

Considering these verses, especially 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, I have to take this opportunity to thank you once again for how well you “esteemed” me during the recent celebration of my 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as Pastor of Faith. I can’t tell you how much it meant to Becky and me and how loved we felt. Thank you so very much. We look forward to seeing how God will continue to bless the ministry of Faith in this community and around the world.

In Christ,