

## LIVING

### 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

(Prepared by: Gene Thompson)

1. When young lovers are courting, what do they think about all the time? (The other one! Our mind is filled with thoughts like: what is she doing right now? How will he like the cookies I made? What did she think about what I said? Will she come to school today so I can see her?)

Everything is viewed against the backdrop of their relationship and love for one another. That's how Jesus lived in His relationship with the Father. He did nothing on His own initiative, only what He saw the Father doing, in order to please Him: John 4:34; 5:19; 6:38; 8:28, 42; 12:49.

2. How would your life be different if you lived with Jesus on your mind like we did with our first real love?
3. As we pay attention to the behavior, demeanor, and conversations of others, what do we learn about them? (We learn what is important to them and where their priorities are.)

In the first part of chapter 5 Paul talked about the Second Coming. Before he ends his letter, he wants the believers to know how they should live in the meantime. Paul knew the church was going through a difficult time. He clearly identified what the Lord would have them to be and do, no matter the circumstances.

**Our circumstances don't define who we are; our relationship with Christ determines our thoughts, words and actions even in dire situations!**

### **RESPECTING! Read 1 Thess. 5:12-13**

1. If we are all following one leader (Jesus) what will be the result? (Unity and peace among the ranks! V. 13)
2. What are the responsibilities of the leaders in our church as listed here? (Lead and admonish the believers.)
3. How are we to treat our leaders according to this passage? ("Give recognition" and "regard them very highly in love.")
4. Why are we to do this? ("Because of their work.")

This isn't the only place in the New Testament that tells us to honor and obey our leaders: See Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 16:15; 1 Tim. 5:12-18; 1 Pet. 5:5. God places us, as members of Christ's body, in fellowship groups called churches. He places leaders in these churches, and we are called to submit to their spiritual leadership.

5. How can we demonstrate honor and respect toward leaders in our church? (Sincere, kind words or gestures of encouragement. Respect for and obedience to leaders' instructions eases their load and honors the Lord.)
6. How does showing respect for church leaders demonstrate the spiritual health of a group of believers? (Not following our church leaders is rebellion against God and causes dissension in the church. Obedience to God brings peace and harmony and the church will grow—healthy churches grow!)

Paul went on to provide a host of commands related to holding one another accountable. That sure makes the leader's job easier.

### **ACCOUNTABLE! Read 1 Thess. 5:14-22**

Notice: verses 14-15 deal with the church as a whole, while 16-22 are more applicable to each individual.

1. Why is it important that we warn, admonish, and correct one another? (As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are accountable to each other. Our actions in this area must be bathed with prayer and action taken with love. Just as Nathan confronted David it takes strong leadership from the Lord to do this.)
2. With whom are we supposed to be patient? (Everyone!)
3. Who do you find it most difficult to show patience: the irresponsible, discouraged or the weak? Why?
4. How does verse 15 speak to you? (I find it difficult not to want to get even when I've been wronged.) Notice Paul ends verse 15 with a real challenge: "always pursue what is good for one another and for all." "A recent study found hostility a bigger predictor of coronary heart disease than high cholesterol, smoking, or obesity. Those who respond to adversity with anger or acute anxiety may trigger such conditions as cardiac arrhythmia. Faith, however, calms us. How wonderful to say, with God, we can be victorious."—David Jeremiah
5. What challenges do we find in verses 16-22?
  - "Rejoice always!"
  - Pray constantly.
  - Give thanks in everything.

For this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

- Don't quench the Holy Spirit.
- Don't despise prophecies.

But test all things. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil."

6. What does it mean to "rejoice always"? ("The Greek word here refers to the uplifting, ongoing, cheerfulness of the Christian. Joy is the helium of the heart that makes us airborne. It's the corklike quality of our souls that keeps us buoyant...Sadness and sorrows befall us in life. Tears come. Disasters strike. But by and large, the default attitude of the believer is the joy of the Lord. That's the natural 'setting' of the Christlike person. Uplifting, outgoing cheerfulness. Gladness."—Robert J. Morgan)
  7. How can we "Pray constantly"? (In addition to our morning, meal and evening prayers we breathe sentence prayers throughout the day. Prayer isn't just a pattern; it's a Presence.) Notice we are to give thanks "in" everything not "for" everything! For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" may apply to all three of the commands above.
  8. How do we quench the Holy Spirit? (By not doing what He tells us to do. In Eph. 4:30 Paul says "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." We grieve Him when we sin.)
- In the New Testament, to despise prophecies means ignore the preaching and teaching of the Scripture.
9. How do these verses challenge your walk with Christ?

Paul closed his letter with a blessing, expressing his desire to see the Thessalonian believers sanctified.

### **SANCTIFIED! Read 1 Thess. 5:23-24**

1. How are you sanctified? (It simply means for us to become more and more like Jesus. We will not reach that in this life.)
2. What actions contribute to our sanctification? (Reading and studying God's Word. Prayer. Fellowship with other believers. Worship, both corporate and private. Studying God's Word with others. No one who ignores these things will ever make much progress in sanctification. J. C. Ryle said: "I can find no record of any eminent saint who ever neglected them.")

Notice sanctification involves the spirit, soul and body!

### **Sanctification is the outcome and inseparable consequence of regeneration!**

3. How does being sanctified influence a Christian's conduct? (Christlike behavior manifests as believers mature in faith. God enables believers to progress in sanctification through the work and power of the Holy Spirit.)

4. Is sanctification visible or invisible? (Moses as he came down from the mountain after being with God glowed but didn't realize it. The Christian becomes more and more like Jesus. It is hard for him to see but others notice the difference. **Also see Matt. 25:37**—“When saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee?”) Humility plays a large role in sanctification!

## SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE!

Paul ended the letter with three personal requests: prayer for him, godly affection for one another and fellowship with other congregations. His benediction included an appeal for Christ's grace, much like his introduction wished them grace and peace.

### Read 1 Thess. 5:25-28

1. Of all the commands in today's passage, which resonate with you most?
2. Which do you demonstrate regularly?
3. Which are most difficult to follow?

A life that honors God seeks to follow His Word! We trust God to give us the grace to live a godly life.