

Instructions, Exhortations, Prayer, and Farewell

Study 8. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

by James T. Bartsch, WordExplain.com

A. Instructions to the Church as a Whole. 5:12-13

1. In this section, Paul first speaks about the leaders of the Thessalonian church. What does he ask the Christians (he calls them “brethren”) to do regarding their leaders? 5:12a _____¹
2. Paul describes the leaders of the church with three descriptive phrases. What are they? 5:12b
 - a. They diligently _____ among them;
 - b. They have _____ over you in the Lord;
 - c. They give you _____.
3. Paul then asks the people, further that they esteem their leaders very highly in _____. 5:13a Why should they treat their leaders this way? Because of _____.

☞ How can you apply these instructions to your own lives?

4. What closing instruction in this section does Paul give to everyone? 5:13b

☞ What are some practical ways to put this instruction into practice?

¹ 5:12 - We request of you, brethren, that you appreciate: “Appreciate” translates the infinitive of the Greek verb *oida* (3609), “to know.” The verb *oida* is used 318X in the NT. In an overwhelming number of instances in the NASB, 287, to be exact, it is translated with some form of the verb “to know,” such as “know” (216X), “knowing” (36X), “knew” (16X), “knows” (15X), and “known” (4X). The idea behind *oida* is to know intuitively, or instinctively, as opposed to knowing by experience. So Paul was requesting that the people of the Church of Thessalonica instinctively know, or understand their leaders.

B. Concluding Exhortations. 5:14-22

1. The responsibility of the believers toward different types of people. Some of these people would be in their own church; others would be on the outside. 5:14-15
 - a. First, these Christians were to admonish ² the _____. 5:14a ³
 - b. Second, they were to encourage ⁴ the _____ - _____. 5:14b ⁵
 - c. Third, they were to help the _____. 5:14c
 - d. Fourth, they were to be _____ with all men. 5:14d
 - e. Their responsibility toward those who would mistreat them. 5:15
 - 1) Fifth, not one of them should repay another with _____ for _____.
 - 2) Sixth, by way of contrast, they should always seek after that which is _____. They should do this
 - a) For _____
 - b) And also for _____.

² 5:14 - admonish: "Admonish" is the present tense plural imperative (command) of the verb *noutheteō* (3560). It seems to have the idea of cautioning people in regard to specific faults. It is used in the NT in only eight instances: Acts 20:31; Romans 15:14; 1 Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28; 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:12, 14; 2 Thess. 3:15. It would do well for the Christians who seek to obey this exhortation to examine carefully all instances and to seek to comply with the qualifications and style of admonishing others. The plural suggests that all the "brothers" are to be obeying this exhortation, not just one or two.

³ 5:14: unruly: This word (*ataktos*, 813) is difficult to define, for it is used only here in the whole NT. It carries the idea of being *out of order*, or *out of place* (from *NAS Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*).

⁴ 5:14 - encourage: *paramutheomai* (3888) is used sparingly in the NT – only in John 11:19, 31; 1 Thess. 2:12, and here in 1 Thess. 5:14. John 11:19 and 31 both speak of Jewish people who had come to **console** Martha and Mary on account of their dead brother, Lazarus. In 1 Thess. 2:12 Paul said that he and his apostolic team were "**encouraging** ... each one of you as a father would his own children." Para means "alongside;" *mutheomai* means "to speak." To "speak alongside" is to "comfort." (Emphases mine.)

⁵ 5:14 - fainthearted: A translation of *oligopsuchos* (3642), used only here in the NT. *Oligos* (3641) means "small," and *psuchē* (5590) means "soul." Literally, one who is "small-souled," i.e. timid or faint-hearted.

2. The responsibility of the believers in regard to their own spiritual lives. 5:16-18
 - a. They should always _____. 5:16
 - b. They should _____ without _____. 5:17
 - c. They were to give _____. 5:18
 - 1) Under what circumstances? In _____
 - 2) For what reason? For this is God's _____ for you in Messiah (King) Jesus!

3. The responsibility of the people of the church in regard to the Holy Spirit working among them in their church services. 5:19-22
 - a. They were not to _____ the _____. 5:19
 - b. They were not to despise _____ utterances. ⁶ 5:20
 - c. When someone claiming to be a prophet speaks, what is the responsibility of the people of the church regarding that prophet? "But _____ everything carefully." 5:21a

⁶ 5:20 - despise not prophetic utterances: A prophet is someone to whom God communicates a message directly, and who then conveys what God has told him to the appropriate listeners. All prophets may teach, but not all teachers are prophets. Obviously, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, there were prophets in existence. The apostles themselves were prophets (Eph. 2:20). The book of Acts records the existence of prophets (Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:8-11). The letters to the churches record the existence of prophets (1 Cor. 12:28; 13:8-10; 14:1-5, 22-24, 29-32, 37-39; 1 Thess. 5:19-22).

Are prophets in existence today? A good many people insist that there are. If there are genuine biblical prophets in existence today, then the following must also be true: (1) Their prophecies are just as valid and as binding as any Scripture, for Scripture is prophecy written down. (2) They will be able, at some point, to predict the future in such a way that listeners can validate whether they are truly prophets or not (1 Kings 13:1-5; Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11, cf. 21:27-28:31). (3) Sooner or later, some of these prophecies will be written down as Scripture. (4) There is no margin for error in a Biblical prophet. A false prophet is worthy of death (Deut. 18:20-22).

For my own part, I strongly suspect there are no Biblical prophets in existence anymore today. First, Paul predicted that, if there are prophecies, they will be done away with or abolished (1 Cor. 13:8). Prophets prophesy in the realm of the partial (1 Cor. 13:9). When that which is complete comes, that which is partial will be done away with or abolished (1 Cor. 13:10). Second, with the completion of the canon of Scripture, there is no longer need for additional revelation. Third, if prophecy still exists today, why has no Scripture been added for 1900 years? That is completely unprecedented in the history of Biblical prophets and prophecies. Fourth, we know that in the future, there will be Biblical prophets in the unmistakable mold of the prophets of yore. The two witnesses who appear in the Tribulation will prophesy and have Moses-like powers (Rev. 11:1-13).

- d. As a result of their careful examination of what prophets say, the people of the church are to do two things: 5:21b-22
- 1) They are to _____ to that which is _____.
5:21b ⁷
 - 2) And they are to _____ from every form of _____.
5:22 ⁸

C. Concluding Prayer. 5:23-24

1. Paul prayed first, for the activity of God. 5:23a
 - a. How did he describe God? _____
 - b. What did he ask that God might do for the Thessalonians? _____
_____ ⁹
2. What did Paul anticipate would be the results of his prayer? 5:23b
 - a. Their _____ and _____ and _____ would be preserved _____, without _____.
 - b. When would this happen? _____

3. Without denying that we have a part in our own sanctification (see 1 Peter 3:15), on whose faithfulness does our Perfect Sanctification ultimately rest?
5:24 _____

⁷ 5:21 - hold fast to that which is good: The people of the church were to adhere to and follow the teaching of a prophet who had uttered valid prophecy. Apparently they were to evaluate the prophecy according to the OT Scripture that had already been written (Acts 17:11), and according to the NT Apostolic teaching they had already been given (1 Cor. 14:37-38; 2 Cor. 11:1-4; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 1:3).

⁸ 5:22 - abstain from every form of evil: In the context, Paul's statement can only mean that the people of the church are to abstain from any association with invalid prophecy.

⁹ 5:23 - sanctify: The word is *hagiadzō* (37). To sanctify someone is to set apart that person for God's purpose and use. (1) There is a sense in which all believers in Jesus have been sanctified, or set apart, through the death of Christ (Heb. 10:10; 13:12). So believers are in the Position of having been sanctified. (2) There is a sense in which we are in the Process of being sanctified, or set apart for God. Jesus prayed that his followers might be sanctified by means of the truth, which is the Word of God, the Bible (John 17:17). Similarly here (1 Thess. 5:23a), Paul prayed that God would sanctify believers completely. (3) There is a sense in which we await the Perfection of being sanctified. Paul addressed that prospect in 1 Thess. 5:23b – he prayed that we would be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

D. Farewell. 5:25-28

1. What does Paul request of the Thessalonians? 5:25 _____

2. How are they to greet all the brethren? 5:26 _____
_____ ¹⁰
3. How would we do this in our culture? _____

4. What did Paul solemnly urge them to do with his letter? 5:27 _____

5. What was his benediction upon them? 5:28 _____

6. What have you learned from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 that will enable you better to live the Christian life? _____

7. What have you learned from 1 Thessalonians as a whole that will enable you to live the Christian life better? _____

8. What have you learned about the future from 1 Thessalonians? _____

9. How should you live your life in view of what you have learned about the future? _____

¹⁰ 5:26 - holy kiss: The word holy is *hagios* (40), the adjective derived from the word *hagiadzō* (37), to make holy, or to sanctify. They were to greet one another with a sanctified, set apart, kiss. In that culture, all greeted one another with a kiss, whether Christians or not. These believers were to acknowledge the uniqueness of greeting a fellow-believer. We are all in the process of being sanctified, and we ought to give one another a sanctified greeting that acknowledges the process of perfection in which we are participating.

Study 8. Instructions, Exhortations, Prayer, and Farewell
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Prepared by James T. Bartsch

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Email Contact: jbartsch@wordexplain.com

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