



1 Thessalonians 5 Part 2

***12** Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. **14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. **16** Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's*

will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-18, NIV).

1 Thessalonians 5:13

And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

***12** Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. **13** Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, NIV).*

God raises up leaders. They are called. They are empowered and led by God when they're yielded to the Holy Spirit. They are to be respected, which Paul says is due to their hard work. The problem is that leaders are all sinners, and they are weak and have weaknesses just like everyone else in the congregation. But Paul says we are to respect our leaders; and not only that, we are to "regard them in love." I think that means you guys are commanded to love me even when you see my weaknesses and my humanness. It would be easier in those times to maybe discredit me or tear me down, but Paul says it works well when you love me for the work that I do, and when you pray for me and try to lift me up. This doesn't mean you should follow bad leaders over a cliff. It means you should check all that I teach and that others teach against the Bible. Keep the meat and leave the bones. You can disagree with some things a teacher says without throwing it all away.

I and other leaders are appointed to care for their body of believers and to admonish that body. So, what does that look like? I need to have a heart that feels and cares about each of you in here. I am called to care. That's sort of odd isn't it? I haven't always been a very caring person, but I'm learning that when I am lead by the Holy Spirit, I can sympathize and empathize with the worries and cares of my congregation. I also have a duty to "admonish" those I pastor. Do you know what "admonish" means?

It means: to warn you, to counsel you, to exhort you, to implore you, to beseech you, to encourage you, to push you, and sometimes to even pressure you towards being all that God wishes for you to be. So the scripture here says that there are people that God puts into your life that are to do all of these things. So what is your role in all of this? Are you teachable? Do you have a teachable spirit, or are you so stubborn you already think you've got it all down and you're doing it ALL RIGHT. A teachable spirit comes with great humility.



Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ *And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.* ¹⁵ *Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.* (1 Thessalonians 5:13b-15, NIV).

Living in peace with one another is not as easy as it all seems. It involves putting aside our own rights and desires to be the center point of the conversation, to be the controller of the group, and to have things always go our way. Remember that peace, real peace, is different than just an absence of conflict. I told one of our members this week that living in community is difficult. We must learn to love each other without changing things about each other that might drive us crazy. Paul goes on following this idea of "living in peace with each other" with perhaps a few suggestions that help this become a reality.

1 Warn those who are idle and disruptive! What Paul says here in the Greek is quite interesting. It should read more like, "Tell free loaders and trouble makers to move on!" Before you think of that slackard in the congregation who won't do a thing to better his/her situation, think about yourself. How might you be idle? Idleness can involve not just being lazy and avoiding work, but also engaging in things that have no redeeming value. Talking just to talk is idleness. I remember one of the most corrective things ever spoken to me was by a prayer partner a few years ago. He told me one day, "You sure do like talking about yourself." Wow! That hurt, but I listened. I trusted this brother and I wanted to make sure that I listened to what he had to say. I realize that I might still have that tendency, but I've learned to try to listen to myself and make sure I'm listening to another's stories as much as I'm enjoying listening to my own story.

Be careful about telling people that they are lazy or that they avoid work. It is true that some do those things, but err on the side of graciousness. I don't ever tell someone they are lazy or avoiding work unless they come to me asking for advice or if they come asking for money. It might be a more Christian way to approach it by saying something like, "You know, I know I have my own problems, but it seems to me that people that spend down to the point that they are broke have a hard time getting gas money or tires to even get to work. Try to encourage rather than to criticize in a way that makes the person feel defeated. Work at empowering others. I sometimes will make myself available to hire others. What they do with that opportunity is their business.

2 Encourage the disheartened. Do you know what "encourage" means? It literally means to put the heart back into another. We all get beat up by life and by our circumstances. As we do, our heart to do anything seems to fade away and can be interpreted as laziness or disinterest. That's really depression isn't it? You feel so overwhelmed that you don't have the heart (the gumption) to get something (or anything) done! It takes effort to encourage another. Ways to do that might include: (1) stop to listen to them, (2) assess how serious their depression really is, and/or (3) give them genuine encouragement from God's word. There are so many verses that speak to encourage us when we get down.

Psalm 56:3-4, NKJV

3 Whenever I am afraid,

I will trust in You.

4 In God (I will praise His word),

In God I have put my trust;

I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?

I always say such truths as the following. (1) God is present at this very moment even if you do not feel His presence. (2) When we go through trials like this, God's word tells us that it will make us spiritually stronger (James chapter 1). (3) Don't give up! Don't surrender! Call out to the Lord and ask Him for wisdom and guidance. He can and will give it to you.

Perhaps the thing that helped me the most, was that when I felt down or blue as a child, my mother would tell me to "count your many blessings and name them one by one". There was a little song that went like this,

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

*Refrain:
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.*

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by. (Refrain)*

*So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end. (Refrain)*

3 Help the weak. We are commanded to help the weak. Sometimes it's hard for us to admit our weakness to others. Find a friend with whom you can confide your own fears and failings. We are all weak in one way or another. This is a perfect way to even encourage yourself. Step outside of yourself and help someone in a more helpless situation than you find yourself. Others should and will come along and help you. I know I might seem totally self-situated and self-reliant, but I cannot tell you how wonderful it is when one of you shows up and helps me with some task I've been dreading. I do not have the words to express how loved this makes me feel. It might be a basket of clothes sitting in my room that I just haven't found the time to deal with. I come in and find them folded and ready to be put away and I feel loved.

If each of us sees the weakness in others and tries to do a thing or two to help, then we're all helping each other. That is the beauty of community! Paul tells us "HELP THE WEAK." My point is that we're all helpless and hopeless in some area of our lives. Let's learn to recognize that in each other and reach out to help meet that need. THAT my friends is the Kingdom of God in operation.

4 Be patient with everyone! I have a hard time being "patient with everyone." I wish the verse said, "Be patient with those who are not irritating to you!" But, the verse doesn't say that. It says, "Be patient with

everyone." Patience for others must be fueled by the Holy Spirit to empower us to love those who frustrate the fire out of us. Patience is not something that we can muster up out of ourselves. It is produced through the operative power of God in our lives. The fruit of the flesh is impatience, but the fruit of the Spirit includes patience. What is the fruit of the Spirit?

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:22-23, NKJV).

If that is the fruit of the Spirit, think for a moment what the "fruit of your flesh" might produce. The fruit of the flesh is: hate, joylessness, turmoil, impatience, criticism, bad intentions, unfaithfulness, harshness, and being out of control" (author's interpretation). DON'T BE CONTROLLED BY THE FLESH. BE CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

5 Don't engage in payback! Don't payback the ill will and wrong that others might do to you. Don't run a tally sheet in your mind. Do good to others because you're commanded to do good to others. Don't do good to others to "get." Don't do evil to others because they've done evil to you. That is revenge and the Bible says we're to leave that up to the Lord.

Payback is built into our DNA as humans. When someone hurts us, we have the tendency to want to make sure they get theirs, and we sometimes fantasize or engage in activity to make sure that they get THEIRS! Scripture tells us NOT TO DO IT. The reason we are not to do it is probably multi-faceted, but one reason is that it will reduce us to the level of those that hurt us and it denies the power of God to bring about justice. God is watching. Scripture tells us:

⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

⁸ For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:7-9, KJV).

Scripture tells us that God will sort things out, ***"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord." (Romans 12:19, NASB).***

The bottom line is that the wrath of God is a much more formidable foe than you yourself could ever be. Leave it to God. Leave it alone. Don't let it rot you from the inside out. Don't harbor hatred for those who wronged you.

6 Do what is good for each other and for everyone else. This is pretty straight forward. Be about looking after the good and the welfare of others. Love others. It will cost you your time, your talent, and your treasure. Loving others will never feel "even" in worldly terms, but it is a precious way to live. When you begin to love others as you love yourself, you are walking in the Spirit; you are very near to the heart of God.

Jesus said, I have come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly" (author's paraphrase from John 10:10). Open yourself and your heart up to be used by God. I think each of us can work in partnership with God as we seek to "do what is good for each other." I think we start this by getting our

eyes off of ourselves. We can either have lives that are lived in vanity, seeking our own pleasure and welfare, or we can choose to love God with all of our hearts and minds. When we choose to love God, we become inspired and empowered by God to love others as we love ourselves.

This kind of lifestyle is summarized in the following words which are some of the most empowering words in the Bible: REJOICE ALWAYS - PRAY WITHOUT CEASING - IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS ---- FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS CONCERNING YOU.

The most unhappy people I've met are those who are ungrateful. They are so focused on the negative in their lives that they cannot see anything positive. Ask God to help open your eyes to see ANYTHING that you can be grateful for. This will more than often lead to joy. χαίρω,ν \{khah'-ee-ro} = 1) to rejoice, be glad 2) to rejoice exceedingly 3) to be well, thrive

We will begin with that next week, but I would like to say that when I feel something wrong in my life, I usually start with three things. When I feel a setback or I am in doubt or discouraged for some reason, I find a little something to rejoice about. Then I pray intently on the thing/s I'm worried or perplexed about. And then, I give thanks to God that He is in control of my life. I give thanks that He knows the grain of sand that's rubbing in my soul, and He's going to bring comfort to it. I whisper in my soul, "God, You are good. You are gracious. I love you, and I commit myself into your sovereign hand this moment."

Let us pray.

<p>Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese-Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.</p>
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