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# The Thessalonian Letters

*Instructions for Deepening Spiritual Growth*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28



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## Appreciate the leaders of the church (5:12)

- **“appreciate”** (literally, “*know*”) the appointed leaders of their church.
- Who **“diligently labor”** (*kopiaō*) ~ intense labor accompanied by struggle, fatigue, and weariness (1:3; 2:9; 3:5).
- **“have charge over you”** (*proistēmi*) ~ commissioned with authority and having the responsibility of governing, leading, or managing the affairs of the local church.
- **“give you instruction”** (*noutheteō*) ~ literally, “to place into the mind.” Its normal meaning is to admonish, warn, or gently reprove.

*A minister is to put his people in mind of the truth; to warn them of danger; to exhort them to perform their duty; to admonish them if they go astray.*

## Esteem church leaders very highly in love (5:13)

- **“esteem”** (*hēgeomai*) ~ an interesting play on words. It is often used to identify someone as a leader, governor, or chief ~ literally someone who “leads the way.” A secondary meaning is to give something a leading place in your thoughts or affections.
- **“very highly”** (*huperekperissōs*) ~ an intensified form of *perissōs* that by itself means “exceedingly beyond measure.”
- **“love”** (*agapē*) ~ demonstrates their deep regard for their leaders.
- Respect not only for their position, but also because of their **“work.”**
- **“live in peace with one another”** ~ apparently there was evidence of an independent spirit which caused them to fall short of Paul’s high standard for respecting their leaders. Paul will say more about this later.

## Proper behavior for the brethren (5:14)

- “We **urge** you, brethren” (*parakaleō*) ~ Paul is encouraging and exhorting.
- “**admonish**” (*noutheteō*) ~ caution or warn a particular group of people → the “**unruly**” (*ataktos*) ~ literally, “out of rank.” Describes someone who is insubordinate or willfully strays from an authorized structure.
- “**encourage**” (*paramutheomai*) ~ to come alongside with gentle words of consolation, comfort, or cheer → the “**fainthearted**” ~ literally, of “little spirit” ~ those who have come to the point of losing heart.
- “**help**” ~ to cling to or hold firmly → the “**weak**” (*asthenēs*) ~ those who have no strength, either physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, or spiritually.
- “**patient**” (*makrothumeō*) ~ long-suffering; enduring offenses and injuries.

## Rejoice in pursuing good (5:15-16)

- **"See that"** (*horaō*) ~ watch out or see to it (imperative).
- **"repay another with evil for evil"** ~ retaliation is forbidden; ***long-suffering*** is the antidote to retaliation (see 5:14).
- **"But"** (*alla*) ~ strong contrast; **"seek after"** (*diōkō*) ~ actively pursue **good** (*agathos*) ~ the contrasting term for **"evil"** (*kakos*).
- **"rejoice"** (*chairō*) ~ be glad, joyful, or full of joy. This kind of joy is not a feeling, but a decision. Feelings cannot be commanded.
- This is a joy that is not conditioned by outward circumstances. It is not natural joy, but something produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

## God's will in Christ Jesus (5:17-18)

- **"pray"** (*proseuchomai*) ~ the common word for laying one's concerns, wishes, and desires before God.
- **"without ceasing"** (*adialeiptōs*) ~ uninterruptedly or by unvarying custom (compare 1:3). Be in fellowship with God, whether formally or informally.
- Prayer is the continual expression of our dependence on God, and it is what allows believers to rejoice always, no matter the circumstances.
- **"give thanks"** (*eucharisteō*) ~ the common word for expressing gratitude.
- Respond with thanksgiving **"in"** all situations (not necessarily **"for"** all).
- **"God's will"** (*thelēma*) ~ rejoice, pray, and give thanks.
- **"in Christ Jesus"** ~ it is only in union with Him that such a life is possible.

## Rightly handling prophetic utterances (5:19-22)

- “Do not **quench** the Spirit” (*sbennumi*) ~ to extinguish, hinder, or thwart.
- “do not **despise** prophetic utterances” (*exoutheneō*) ~ to set at naught or consider worthless. “**prophetic utterances**” (*prophēteia*) ~ includes predictions as well as instruction given through the special gift of the Spirit for the early church age (Acts 13:1; 15:32; 21:10; Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10, 28; 14:1-40; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 2 Pet 1:20-21).
- “**examine**” (*dokimazō*) ~ determine whether the message is consistent with the will and Word of God (Phil 1:9-10).
- “**hold fast**” (*katechō*) ~ keep a firm grasp for the purpose of safekeeping.  
“**abstain from**” (*apechō*) ~ anything found to be unsound, wrong, wicked, or worthless.

## Paul's closing prayer (5:23)

- **"Now may"** marks Paul's final prayer for the Thessalonians.
- **"God of peace"** ~ in 5:13 Paul commanded them to "live in peace with one another," and here he identified the source of all true peace.
- **"sanctify"** (*hagiazō*) ~ to declare or make something "holy" (*hagios*). Only God can make something holy.
- **"entirely"** (*holotelēs*) ~ "to the end" or having reached its goal.  
**"complete"** (*holoklēros*) ~ having received an assigned portion or inheritance.  
**"without blame"** (*amemptōs*) ~ blameless at the **"coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."** Paul focused on the completion of the believers' sanctification in glory at the coming of the Lord (3:13).



## Final reassurance and requests (5:24-26)

- God who initially **“called”** (*kaleō*) them will be faithful to carry them through to the end (Phil 1:6).
- God is **“faithful”** (*pistos*) ~ He is completely trustworthy and He will **“bring it to pass”** (*poieō*) ~ the common word for doing something.
- **“Brethren, pray for us”** ~ Paul sincerely appreciated others’ prayers.
- **“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss”** ~ **“brethren”** clearly characterizes the relationship between Christians as brothers and sisters. A **“holy”** or fraternal kiss was an appropriate expression of greeting, similar to how we might greet a family member today with a loving embrace. It is intended as an expression of true Christian love of the brethren (*philadelphia*, 4:9).

## Closing words (5:27-28)

- “**adjure**” (*enorkizō*) ~ to put someone under oath, obtaining their solemn promise that they will do what you ask. “**the Lord**” is the witness for their promise. Paul wants the Thessalonians to consider the public reading of this letter to be a solemn obligation.
- Paul ends just as he began (1:1), with “**grace**” (*charis*) ~ the unmerited favor of God.
- Because of our sinful condition, there is nothing that any person can do to earn the favor of a holy God. He sets His love upon individuals based solely on His own sovereign choice and on what Jesus Christ has accomplished on our behalf.