

STANDING FIRM

Part Seven: *church advice*

October 15, 2023

This fall, we're studying the Apostle Paul's letters to the Thessalonians to learn how to stand firm in the Lord. Last Sunday, we looked at 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 where Paul teaches the Thessalonians about the Day of the Lord. Today, we're going to study the second half of chapter five, where Paul gives the Thessalonians some church advice.

In 1 Thess. 5:12-13, Paul tells church members their responsibility to their pastors.

1st – Paul tells the church to honor their pastors. Vs. 12

The Greek word translated *honor* in Vs. 12 means “*to know and appreciate by experience.*” Paul wants the Thessalonians to have a personal relationship with their pastors and value their leadership and service.

2nd – Paul tells the church to show their pastors great respect and love. Vs. 13

God has called pastors for the important work of leading His church, and He has called church members to appreciate their pastors and support, encourage, and pray for their pastors (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

3rd – Paul tells the church to live in peace with their pastors.

Sheep are supposed to follow their shepherds – not lead a rebellion in the sheepfold (Rom. 12:18; 1 Cor. 14:33; Heb. 12:14; 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 3:10-12).

In Vs. 14-15, Paul tells church members their responsibility to their fellow church members.

1st – Paul tells the church to urge the lazy or rebellious. Vs. 14a

The Greek word translated *lazy* in Vs. 14 can mean idle, indolent, or apathetic. The term was used for a soldier who was not performing his duty.

2nd – Paul tells the church to encourage the timid. Vs. 14b

The timid are Christians afraid of stretching their faith and taking on challenges in ministry. Paul advises the Thessalonians to encourage (speak alongside as a coach) the timid in their church.

3rd – Paul tells the church to take care of those who are weak. Vs. 14c

Paul wants the stronger sheep in the church to hold up (support) the weaker sheep in the church using Biblical counsel, personal accountability, and prayer (Titus 1:9).

4th – Paul tells the church to be patient with everyone. Vs. 14d

The Greek word translated *patient* in Vs. 14 means “*to not lose hope while waiting.*” Paul wants the spiritual in the church to keep extending love, patience, and forgiveness to those who are not as spiritual as them.

5th – Paul tells the church not to retaliate against those who offend them. Vs. 15

Church members are not to seek revenge when wronged but to respond to evil with genuine acts of love (Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:17-21; Eph. 4:25-32; 1 Peter 3:9).

In Vs. 16-18, Paul tells church members their responsibility to God.

1st – Paul tells the church to rejoice in all situations. Vs. 16

Christians can rejoice in good and bad situations because they have a good and great Heavenly Father who loves them and is always doing or allowing what is best for them (Phil. 4:4-20).

2nd – Paul tells the church never to stop praying. Vs. 17

Through prayer, we praise, reprioritize our lives, confess our sins, and ask our Heavenly Father for supernatural wisdom, power, and provisions (Matt. 6:9-13).

3rd – Paul tells the church to be thankful in all circumstances. Vs. 18

Even in times of great anxiety, loss, and pain, we are called to be grateful for all the Lord has done and is doing for us (Col. 2:6-7; 3:15-17; 4:2)!

In Vs. 19-22, Paul tells church members their responsibility to the Word of God.

1st – Paul tells the church not to quench the Holy Spirit. Vs. 19

Once saved, the Holy Spirit gifts us for service and progressively makes us holy like Christ (Romans 6-8; 12:4-13; Phil. 1:6; 3:20-21). Paul's command in Vs. 19 is to cooperate with the Spirit of God so we can become the person He wants us to become (Gal. 5:16-25).

2nd – Paul tells the church to not scoff at prophecies. Vs. 20

The New Testament gift of prophecy is not foretelling the future or giving the church some new revelation from the Lord. It is publicly declaring biblical truth (Rom. 12:6; 2 Tim. 4:2). Paul's command in Vs. 20 is to not look down on or disregard any biblical truth given to us.

3rd – Paul tells the church to hold on to what is good and stay away from evil. Vs. 21-22

Church members are to use the Bible to test a speaker's message (2 Timothy 3:16-17). After testing (Acts 17:10-12), we are to embrace what is true and stay away from what is false.

Takeaways...

1. We are to appreciate our pastors and support, encourage, and pray for them.
2. We are to warn the lazy, encourage the timid, take tender care of the weak, and be patient and good to all people.
3. We are to possess joy and practice prayer and thanksgiving continually.
4. We are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work, embrace biblical truth, and stay away from what is false.