

1 THESSALONIANS

Lesson 8 w/Answers: Encouragement and Instruction for Today

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

In the previous lesson, Paul encouraged the church at Thessalonica—as well as us today—by reassuring them that even if they died before Christ’s return, they would be resurrected and not miss his return. He further encouraged them (and us) to be diligent and sober in our actions and not to fear the wrath and judgment of God, since through Christ we will kept from them.

With this reassurance, Paul now tells us how we are to live and conduct ourselves within the church body as we eagerly look toward Christ’s return. We will specifically be looking at Paul’s commands to rejoice "evermore;" and "in everything give thanks" and consider what this means during times of turmoil and challenge in our lives. Paul’s commands are excellent for all of us to apply to our lives. I pray you will be blessed even more than usual by your study of this passage.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 and consider the following questions:

1. There are three groups, or people, addressed by Paul in this passage. Can you identify them?
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 refers to _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Those who work hard among us, and who care for us in Jesus’ name.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 refers to _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Those among us who are idle and disruptive.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22 refers to _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Those who rejoice, those who pray continually, those "who give thanks in all circumstances," those who test prophecy, those who reject evil, and those who hold on to "what is good."
2. Within the church then, Paul calls out our responsibilities and relationships to the leadership that God places over us within his church, the people who make up that church body, and us individually. In referring to the church leaders, why does Paul say we are to "esteem them very highly?"
 - a. ANSWER: Paul instructs us to hold the Church’s leadership in high esteem, or highest regard, in love "because of their work." The work of the leadership within the body of Christ is essential if we are to successfully accomplish his will for his Church. The responsibility for this leadership falls on them; and because it does, we are to respect them and acknowledge the great responsibilities God has given them. (See Jeremiah 3:15, Jeremiah 23:2, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 5:2 for example.)
3. Identified in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 are five things we are to do as a church body. They are:
 - a. Warn the _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Warn those who are "idle and disruptive."
 - b. Comfort the _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Comfort the "disheartened or fainthearted."
 - c. Support the _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Support the "weak."
 - d. Be patient towards _____.
 - i. ANSWER: Be patient towards "everyone."
 - e. See that none render evil for _____.
 - i. ANSWER: See that no one renders evil for "evil"—always pursue what is good

4. Paul then instructs us individually in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22. We are told to:
- a. Rejoice _____
 - i. ANSWER: Rejoice "always."
 - b. Pray without _____
 - i. ANSWER: Pray without "ceasing."
 - c. In everything give _____
 - i. ANSWER: In everything give "thanks."
 - d. Quench not the _____
 - i. ANSWER: Quench not the "Spirit."
 - e. Despise not _____
 - i. ANSWER: Despise not "prophecies."
 - f. Prove (or test) all _____
 - i. ANSWER: Prove (or test) all "prophecy," holding on to what is good.
 - g. Abstain from _____
 - i. ANSWER: Abstain from, or reject, "every kind of evil."
5. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul tells us to give thanks in "everything." Why does he say that we should do this?
- a. ANSWER: We can sometimes have difficulty understanding this verse, knowing that we live in a fallen world among fallen people and bad things can happen to us. James 1:2-4 tells us that we should consider it "pure joy" when we face the trials of life. He tells us this because he knows that these trials help us to grow spiritually, and to develop perseverance; and, in-turn, this growth allows us to help and serve others who are going through similar trials. In Philippians 4:6, Paul tells us not to be "anxious for anything," and to take our concerns to God in prayer. If we do, "the peace of God" will guard our hearts and minds in Christ. Further, we to give thanks in *all* circumstances—because no matter what circumstance we find ourselves in, it is because "this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." That is, we can know that no matter what happens, this is God's will for us; it is for a purpose, a divine one, and therefore we should rejoice. We may not understand it at the time; perhaps God is using a particular circumstance to discipline us in order to "produce a harvest of righteousness and peace" (Hebrews 12:11); or to grow our faith and perseverance, as James wrote in his letter. Whatever the circumstance, and whatever the reason, we can be assured that it is God's will for our lives; and because He cares about us we should rejoice and give thanks, no matter the circumstance.
6. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, what does it mean to be "sanctified?"
- a. ANSWER: Again, for Christians, "sanctified" means to be set apart. When we read that we are sanctified by our faith in Christ, it means that God has set us apart eternally; it cannot be reversed. Once God has sanctified us through the blood of his only son Jesus, we as believers are separated unto Him. In this verse, Paul is telling us that God is the one who is taking the action to sanctify each of us. He is setting apart our very being, "our spirit, soul, and body" so that we are kept blameless at the "coming of the Lord." This is not something we can do; it is only something that God can do. God is holy and through His Holy Spirit, we are instructed in 1 Peter 1:15 to "be holy in all you do." In other words, we are to act, think, walk, talk, and behave as those who have been set apart by God—and not to act as the world does.
7. Finally, consider 1 Thessalonians 5:16 and 18, and James 1:2. How can we rejoice in everything, when many things in life are difficult, painful, challenging, uncertain, and cause us to become filled with anxiety?
- a. ANSWER: By way of review, as we have observed in our study, above all else we should see God in everything, recognizing the great gift of eternal life He has given us through His only son Jesus. Accordingly, we are to live a life which reflects that eternal hope. We also have recognize that when we become one of God's children, He, through his Holy Spirit, will lead us to walk a path that is in accordance with His will, and not ours. In Isaiah 55:8, God tells us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord." Often we may find ourselves overwhelmed by the challenges of the day, but we can have God's inner peace knowing that He is leading us. All we need to do is follow and have faith that God will bring us through it, in accordance with his perfect will. The real blessing is knowing that God has chosen us, as followers of Jesus, to set apart, to sanctify, and to bring us into His eternal presence. Now that's something to rejoice about, no matter what the day brings!

In closing, please read Matthew 6:25-34 this week. It will give you great peace, and free you from anxiety and worry.

Thanks for studying with us.

In Christ,

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