

8/23/20

Recap of last week's message (8/16/20 - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15):

1. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12ff, Paul turns his attention from the future (the Rapture 4:13-18; the Day of the Lord 5:1-11) to the present responsibilities of the Thessalonians. Using a number of imperatives in quick, staccato-like instructions, Paul deals with the proper attitude toward church leaders (5:12-13); responsibilities toward each other (5:14-15); personal responsibilities (5:16-18); and responsibilities concerning the Word of God (5:19-22). Kind of a first century HR handbook for the church.
2. Paul calls for the believers in Thessalonica to respect their spiritual leaders ("Hold them in highest regard in love for their work"). Spiritual ministry is difficult; spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically exhausting. Spiritual leaders are responsible to God for those under their care (Hebrews 13:17). They are called to be servant leaders not lords or tyrants over others (Matthew 20:26-28; 1 Peter 5:2,3). Part of the ministry of leaders is to admonish those under their care; to correct wrong doctrine and living; to redirect them from wrong ways and wrong behavior. This can lead to resentment on the part of the one corrected. Thus Paul calls for leaders to be esteemed, valued for their work's sake. Love must prevail. Leaders must not abuse their authority and church members were not to disregard their leadership.
3. In 5:14,15, Paul lists the responsibilities of believers to each other. They are to "warm those who are idle." The same word as "admonish" in verse 12. They are to take corrective measures against those who shirked their daily responsibilities; an issue Paul dealt with earlier in the book and one he would deal with in 2 Thessalonians 3:6,7. They were to be self-supporting and not a burden to others. Secondly, they were to encourage the timid; that is those who had lost heart and were ready to quit. Thirdly, they were to help the weak; those who were spiritually weak, weak in faith. They needed to learn to trust the Lord for their spiritual needs, to lean on other believers (Galatians 6:1). Fourth, they were to be patient with everyone. Spiritual ministry can try one's patience, but believers are to exercise patience with others.
4. Last of all Paul calls upon believers to refuse to retaliate against one another. Jesus' principle in Matthew 5:38-42 forbid retribution or retaliation against another. (He did not, however, forbid self-defense). The alternative to retaliation is kindness, to "try to be kind." They must work at replacing revenge with kindness.