

Paul's Letters to the **Thessalonians**



Lesson 7-The Apostle's Final Instructions

Focus: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

➤ Final points of instruction from Brother Paul (v.12-22)

- (v.12-13) *The brethren were to **get to know their leaders in the faith** and to have a loving and good relationship with them. It is always advisable for us to get to know the leaders around us in our church and community and to have a decent and proper relationship with them—especially with our leaders in the faith.*
- (v.14) **We should have concern for the lives of those around us.** *We should take an interest in other's lives and see what can be done to help each other. If some are living in error, we should lovingly and humbly strive to share a good example and also to encourage others to walk in the right way. Actually, we all need to encourage each other to walk faithfully in the way of the Lord! "...exhorting one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). This is often done well in the public meetings and being generally spoken to the group, but sometimes some specific counsel and lovingly concerned talk needs to be had with individuals, humbly so. We should help and support the weak among us, caring for others too.*
- (v.15) **We should follow what is good, and do not repay evil for evil.** *But, repay all things with love and kindness. **Jesus taught us about this subject of loving our enemies and not retaliating to their evil in some kind of evil way**, when He spoke His great Sermon on the Mount of Olives! (See **Matthew 5:38-42**, on retaliation, and **v.43-48** on loving even our enemies, with God's perfect love). Do what is good to all people.*
- (v.16-18) **Pray always, and give thanks to God for everything**—that is Christ's will for you! *We should not resist God's Holy Spirit! Having a **regular prayer life** is very important and even essential for our life with God and our connection to Him. We should not let the distractions of this world interfere with our prayer life and our connection to God. Every day, morning and evening, and throughout the day we lift our hearts to God in prayer! We need to cultivate the habit of talking with God about everything! Prayer does not bring God down to us, but **prayer lifts us up to God!** Prayer is our connection with the source of all power and of all strength—we must depend upon God continually, even for life itself. Develop the habit of talking with God more. Focus on the Lord. Learn how to pray more deeply and with greater concentration and sincere devotion. Our prayers can and will become a sincere blessing and joy that you would feel empty to live without! Take out the distractions from your life that might be hindering your prayers and then have focused prayer time with God. If you've got worldly music lyrics and TV pictures going through your head every time you want to prayer then maybe you ought to consider eliminating those distractions. Pick up your Bible and read it! This will also help your prayer life to become more focused and productive! You can develop the habit*

of prayer and it will be an incredible blessing and a genuine source of strength and power for life! Spending sincere time with God you can learn to be focused and blessed in God's presence!

- *(v.19-21) **We should not despise prophesying's, but test everything!** Some people have taken a negative or a bad attitude to anyone who claims to have been given insight from God. The Bible says that we should not take a negative attitude. But, neither should we believe everything or everyone that we hear just blindly. No. Actually, we should "test all things and hold fast what is good." (Also see 1 John 4:1,2 and the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:4,5, 24). Jesus did not say that there would be no prophets within His church! But He did say to watch out for the false ones! All throughout history there were the false and the true! We should carefully evaluate these matters based on the Bible! Prophecy is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which God does give to some individuals within His church at various times and places—and yes in the last days too! They came in the early church too—both men and women even! (See Acts 2:17,18; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-31; Luke 2:36; Acts 11:28; 21:8, 9, 10; 2 Kings 22:14). We should just test, **(1)** Do they obey and go by all the Bible; do they uphold God's holy Law or commandments? (See Isaiah 8:20), **(2)** Do they glorify Jesus Christ, and not themselves (1 John 4:1,2), **(3)** Do they have the righteous fruit of a true messenger from God in their life, and do they lead others to have a solid and real faith in Jesus Christ—personal fruits and ministry fruits (Matthew 7:15-20). These are among some of the tests we must apply. Also, if they make predictions, these should come to pass, or else they are not from God. But, obedience to God is much more important than a miracle or a fulfilled prophecy (See Deut. 18:19-22).*
- *(v.22) **We should also "abstain from all appearance of evil."** Not only is the act of evil a bad thing, but also the appearance of evil is a bad thing. We should not make or set an example that looks like a bad or evil thing. It is not good for Christ's or our own reputation, and it is not a good example to others. It could also lead to sin in the lives of others, or perhaps even our own. Stay as far away from evil as you can! Don't make it so easy for someone to misconstrue or question your actions. Remember too, that sometimes things which have the appearance of evil can even open the door to evil and give Satan a place of attack in your life! (For example, keeping late hours in places you shouldn't; meeting with members of the opposite sex at inappropriate times, places, or under bad circumstances and also having no outside witnesses). Sometimes, even an innocent action could appear evil and bring condemnation or ill thoughts to the mind of others (See 1 Samuel 1:12-16 for an example).*
- **Final prayers, wishes, and goodbye (v.23-28).**
 - *(v.23) Paul here prays for the sanctification of the believers—that God would make them holy—and that truly they would submit themselves to such a work by God! (That their souls would be purified by the presence and power of God working in their lives!).*
 - *The brethren should all be greeted in a holy way, which was fitting for the culture of that time and place, and this epistle or letter was to be read to all the brethren for its instruction was very practical and very important for the faith of the believers!*

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to live a life that follows the pattern of Jesus' life, by God's grace? _____