

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Theme

Because we are pleasing to God, we are called to progress in godliness in every area of life. For the Christian, progress in holiness is a lifetime of growth, like learning a musical instrument. We begin fully accepted by God because of Jesus' death for us. God knows our sin completely and is at work in us to bring us to holiness.

Outline

1. 5:12-13, We are to progress in identifying and showing honor to those who serve the church.
2. 5:14-15, We are to progress in our ability to help each other grow, according to the needs of the person.
3. 5:16-18, We are to progress in our rest and delight in God's grace so that we bear the fruit of joy, prayerfulness, and gratitude.
4. 5:19-22, We are to grow in cultivating the life of the Spirit governed by truth.
5. 5:23-24, All of this is founded on the certain completion of God's work in us.

Quotes

- *The policy of Paul and his colleagues seems to have been to wait until qualities of spiritual leadership displayed themselves in certain members of the church and then urge the others to acknowledge and respect those as leaders. One of the most obvious qualities of leadership was a readiness to serve the church and care for its needs. Such leaders did not do the appropriate work because they had been appointed; they were recognized as leaders because they were seen doing the work. - F. F. Bruce -*
- *As the God whom they call Father is good to all, irrespective of their deserts, so must they be. - F. F. Bruce -*
- *You will fail to obey God because you are not trying to obey God out of gospel principles. In order to truly obey God, you must have the assurance of God's love for you. - Walter Marshall -*

Application

1. Do you see the commands of God as a way to measure growth or as a condition of your acceptance with God?
  2. How do you fight condemnation? What truth do you apply to your life from this passage to help with condemnation?
  3. How do you fight discouragement? What truth do you apply to your life from this passage to fight discouragement?
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