

Jesus is coming back. First for His church and then to put an end to Satan's lies and deceptions. So what are we to do in the meantime? Do we sit back and wait for Jesus to come for His bride? Should we stop our work and ministry and just wait?

We have learned over our time together that we are already seated in the heavenlies with Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). We already have victory over the ruler of this world and his schemes. But even though we are seated in the heavenlies, our feet are still on this earth. This is still our temporary home, and we are surrounded by people who have no hope, people who have fallen prey to Satan's lies. As long as we walk around on this earth, we have a job to do, so let's get busy and be God's hands, feet, and mouth piece.

Paul spent the end of chapter four and the beginning of chapter five giving us great encouragement in what is going to come for the believer. We are to encourage each other as we expectantly wait for the return of the Son for His bride. But while we are waiting, we have a job to do. We need to invite everyone we can to come to the wedding feast. Paul gives the practical day to day activities that we are to live out in these days while we wait.

Study well as we finish up the book of I Thessalonians. Be busy with admonishing the unruly, encouraging the fainthearted, and helping the weak. Are you living as you ought to live in these last days? Put on your armor, you are in a fight and the battle will become more intense everyday. There is no room for fainthearted people in battle which is why we are to be encouraging them and helping them to prepare for the days to come.

DAY ONE

Be sure to begin each day in prayer. As you look at this lesson, ask God to show you areas in your life that you need to strengthen. If you are living as you ought to live, ask God to show you how to excel still more.

1. Let's start off this week by reading I Thessalonians 5:12-28. It shouldn't be difficult to see that Paul is laying out instructions for our daily walk. You need to look at and understand each of these instructions and how they apply to you.
2. Focusing on verses 12-13, Paul gives three instructions. List what they are.

3. In verse 12, Paul gives you a description of the people whom you are to appreciate. How are they described in this verse? Again, he lists three attributes of these people. Make sure to list all three.

4. Here we are, living in a world that is almost 2,000 years removed from the writing of I Thessalonians. We tend to be very shortsighted and filter all that we read and study by our own experiences. Let's step back in time for a bit and question why Paul may have tied these three instructions (appreciate those, esteem them, and live in peace) with the description that he gave of those they were to appreciate (diligently labor among you, have charge over you, and give you instruction). If you remember the history of this book, Paul came and brought the gospel to those in Thessalonica. They received the Word, became imitators, and then became examples of living out the Word. The church was started and they were all novices (new believers). There were no pastors that went to seminary and have had years of practice at pastoring a church. Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus, through the wisdom of God, must have appointed certain people to run this new church. With that in mind, can you understand why these instructions may have been given? For those of you who have been studying the book of Exodus with us, you may have more information to draw on from the study of Aaron and his sons being chosen to be priests unto God. If you need help answering this questions you may want to read Numbers 16-17.

5. The command in verse 13 is to “live in peace with one another” (be at peace among yourselves - KJV). The word “live” or “be” is in the present tense, imperative mood. Present tense means that it is to be a lifestyle, an habitual action, and the imperative mood makes it a command, not a suggestion. They are to live a lifestyle of peace with one another. There is another word that needs to be looked up and that is the word “appreciate” in verse 12. Find out what that word is in the Greek and record its transliteration and the definition of the word. Put that back in verse 12 and explain why Paul used that word and whether it changes your understanding of what Paul is saying.

6. There are those who lead, rule, or teach, and then there are those who are led, ruled over, or taught. God has given each person responsibilities toward the other. Take some time to read and meditate on these Scriptures and then record the information on the chart on page 114.
 - a. Romans 12:8
 - b. Romans 13:1-5
 - c. I Corinthians 9:1-18
 - d. Galatians 6:6, 10
 - e. I Timothy 1:6-7
 - f. James 3:1-3

Responsibilities of Leaders, Rulers, or Teachers	Responsibilities of Those Being Led, Ruled Over, or Taught

7. One last question to mull over before we call it a day. God is a God of order (I Corinthians 11:1). There is to be an order in the body of Christ. What happens within the body when order is disrupted.
 - a. Read I Corinthians 11:3 and record the order that you see there.
 - b. When order is broken, it brings strife. There is a competition to see who can grab the most powerful, prestigious position. Read Mark 10:35-45 and record what you learn.
 - c. How does this play out within the church body? Take into consideration all that you have studied today to answer this question. This is the reason that Paul gave the instructions that he did in verses 12-13. Those instructions seem to make perfect sense now, don't they?

1. Paul continues his instructions. Yesterday you saw the instructions that were given between those who are in charge of the body of Christ and those who are to be submissive within the body. Today you are going to look at I Thessalonians 5:14-15. Read these verses and take note of the groups of Christians that Paul discusses and what our response should be to each of those groups. Record your answers below. (You should find four different groups.)

- a. How many times is this done by individual Christians or by the church? Have you admonished anyone or you the type who grumbles and complains about others? How do you think God would want you to change in this matter?

b. Does Scripture give you any help to know how to admonish someone? We know that if God calls us to do something, He equips you to accomplish His will. Read the following references and record what you learn about each.

1) Proverbs 15:31-32

2) Proverbs 27:5-6

3) Proverbs 28:23

4) Ecclesiastes 8:11

5) Matthew 18:15-17

6) Galatians 6:1

7) II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15

8) I Timothy 5:19-21

DAY THREE

From your study to this point, you know that the church at Thessalonica was suffering a great persecution. In the midst of that suffering, there were those who were becoming fainthearted. Fainting is not of the Lord. Perfect love casts out all fear (I John 4:18), therefore, we don't have a spirit of timidity (fear) but of power, love, and discipline (II Timothy 1:7). We are called to stand firm because we are strengthened in God's power and His might (Ephesians 6:10). Yes, living in this world is hard, but we have been made overcomers through Christ (I John 5:4-5). So pull yourself up by your spiritual boot straps, put on the full armor of God, and run into the battle because the victory belongs to the Lord (Proverbs 21:31).

With that said, what must you do when you see someone who is fainthearted. Since we are members of one body, when one person is affected, it affects the body as a whole. Is it any wonder that the church today is so weak?

1. Paul tells us to "encourage the fainthearted" (comfort the feeble-minded - KJV) Look up the words "encourage (comfort)" and "fainthearted (feeble-minded)." Record what you learn.
2. The question you should be asking is, "How do I do that?" You are going to see the examples set forth in Scripture. Hebrews 12 is sometimes called the chastening or discipline chapter. It is designed to encourage those who are losing heart (fainting). The word heart is "psyche" which means "soul" or "life." We get the word psyche from it. Remember this battle is taking place in the mind. As a man thinks so he is (Proverbs 23:7).

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and record how you could use these verses to encourage someone who is fainthearted.

3. Read the following verses and see if they can be useful in encouraging others to not lose heart.

- a. Galatians 6:8-10

- b. Ephesians 3:12-14

4. Paul had a special relationship with Timothy. Timothy was a young man who had a tendency to be fainthearted, but Paul was mentoring him to take over the ministry when Paul was put to death. Take a moment to read II Timothy 1:6-12 and record what you learn about Timothy from these verses.

5. Now watch to see how Paul came alongside Timothy to encourage him. You can learn much from. I am also throwing in a Proverbs passage for good measure. Record what you learn about working with someone who needs encouragement.

- a. Proverbs 12:25

- b. I Timothy 1:18-19

- c. II Timothy 2:1

- d. II Timothy 3:10-14

e. II Timothy 4:5

6. What about you? Are you bold or fainthearted? If you are one who tends to be a Timothy, you need to align yourself with a Paul. If you are a Paul, then you need to be on the look out for those who may be Timothys.

DAY FOUR

1. Another exhortation by Paul was to “help the weak” (support the weak - KJV). Using your study tools yet again, look up the words for “help (support)” and “weak.”

2. God doesn't give us room to be impatient with those who have not matured to a point where they can stand up under persecution and not be intimidated by Satan's attacks. We are all part of the body of Christ and are therefore, responsible to help those who are weak. How can you help those who are weak? Read the following verses and record what you learn.

a. Matthew 26:41

b. Luke 22:31-32

c. I Corinthians 8:7-13

d. I Peter 3:7

e. Acts 12:25; 15:36-40; II Timothy 4:11 (All these verses deal with John Mark, also known as Mark. Read these passages and note what the disagreement was about. Who supported John Mark? Who wanted nothing to do with John Mark? What was the end result of this conflict. Interestingly enough, Barnabas means son of encouragement. Think about that and what may have happened if there wasn't a son of encouragement around.)

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