



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

## *1 Thess 5:12-15 – Our Relationship to Spiritual Leaders*

- *1 Thessalonians 5:12 – And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,*
  - *And we urge (beseech) you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you*
    - Twenty-one times in the Thessalonian epistles alone, Paul addresses the believers of this church as “brethren”
    - *Urge* or *beseech* reflects an atmosphere of begging or exhortation but with respect, here for *those who labored among them*.
      - *1 Cor 16:18 - For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men.*
      - *1 Tim 5:17 - Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.*
      - *Heb 13:17 - Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*
  - How do we *recognize* (*eido* - *know*) those that are *laboring* and what is *laboring*?



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

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- In Greek, the interpretation here is those who *labor* extensively with wearisome effort or toil!
- Thus, is this simply respect or could it be a deep-seated concern?

– *and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,*

- *over you* is one who presides and serves as a guardian.

– *Phil 1:1 - Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops (overseers) and deacons:*

- And what are the duties of *those who are over us*?
  - Effort rather than laziness, guidance, teaching

- How should we interpret *admonish*?

– In Greek means to *put in mind*, implying not arbitrary authority delivered in a rebuking manner, but gentle, though faithful, admonition.

- ***1 Thessalonians 5:13 - and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.***

– *and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

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- How should we interpret *esteem*?
  - Is it to command or rule, or deem, account or think?
    - » Keep in mind it's their work not their personality.
  - The idlers in Thessalonica had evidently refused to follow their leaders in church activities.
  - Whatever it's *very highly in love (agape) for their work's sake!*
    - » McCalley – 'Very highly is a strong double compound superlative adverb and means out of all bounds, beyond all measure.'
    - » *Gal 6:6 - Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.*
  - *Be at peace among yourselves.*
- This is an imperative – cultivate and live in it!
  - Keathley III – 'But the command to live in peace is not only a protection, but a result. Perhaps the Apostle is saying here that obeying the former instructions will enable you to fulfill this command.'
    - » *Col 3:15 - And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*
- How does this relate to the sentence before?
  - McCalley - Some interpreters attach the exhortation to live in peace to the verses that follow rather than verses 12 and 13. If this be the case, the



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

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command is general and one another describes all other believers. On the other hand, it seems that the context argues that one another refers to the believer and the leadership. Believers are to love their leaders, and those who lead are to love the ones led.'

- ***1 Thessalonians 5:14 - Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.***
  - *Now we exhort (parakaleō) you, brethren, warn those who are unruly;*
    - This is strong language but not an imperative but indictive - a fact!
      - Is this to the leaders only or all of us?
    - Who are the *unruly*?
      - Only NT use – reflects the military SOP as those who are disorderly, out of ranks; deviating from the prescribed order or rule; or irregular or inordinate.
        - » So, what does this look like in the body?
        - » *2 Thess 3:6 - But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which they received from us.*
  - *comfort the fainthearted (feebly minded)*



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

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- Another one and only NT only use, and this is an imperative.
  - discouraged, little-spirited, i.e., faint-hearted
- *uphold (support, help) the weak,*
  - Another imperative
  - Are these members *weak* in spirit and/or flesh?
    - *Rom 6:19 - speak in human terms because of the **weakness of your flesh.** For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, **so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.***
- *be patient with all.*
  - Another imperative and how should we interpret two different types of verbs in these instructions?
  - This is to all people in all situations.
    - The same patience is required toward non-Christians, but reference to them is not specific until v15.
  - Many of us are not patient people, how can this be developed?
    - Strong - to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish.'



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

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- » *1 Cor 13:4 - Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;*
- » *2 Tim 2:24,25 - And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,*
- » *Prov 14:29 - He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.*

- ***1 Thessalonians 5:15 – See that no one render(s) evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.***

- *See that (imperative) no one renders evil for evil to anyone,*
  - What should we conclude from ‘no one’ (none) and ‘anyone’?
    - Keathley III – ‘We might also note that Paul moves from the second person plural, “you all see that,” to the third person singular, “no one pays back evil for evil to anyone.” This stresses that the whole congregation of believers is responsible to see to this personally and corporately.
    - This means everyone!
  - *render* is in the subjunctive tense.
  - *evil* is wrong inflicted



# *1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Paul to Thessalonica*

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- *Rom 12:17 – Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.*
- *1 Peter 3:9 - not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*
- *but always pursue (imperative) what is good both for yourselves and for all.*
  - *pursue (follow) - to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire.*
  - *but is important here, however, do we always know what is good (agathos)?*
    - *In context what is upright, honorable, and acceptable to God!*
      - » *Rom 12:2 - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
  - *The primary objective here is the spiritual welfare of the offender.*
    - *Thomas - Non-retaliation for personal wrongs is perhaps the best evidence of personal Christian maturity.'*