

High Peaks Bible Fellowship

What Distinguishes Believers from Those in Darkness? (1 Thessalonians [5:12-28](#))

Respect for spiritual leaders (1 Thess. [5:12-13](#))

- *NOW* = Paul makes a request. The first thing that distinguishes believers from those in the darkness is their appreciation and esteem for those who lead them. Paul had certainly appointed elders in the church at Thessalonica (see his typical practice in Acts [14:23](#)).
- He asks a two-fold request:
 1. Appreciate leaders (1 Thess. [5:12](#)) = literally, to see them, to pay attention to them, to have the proper respect for them.
 2. Esteem leaders *very* highly (1 Thess. [5:13](#)) = to consider them and form a high estimate of them. They are to do this in love rather than out of fear or in hypocrisy. Not in words only, but from the heart.
- Since the Thessalonian church was relatively new, the elders were probably new converts who were relatively immature in their faith. This may have been part of the reason that people were treating them with less respect. Paul will pick up this theme again later in this section.
- There are three facets of leadership that Paul discusses here:
 1. they labor = toil even when exhausted.
 2. they have charge over = literally, *those who stand in front of you*, to lead & direct or to protect & care for others.
 3. they give instruction = literally, *to put sense into the mind of someone*, to correct those who are in error.
- Live in peace = maintain a quality of life that is characterized by peace. This is the first of 15 present imperatives contained in the next ten verses of this passage.

Willingness to follow several imperatives (1 Thess. [5:14-22](#))

1. Live in peace with others (see 1 Thess. [5:13](#)).
2. Admonish those walking out of step with God's Word.
3. Console the timid, the fearful, and those without courage.
4. Uphold those who lack moral or spiritual strength.
5. Be long-tempered with everyone.
6. See to it that no one repays evil with evil.
7. Diligently pursue what is good for believers (and for everyone).
8. Maintain a continual attitude of rejoicing in all circumstances,
9. ... worshipping God and praying uninterruptedly,
10. ... and giving thanks under all conditions.
11. Do not suppress the leading of the Holy Spirit within you.
12. Do not downplay what is spoken as being from God.
13. Thoroughly examine what is spoken as from God and approve it only after careful testing.
14. Own or hold fast to what is good.

15. Keep your distance from every kind of evil, even from what might appear to others as evil.

What makes it possible for believers to follow these imperatives? (1 Thess. [5:23-24](#))

- This *peaceful* quality of life (see 1 Thess. [5:13](#)) comes about as God Himself sanctifies believers. The "God of Peace" is the only One who is capable of making a person holy.
- God is faithful = He loved you and chose you, He called you and drew you, and now that you belong to Him He is certainly not going to leave the chain of redemption unfinished. You can depend upon His faithfulness to actually perform the work and bring it to completion.

Paul's final requests (1 Thess. [5:25-28](#))

- *Brothers, pray for us* = now, Paul gives them a possible object for their prayers!
- They are also to treat each other with kindness and show the proper signs of Christian affection to one another. However, even these signs of affection are to be holy, and they are to guard against any improper familiarity or sin.
- He puts them under a solemn oath to have the written Word of God publicly read. The written Scriptures must be read and explained so that mutual accountability and growth in holiness & maturity will result.

Points of Application:

- This passage is very practical, and each verse contains its own practical applications.
- We must keep in mind, however, that it is God Himself who sanctifies us completely. Allow Him to perform His work of grace in you without resistance of any kind.
- "*Faithful is He who calls you, who will also perform it!*"

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Our primary purpose is to uphold the truths of the Word of God.

I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

Our primary responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)