

## **1 Thessalonians 5b**

*12 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.*

Paul concludes this letter with a list of advice like a string of pearls. His first point is to have respect for the leadership of the church that works hard, those who admonish (warn) you. Who warns you in your fellowship? What kind of warnings or admonitions do you receive? Stay in the Word. Be faithful in prayer. Don't compromise with the world. They are admonitions much like the ones that follow. Shepherding God's flock is a difficult and selfless task. Many times the leader's admonitions are rejected and then the offended party tries to find fault in the leader. In some countries the leaders are the target of attack. They are always the target of the enemy. Do you hold your leaders in high regard in love? Hebrews 13:17

It isn't by chance that this first pearl is followed by the command to live in peace with each other. This is the elder's most difficult task, being a peacemaker within the flock. It is easy to think they are taking sides when they have one goal in mind, peace within the flock. One way to honor your elders and the Lord is to live in peace. That usually means dying to yourself and your right to be right or to have your personal preferences. Hebrews 12:14; Colossians 3:15

*14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*

There is some speculation that a few people had quit their jobs and were just waiting for Jesus to show up. (This literally means, "warn the quitters!") In the mean time they lived off the hospitality of the church. Paul is telling the church to give them a warning. Will they respect the elders that do so? Ephesians 4:28 Some folks need more encouragement than others. They are naturally timid. The Greek means those whose souls are small. As members of the same body, we need to encourage them in the faith. Think of someone right now that you know needs to be encouraged. How can you encourage them? Maybe a note, or an invitation to spend a little time together. Romans 14:1

Everyone needs patience. We are all a work in progress. Remember that what you sow you reap. If you are patient with others, they will be patient with you. That requires you to overlook a harsh word when they are having a tough day, or perhaps an idiosyncrasy that annoys you but isn't really something evil. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

*15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.*

Getting even isn't an option for Christians. We feel most hurt by those who are in the spiritual family, but as members of one body, as brothers and sisters in

Christ, we are to forgive. Kindness should be the mark of our Christianity.  
Ephesians 4:32

*16 Be joyful always;*

Joy is the deep abiding sense of being right with God, loved by Him, destined for heaven. Happiness on the other hand is pleased with your present circumstances. Don't forget that those who mourn are blessed. You can mourn and yet possess joy. Christians should be noted for kindness, but also for joy. Philippians 4:4 Our rejoicing is in Christ, and unlike circumstances, He never changes.

*17 pray continually;*

This does not mean to be on our face doing nothing all day but talking to God. It does mean that as we go about our day and whatever we must do we should enjoy the company and fellowship of the Spirit of God. You can and should pray as you do everything. Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18

*18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Taking this verse to heart will change your life. It changes your life because it changes your attitude. If you trust that the circumstances in your life will all work together for good (Romans 8:28) even when you don't understand them, you can give thanks by faith. If you believe that though the world is evil, God is good and has good plans for you, you can give thanks. The enemy of your soul loves to see God's people discouraged and complaining. It ruins their effectiveness. If you will be determined to look past your circumstance to the Sovereign One who loves you, the enemy will not be able to win that battle. This is God's will for you! People pray for God to show them His will. This is it!

Consider these last four admonitions, kindness, joy, prayer, and thankfulness. If these were the dominate qualities the world saw in the church you attend, what would be the worlds attitude toward your church? How inviting that church would be! Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6

*19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire;*

When the Spirit is moving you, prompting you to praise, or share, or sing, or cry, just do it! Let go! Don't stifle the Spirit of God. When you sense Him stirring your heart, join in with your whole being. Think of it like your spouse wanting to share something important. If you turn away, refusing to listen, it shows a lack of love and concern. Acts 7:51

*20 do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.*

"Though much of OT prophecy was purely predictive, see [Micah 5:2](#), e.g., and cp. [John 11:51](#), prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore-telling. It is the declaration of

that which cannot be known by natural means, [Matt. 26:68](#), it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see [Gen. 20:7](#); [Deut. 18:18](#); [Rev. 10:11](#); [Rev. 11:3](#). ...

—Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

When someone speaks forth the Word of God in instruction or reproof, we should take it to heart, but we should also test it. What is in line with the Word we should cling to. I'm often amazed how the Lord will speak through a sermon to a need that will soon present itself, and yet we have forgotten its application during the week. Paul is saying to test everything. Prophecy, preaching, comments, teaching, etc. and hang onto the good stuff. 1 Corinthians 14:29

*22 Avoid every kind of evil.*

If after testing it you find it is evil, don't go near it! We often see how close we can come to evil. That shows our ignorance of how destructive evil is. Stay far from it. Romans 12:17 Sometimes we are most tempted to do evil when evil is done to us. Don't go there; it will only make it worse.

*23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.*

You are holy in Christ Jesus. You are learning to live a holy life by your relationship with Him. He will see that this work is completed. 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Acts 26:18; Philippians 1:6 This is the only passage that mentions man's trinity. He has a body which houses His soul and spirit. The soul is the mind, will and emotions. The spirit is the Holy of Holies, the place where God resides within us. It is a place that is made alive when we are born again.

*25 Brothers, pray for us.*

Paul asked for prayer for the ministry team he worked with. I think it is significant that he did not say me. He thought in the same terms as the Lord's Prayer. He thought in community. He believed prayer made a difference and knew that they needed the prayers of the saints. Pray for your leaders in the Lord.

*26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

The believers were like family. They were to share this instruction from the Lord. You could consider this a prophecy, as it was a Word from God through Paul to the churches. He closes with his familiar closing remark. It is the one thing we truly need on a constant basis, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.