

1 Thessalonians 5: 12-18 (ESV) – How to treat one another

Main point: Treat each other well, because God is taking care of you.



Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: Scholars think this may have been the earliest written book in the New Testament, possibly around 50 A.D. It's a letter that Paul wrote to the church at Thessaloniki, which is still a city in Greece. Back then it was part of the Roman Empire and was a large port town that Paul visited on his second missionary journey. Paul ends the entire letter by giving the group some instructions on how to treat each other.

Focus of the study:

¹²We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Questions:

1. *Who is Paul talking to in this passage? Who do you think makes up a church group?*
 - a. leaders/pastors/ministers; regular members; and God. Paul is going to address all three of these in turn.
2. *What words does Paul use to tell the people how to treat their church leaders?*
 - a. v. 12-13: "respect" and "esteem"
 - i. *What does respect mean?* treat them with honor, not griping at them all the time, give them attention
 - ii. *What does esteem mean?* consider them honorable, upright; give them honor; praise and encourage them
3. *Are all leaders perfect? (Of course not...) Unfortunately, what is it easy to do when we don't like what a leader is doing? What could we do instead?*
 - a. It's easy to grumble and complain about leaders when they don't do things fast enough or the way we want them to.
 - b. Give them more credit 😊 Consider that they also have problems and are probably trying to do their best.
4. *Paul then turns to "yourselves," the "brothers." What kinds of attitude and behavior does Paul encourage among the members of the group?*
 - a. v. 13: Be at peace among yourselves. *What does this involve?*
 - i. Don't hold grudges; care for each other
 - b. v. 14: Admonish the idle. *I wonder what that means?*
 - i. Admonish: encourage, try to teach. Those who are not working or not busy enough may get into trouble or become frustrated; help them out.
 - c. Encourage the fainthearted. *How do you feel when you feel faint?*

- i. weak, tired, discouraged in heart and spirit
 - ii. Encourage: “in + courage”: lift someone up, give them courage, hope, faith, belief
 - d. Help the weak. *What other kinds of weakness are there besides in spirit?*
 - i. physical, mental ... We can listen, encourage, provide knowledge and give tangible care, like food and clothing
 - e. Be patient with all. *Who is “all”? Just people that are like you or agree with you or who do things the way you do things?*
 - i. No – everyone, even people who are really annoying 😊
 - f. Don’t repay evil for evil: *meaning?*
 - i. Don’t hold a grudge, look for revenge when you are wronged
 - g. Always do good to one another and to everyone: *How?*
 - ii. Offer comfort, assurance, peace, help.
5. v. 16-18: Then Paul turns to God. *What are Paul’s three pieces of wisdom for the people in this church and their relationship with God?*
- a. Rejoice always
 - b. Pray without ceasing
 - c. Give thanks in all circumstances
 - i. *How do we do these things, even when it’s hard, even when we don’t like our circumstances?*
 - 1. Perspective: Our circumstances are on this earthly level, right in front of us. *Where is God?*
 - a. above all, sovereign and good; always watching out for us; always with us; always sustaining us.
 - ii. *How close is God? WITH US.* We can pray without ceasing because he’s there every day, every hour, every minute.
 - iii. *So how/why can we give thanks?* We are not alone; God knows what we need and will provide throughout, even when it’s hard.
 - d. *Who is taking care of you every minute of every day?* God of the universe. God is at your right hand.
 - e. *So why can we take care of others? How do we get the strength?*
 - i. Rejoice, pray, give thanks!

- Ask for prayer requests for today.
- Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
- End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

1 Thessalonians 5: 12-18

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.