

REQUESTS REGARDING LEADERS
1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Introduction

Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 as we begin our study of this last section of this epistle in which Paul addresses practical issues of holy living. He will address responsibilities to leaders in verses 12-13, then responsibilities to one another in verses 14-15, then responsibilities to self in verses 16-22 before concluding in verses 23-28.

We will be examining verses 12-13 this morning, and I will state up front that I am uncomfortable preaching here in this church on this passage or any of the others in which there is instruction on how the congregation should treat their leaders. It is too easy for it to sound self serving. I would much rather preach this as a guest pastor somewhere else or have a guest preacher tackle this passage here. However, it is the Word of God and we must examine it to understand and apply it whether comfortable or not.

My plan this morning is to first explain the request that Paul makes of the Thessalonians on how they are to treat their leaders, then I want to quickly go over the qualifications for church leaders, some instructions to church leaders on how they are to treat the sheep under their charge and finish by looking at additional instructions to congregations concerning their leaders. We need to make sure we have a balanced view of the relationship between church leaders and the congregation because it is too easy to emphasize one or the other to the detriment of the proper functioning of the church. It is also critical to know the Biblical requirements of a church leader to prevent the unqualified and the ungodly from leading the church astray. A tragedy that is much too common as people confuse church position with authority and actual leadership as commanded by God.

Instructions to the Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

The NASB translates this passage as, ¹²*But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,* ¹³*and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.* The last sentence, *“Live in peace with one another”* is better connected with the section on responsibilities to one another in verses 14-15, so we will deal with that next week. Remember, the chapter and verse designations are not part of the Scriptures. They were added after the invention of the printing press as reference points to aide discussion of the Biblical text. The widespread availability of the Bible to common people made this very helpful. I also want to point out that the ESV and NKJV translate this slightly differently. The ESV translates it as 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,* and the NKJV as, ¹²*And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,* ¹³*and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.* Let’s dig into the text and find out what Paul wants them to do.

A request, not a command. The verb translated here as request, ask, urge (ἐρωτάω / erōtō) is one we have seen before in 4:1. It is most commonly translated as “ask” with the context determining if that is asking a question or asking someone to do something as in this context, hence, a request. The context will also set the force of the request ranging all the way up to begging or imploring as in Acts 16:39 of the Philippian magistrates trying to get Paul and Silas to depart from their city. The context here is one of brothers requesting brothers to do something which is consistently the manner in which Paul uses this

word in all of his letters. This is an expression of the desires of Paul and his missionary co-laborers for the Thessalonians. And please note that this is in the indicative and not the imperative mood. This is a request and not a command.

Recognize or Respect? What is it that they would like the Thessalonians to do? The word used here (εἰδέναι / eidenai) is variously translated as appreciate, respect, recognize and know. It is a bit complex because it is the Perfect, Active, Infinitive of οἶδα / oida which is the perfect of the root εἶδ- / eid-) (TDNT) which formed two families of meaning, of which one signifies “to see” and the other “to know” (Thayer) and so also could be used for *knowledge of, understand and perceive*. In this particular verse it is used either in the sense of “to recognize” (TDNT) or Hebraistically with a meaning of have *regard for, cherish, pay attention to* (Thayer).

That sounds complex so let me simplify by giving you my own conclusion and reasoning. Paul is using this in the sense of *recognize* (NKJV, Holman) or *know* (Darby, Young’s Literal) for three reasons. First, that is the sense Paul uses this word in all of his other writings including 1 Thessalonians, so it would be very unusual to give this a meaning beyond that. Second, this context does not support an unusual meaning for Paul will call on them to esteem their leaders in verse 13. It would be redundant to force this to be an exceptional synonym for what he states clearly in verse 13. Third, it is logical that these leaders must first be recognized from among the people before they can be esteemed. What qualities or actions would set these leaders apart so that they could be recognized?

There are no references in this letter to church officers such as elders or deacons. It appears that the church was too new and Paul had to leave too quickly for any elders or deacons to be appointed, so Paul could not simply refer to those who held such positions. Instead, and in many ways much better, Paul points out three actions being done by these men that would call attention to them so that they are properly recognized. I have to point out here that just because someone has a position does not mean they are doing the work. In the church, it is not position, but actual ministry that is to be recognized as the mark of true leadership in the church.

Paul uses three masculine participles governed by one article in pointing out three actions being taken by these men that should cause them to be recognized. This is one group which is carrying out these three actions and not three separate groups doing three separate actions.

Toiling. First, recognize these men who are toiling among you. This is a verb form (κοπιᾶω / κοπιαῶ) of the noun (κόπος / kopos) we have seen three times in our study of 1 Thessalonians (1:3; 2:9; 3:5). It is to engage in hard work, toil, labor with wearisome effort. For example, Simon Peter used it in Luke 5:5 to describe to Jesus that they had “*worked hard all night and caught nothing.*” It is to be a quality that belongs to all Christians in their work to support themselves and others (Ephesians 4:28). It is to especially be a quality of those who minister to others. Paul used it often to describe his own work among the churches (1 Cor. 15:10) and in supporting himself with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:12). In Acts 20:33 Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders to work in such a manner. In Romans 16:6 & 12 Paul used this word to describe Trophæna, Tryphosa and Persis as those who worked hard for the Lord. Paul told Timothy that those who worked hard at preaching and teaching were worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17).

This is a description of the diligence of these men in carrying out their ministries and not a description of a particular ministry itself which Paul will describe next. A godly leader will be marked by toil in ministry among and for the people. A lazy church leader is no leader at all and neither are those that toil for their personal gain instead of the glory of God and benefit of the sheep. Tragically, there are many in positions of church leadership that are like that.

Those who are lazy put in the minimal amount of time and effort necessary to get by. They are usually very careful to take their days off and vacation and seldom are still at church very long once the service ends. How can you minister to people if you will not stay to talk with them? They also tend to be

quick to find shortcuts or get someone else to do the things for which they are responsible. I am not against short cuts such as sermon outlines and such for those that are bi-vocational pastors, in fact, that is part of the reason I post the powerpoints along with my sermon notes as a way to assist such men. It is simply a way to help them be more efficient and effective with what time they do have available. However, laziness is a characteristic that weakens all ministry for it arises out of selfishness, and godly ministry demands that you consider others as more important than yourself.

The same selfishness drives those who toil for themselves instead for their flock and the glory of God. They labor to gain some personal benefit from what they do such as finances, prestige, position, fame or even personal pleasure. I have met pastors who have been quicker to talk about their golf game or hobbies than what God was doing in their church. I visited one church in which the pastor had copyrighted the sermon notes in the bulletin as if they were valuable enough for someone to pay to use them. Frankly, the notes were mediocre and revealed the greedy heart of the man also displayed that in his clothing and jewelry. Yes, I understand the need for copyright for those who make their living through their writing, but the heart of a godly leader is set on toiling for the benefit of Christ and His kingdom. When God already meets your needs through His church, then the labor is not to be for personal gain. Contrast that to our own efforts here in which we pay the costs to make available what is taught here simply because we want to glorify God and be used by Him in building up His church both here and beyond. We make everything on our internet posts available free, and even in person classes and seminars are free except for cost of materials and we will give those free to those in need.

Go back to 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12 and see the example of Paul and his companions. ⁹ *“For you recall, brethren, our labor (κόπος / kopos) and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.”* ¹⁰ *You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;* ¹¹ *just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,* ¹² *so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”* Paul is telling them to recognize those that are following that kind of example. The toil can be very wearisome, but that in itself is part of the worship of God no matter what the particular ministry.

Leading. The next action of the men they were to recognize is specific. They labored in leading, (προϊσταμαι / proistamai), also translated as *be over, have charge over, lead, manage and rule over*. This is a present participle so it is speaking of continuing action and not position. The basic idea is *“to so influence others as to cause them to follow a recommended course of action”* (Louw Nida). Paul lists this as a spiritual gift in Romans 12:8, so it is not an ability that God gives to everyone to do well, though most people will have to do this to some degree according to their position and responsibilities. Those who are so gifted help those who are not. Paul uses the same word in 1 Timothy 3:4, 5 & 12 to describe a qualification for both elders and deacons that the man “manages” his own household well. He uses it in 1 Timothy 5:17 to describe an elder who does this in the church as being worthy of double honor. Such leadership takes diligent labor and wisdom because it requires both knowledge of the people and how to help them progress into greater godliness, and that involves instruction, training, admonishment and correction much like a father would do in raising up his children and directing the affairs of his household. That leads directly to the next actions of those that should be recognized within the church.

Admonishing. The word used here (νουθετέω / noutheteō) is a compound word joining the word for mind (νοῦς / nous) with a verb (τίθημι / tithēmi) meaning *to place or set*, hence it has a root meaning of *to place in mind, to impart understanding*. However, it is not a direct synonym for the word for *to teach* (διδάσκειν / didaskein) which deals with the intellect. This word *“describes an effect on the will and disposition, and it presupposes an opposition to be overcome”* (TDNT). This becomes evident in its use in the Septuagint for Hebrew words that carry the ideas of reproach, admonish, chasten and correct.

Likewise, the corresponding noun (νουθεσία / nouthesia) means admonition, warning, correction. Paul uses this same word 8 times in his writings, and we get the sense here from what he states in 1 Corinthians 4:4 that he wrote to them not to shame them, “*but to admonish you as my beloved children,*” and in 2 Thessalonians 3:15 in which he tells them in regards to those not obeying his instructions to “*admonish him as a brother.*” This is corrective instruction that can be directed and pointed, but it is not harsh, for it is speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

Esteem. Paul’s first request of them is that they recognize these men that are toiling among them in leading and admonishing them. His second request is in verse 13 that they esteem these men beyond all measure in love because of the work they were doing.

The word translated here as esteem or regard (ἡγέομαι / hāgeomai) refers to a belief or opinion that rests on deliberate and careful judgment that weighs and compares facts (GELNT). This is not how you feel about the person, it is what you think about them after examining their work and character. Paul is calling on the Thessalonians to hold them in high regard, to esteem them “*beyond all measure,*” to an extraordinary degree in love. You may have emotions of fondness for men of such high character, but that is not the love that is being referred to here. This is ἀγάπη / agape, the sacrificial love of seeking the best interest of the other person. This is a love that takes action in expressing itself, and in this verse that is by showing them such high esteem.

Why are these men so highly regarded? It is not their position in the church for there is no mention of them holding any office in the church. They are held in high regard and treated accordingly because of their work as Paul has already detailed in verse 12 - their toiling among them in leading and admonishing them.

This is a very important principle to consider regardless of whether someone has an official office in the church or not. While there is a certain amount of respect that is given someone who holds a church office, this kind of high esteem is reserved for those who are actually showing their diligence in doing the work of ministry. Someone who holds a church position but demonstrates they are indifferent, lazy, or incompetent in leading and helping others progress in godliness are not worthy of this high regard.

At the same time, someone that is doing these things is to be shown such respect because of that work regardless of whether he has a title and position or not. It is not uncommon to find that there will be those in the church without any titles that are the actual Biblical leaders as described in this passage. I have always found it interesting that in 1 Timothy 3:1 that while Paul commends someone that aspires to the office of an overseer, what the person is actually commended for is the fine work he desires to do. In reality, the leadership position attained is to be a reflection of the work already being done. That is the basis for how we have set up our requirements for those that want to be in positions of church leadership. Those who are already doing the work and have the necessary character qualities are simply recognized for those things and given titles and positions that match. Church leadership positions are to be based on Biblical qualification and not on either popularity or the favor of current leaders. What then are the qualifications for leaders?

Qualifications for Leaders

I have spoken on this before, so I will be brief on this subject this morning.

Apostle - The key qualification for being an apostle is set in Acts 1:21-22 as being someone who was a disciple of Jesus in His earthly ministry and an eye-witness of His resurrection. The Apostle Paul is a slight exception in that Paul was an eye-witness of Jesus’ resurrection and taught by the Lord post-ascension (Acts 9:1-19, Galatians 1:1, 11-12, 15-18). No one since then has met the Biblical qualifications of being an apostle since the end of the 1st Century.

Elder / Bishop / Pastor. These three titles reflect three responsibilities that belong to the same men. They are not three different positions. Elders (πρεσβύτερος / Presbuteros) are called overseers / bishops (ἐπίσκοπος / episkopos) in both Acts 20:17-28 and Titus 1:5-7. Elders are called to shepherd / pastor the people under their care in both Acts 20:17-28 and 1 Peter 5:1-2. (See Paper on Elder Qualifications).

1 Timothy 3:1-7 list out the qualifications for those that would have this position. *“¹ It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. ² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴ He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶ and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*

Titus 1:5-9 repeats most of these or uses synonyms and adds “self-controlled,” “not pugnacious,” “not quick tempered,” “not self-willed,” “loving what is good,” “just” and “devout.” It also explains household management to include *“having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination”* (NKJV) and that “apt to teach” includes being able *“both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”*

1 Peter 5:1-3 adds that elders are to *² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”*

Take note that all of these are all character qualities except the ability to teach by exhorting in sound doctrine and refuting those who contradict, and having some leadership ability as I already pointed out from 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Churches that ignore or compromise on these qualifications do so to their own detriment and demise. Unqualified church leaders will lead the church astray by either their teaching, example or both.

Deacon - In Acts 6:3-6 there were *seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom* that were chosen to help the Apostles in distributing the daily serving. That is a good start, but the actual qualifications for deacons is set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-10,12-13. *⁸ Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹ but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach . . . ¹² Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

The “likewise” in verse 8 points out that these qualifications are very similar to those of elders. The character qualifications are the same except deacons can have more wine than elders (*“not addicted to much wine”*). Deacons have to *“hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience,”* but they do not have to have the ability to teach. Deacons do not have any particular ministry specified in the Scriptures, so they are simply servants to the church (as their title implies) as directed by the elders.

Deaconesses - 1 Timothy 3:11 states, *“Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.”* These, like elders and deacons, are character qualities, and they, like deacons do not have any particular ministry specified, so they are servants to the church as directed by the elders. There is debate as to whether the generic “women” (γυναικας / gunaikas) refers to an office that could be called “deaconesses” or to “deacon’s wives.” I believe it is deaconesses since there is no corresponding qualification for the wife of an elder and there were women such as Phoebe (Acts 16:1) that are referred to as deacons without reference to a husband.

I repeat again that these qualifications are crucial to the protection of the church because unqualified people in these positions will lead the church astray by either their teaching, example or both. If those who are in these positions do not meet these qualifications, they need to voluntarily step down or be removed. Those who do not meet these qualifications are not those who are to be “esteemed very highly in love” because of the lack in the qualities and work Paul specifies. Those that do meet these qualifications are worthy of such esteem whether they have a title and position or not.

Instructions to Leaders

There are some additional instructions to leaders regarding attitudes and how they treat those in the congregation that I want to quickly point out for they give additional criteria for those who should be recognized and held in high regard and those who should not.

First, Godly leaders are servant leaders who follow the example of Jesus. Matthew 20:25–28, ²⁵ *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* Jesus made the same point in John 13:12-17 when He washed the feet of the disciples just prior to the last supper. Pride and arrogance which are so commonly found among secular leaders are contrary to godliness and should never characterize any church leader. Godly leaders are humble servants to Christ and His church.

Second, this humble servant leadership is seen in the example of Peter in his actions and motivations which he calls others to follow in 1 Peter 5:1–4, ¹ *“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

Peter was an apostle, but he refers to himself as simply a “fellow elder.” He voluntarily and eagerly took on this role with the goals of being a good example in fulfilling the will of God while looking forward to receiving an unfading crown of glory when Jesus comes. He rejected selfish interests of sordid gain or position over others.

Third, Paul warned about dangers that would come and the need to protect the church. In Acts 20:28–31 he charged the Ephesian elders saying, ²⁸ *“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”*

Protection of the flock is done in several ways the first of which Paul emphasizes in 2 Timothy 4:1–5, ¹ *“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*

That protection includes getting involved in the lives of those who stumble in sin as he explains in Galatians 6:1–2, ¹ *“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore*

such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ." Paul was not shy about doing this even it meant publicly rebuking them including an elder who continued in sin (1 Timothy 5:20), or excluding them from the church (1 Corinthians 5:11-13), or even to *"deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"* (1 Corinthians 5:5). As Jesus explained in Matthew 18:15-17, the primary motive of church discipline is to get a sinning brother to repent and be restored, but there is a secondary motive in protecting the church from the influence of unrepentant sinners.

Fourth, Paul often held himself up as an example to the flock and called on others to *"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ"* (1 Corinthians 11:1, see also Philippians 3:17 & 4:9). He gives details of how he lived as an apostle and servant of Christ in passages such as Acts 20:32-35; 1 Corinthians 9; and 2 Corinthians 11-12.

Fifth, Paul gave instructions to both Timothy and Titus in how to act and carry out their mission of being his envoy to Ephesus and Crete respectively. Both Timothy and Titus were relatively young and needed this encouragement, but the conduct described should be true for all church leaders. He wrote in 1 Timothy 4:12, *"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."* In Titus 2:7-8 he encourages him saying, *"In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified,⁸ sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."*

These are really only details and expansions of what Paul tells the Thessalonians. Those with these qualities are the ones that should be recognized and esteemed very highly in love by the congregation for the work they do unto the Lord and for the benefit of the church.

Additional Instructions to Congregations

I will close with several passages that give additional instructions to congregations on how to treat their leaders and then close with a few summary comments.

Double Honor. 1 Timothy 5:17-22,¹⁷ *"The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."*¹⁸ *For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*¹⁹ *Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.*²⁰ *Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.*²¹ *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.*²² *Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin."*

Follow their Example. Hebrews 13:7, *"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."*

Obey & Pray. Hebrews 13:17-19,¹⁷ *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."*¹⁸ *Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.*¹⁹ *And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner."*

Be in Subjection. 1 Corinthians 16:15-16,¹⁵ *"Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),"*¹⁶ *that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors."* Please note that neither Hebrews 13:17-19 or 1 Corinthians 16:15-16 give titles for those in

these positions of leadership to which the congregation has an obligation toward subjection and obedience. The leaders are defined by their actions and examples. The leaders are specifically defined as those who “**watch out for the souls**” of those under them and are devoted to the ministry of the saints. Even the “double honor” in 1 Timothy 5:17 is reserved for those elders that “rule well” which is the same word as in 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Leaders who are good and godly demonstrate it by their character, actions and motives.

Pray for those in positions of leadership and those who are attaining it. We are but mere humans just like the rest of the congregation and also subject to weakness and failure. We are also targets of our adversary who wants us to stumble and fall and take others down with us. We need the spiritual strength that comes from the Holy Spirit as you pray for us. We need to be able to withstand the jealousy of others that assume and make false accusations, which I have experienced so many times I lost count a long time ago. So pray because no matter how much the personal hurt, 2 Timothy 2:24-26 still applies -²⁴ *“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”*

Finally, never seek out a church position of leadership because you think that by it you will gain prestige or power. Those are wrong motives and you will be a detriment to the church in risk incurring God’s wrath. If you want to be great in God’s kingdom, follow Jesus’ instructions and learn to be the servant of all (Mark 9:35). Every church position of leadership is in reality to be just a greater level of service to God and fellow Christians. If you aspire to church leadership as commended in 1 Timothy 3:1, then simply pursue personal holiness and using your spiritual gifts to the best of your ability whenever there is opportunity. Jesus said in Luke 18:14 that those that exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who humble themselves will be exalted, so follow the command of 1 Peter 5:6, *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.”*

Sermon Notes - January 31, 2021
Requests Regarding Leaders - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Introduction

Practical Issues of Holy Living: a) Responsibilities to Leaders (5:12-13);

b) Responsibilities to One Another (5:14-16); c) Responsibilities to ____ (5:16-22); d) Conclusion (5:23-28)

Instructions to the Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

A request, not a command. Request / ask / urge (ἑρωτάω / erōtō). An expression of ____, not a command

Recognize or Respect? Appreciate / respect / recognize / know (εἰδέναι/eidenai -Perfect, Active, Infinitive)

Recognize / Know: 1) Common meaning. 2) _____ 3) Logic of passage: recognize (12) then esteem (13)

No reference to church officer (elders or deacons). Recognized by actions being done. One group - __ actions

Toiling / labor (κοπιᾶω / kopiaō) - 1Thess. 1:3; 2:9; 3:5; Lk 5:5; Eph. 4:28; 1Cor. 4:12, 15:10; 1Tim 5:17

A description of the _____ of these men in carrying out their ministries

Laziness _____ all ministry for it is a characteristic of selfishness and ministry requires serving others

Toiling for self gain is _____ to godliness which demands laboring for God's glory & good of the flock

Paul's example in 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12

Leading / manage / rule over (προϊσταμαι / proistamai): _____ others to follow recommended course

A spiritual gift (Rom. 12:8) and a requirement for elders and deacons in their _____ (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12)

Admonishing (νουθετέω / noutheteō): to place in mind, impart understanding with a _____ element

admonish as a father to a beloved child or to a brother (1 Cor. 4:4; 2 Thess. 3:15) speaking the truth in ____

Esteem / regard (ἡγέομαι / hāgeomai): _____ opinion due to careful examination of work & character

Esteem beyond all measure in love (ἀγάπη / agape) sacrificial _____ for best interest of other - show esteem

Highly regard because of toil in _____ and not because of either having a position or not having one

Church leaders are to be selected based on _____ qualification & neither popularity nor favor of elite

Qualifications for Leaders

Apostle. Acts 1:21-22 - taught by Jesus & _____-resurrection witness. Paul: Acts 9:1-19, Gal. 1:1, 11-18

Elder / Bishop / Pastor: Three titles reflecting responsibilities belong to the _____ men

Elders & _____ same in Acts 20:17-28 & Tit 1:5-7. Elders & Pastors same in Acts 20:17-28 & 1 Pet 5:1-2

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Titus 1:5-9

1 Peter 5:1-3

Deacon. Acts 6:3-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-10,12-13.

Same character _____ as elder, but do not have to teach and can have more wine

Deaconesses - 1 Timothy 3:11. No "_____ wives" & Phoebe was called this with reference to a husband

_____ leaders are crucial to the health of a church or the church will be lead astray

Instructions to Leaders

To be servant leaders like _____ - Matthew 20:25–28, John 13:12-17

To follow Peter’s example - 1 Peter 5:1–4. He was humble with proper _____

To _____ the flock for which they are overseers - Acts 20:28–31

Preach, teach, reprove, _____, exhort, with great patience and instruction - 2 Timothy 4:1–5

Practice church _____: Galatians 6:1–2; 1 Timothy 5:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5, 11-13; Matthew 18:15-17

To follow _____ example - 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; Acts 20:32-35; 1 Cor 9; 2 Cor. 11-12

Follow the instruction given in 1 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 2:7–8

Additional Instructions to Congregations

Double Honor. 1 Timothy 5:17–22

Follow their Example. Hebrews 13:7

Obey & Pray. Hebrews 13:17–19 - those who “_____ for your soul”

Be in Subjection. 1 Corinthians 16:15–16 - those _____ to the ministry of the saints

Pray for those in positions of leadership - they are targets of the _____ and those who are jealous

It is ungodly to seek a leadership position to gain prestige or _____

Aspire to leadership by pursuing personal _____ & ministry to the best of your ability - then let God exalt

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many times the “leader” is mentioned. Talk with your parents about the responsibilities you have toward those who are qualified leaders in the church.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. In regards to 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Why is it important that this is a request and not a command? What do Paul and his companions want the Thessalonians to do? Why are there no references in this letter to any church leadership positions? Why is the meaning here (of εἰδέναι / eidenai) “recognize” and not “respect” or “appreciate”? Is this different people being recognized for different qualities or the same group recognized for the same set of qualities? Explain. What is meant by “toiling / laboring among you”? How would such toil be recognized? Why is laziness detrimental to ministry? Why is selfishness (toiling for personal gain) detrimental to ministry? What was Paul’s example? How can you recognize someone who is leading? How is admonishing different from teaching? Why would that be a significant ministry quality to recognize? What does it mean to hold someone in high esteem (ἡγέομαι / hāgeomai)? How would such esteem be demonstrated? Should a person be esteemed because they have a leadership position? Why or why not? Does anyone living today meet the qualifications to be an apostle? Explain. How do we know that elders, bishops and pastors all refer to the same people and not three different groups of people? What are the qualifications for an Elder? A Deacon? A Deaconess? What differences are there in the qualifications of a deacon compared to an elder? What is the role of a deacon or deaconess? What are the responsibilities of church leaders according to the passages listed above? What are the responsibilities of a congregation to their qualified leaders according to the passages above? What is “double honor”? To whom does it belong? What qualities are to exist in those you obey / submit to in the church? What is the proper motive for seeking church leadership position? What is the proper way about attaining such a position? Are you qualified to be a deacon or deaconess? If not, what needs to change to become qualified?