

(25) Dear brothers and sisters, pray for us.

- The church planter asked for prayer for himself. Paul did not see himself as in invincible herald of God's truth, but as a man needing the prayers of his children in the faith. This is remarkable humility.

(26) Greet all the brothers and sisters with Christian love.

- All were to be **greeted** with **love**. Partiality and favoritism were not even implied.

(27) I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters.

- The letter is not to be tossed aside after the leaders **read** it. **Read** it to every believer when the church assembles. There were some new believers that could not **read** and this was the way they could savor of Paul's inspired Word from the Lord. In our day, many who read words cannot grasp the meaning of the sentence.

(28) May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

- **Burton Coffman** pens these words to summarize the entire letter: "With these noble and characteristic words, Paul closed this beautiful and instructive epistle. Every line of it is a gem. It is rich with some of the most inspiring and comforting passages in all the Bible, and the voice of this letter is frequently sounded over the graves of the righteous in all generations. Fittingly, this final brief paragraph presents the Christian's right to know, his right to read and understand the word of God. O Lord, blessed is thy holy word. Amen."

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5

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The Translation:

We have chosen the *New Living Translation* for this study. It is a thought-for-thought translation made by 90 translators.

Resources:

We have consulted and quoted from **Burton Coffman** (*Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible*), **William Barclay** (*Daily Study Bible*), and **Wilbur Fields** (*Thinking Through Thessalonians*).

Whereas in 1 Thessalonians 4 the purpose was reassurance with reference to deceased Christians, in this chapter is an admonition to be ready for the event when it occurs.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1 NLT) Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you.

- God has not revealed His Divine timing, so **writing** about what Paul don't know was pointless. It is also pointless for us to determine when Christ will come. Instead, our task is to be ready. Focus on that.
- The translators have added "and sisters" to the original "brothers."

(2) For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night.

- What both Paul and his readers **knew** is that the second coming of Jesus would be totally unexpected.

(3) When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman's labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.

- The word in the street will be that all is **peaceful** and secure, but the Lord will return abruptly and there will be no exceptions. Some of those Thessalonians were very concerned about the destiny of dead Christians; but, after disposing of that problem, showing that death cannot make the slightest difference in eternal rewards, Paul then warned that when the Second Coming does occur, vast numbers of earth's population shall be totally unprepared for it.

(4) But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief.

- Because believers know God's plan, there will not be fright for them. The immediate future will not terrorize believers because we know the Lord is returning, we just know't know when.

(5) For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night.

- We know God's plan because we have His **light**.

(6) So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded.

- Believers are to remain on their **guard**, alert and clearheaded. Be like security guards whose job is to not let anyone past your station.

(7) Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk.

(20) Do not scoff at prophecies, (21) but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.

- **Burton Coffman:** "There is no need to understand this as a reference to charismatic gifts of the primitive era before the New Testament was written. It is well known that Paul often used the word in the sense of teaching the holy scriptures. . . . therefore, "proving all things" and "holding fast to that which is good" would be exemplified by the ancient Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). Even today, in finding the difference between what is true and what is false, there is no substitute for searching the word of the Lord."

(22) Stay away from every kind of evil.

- There is no minor sin. Avoid all kinds. Learn to walk out, turn off, or what ever is required to stay away from evil. **Wilbur Fields** writes, "Avoiding all appearance of evil (KJV) means that Christians should avoid going to places where people might think they were doing evil. To go into a night club, pool hall, tavern, etc., even for a legitimate reason, might cause some one to think we were indulging in evil. We should not only avoid the evil itself, but we must avoid even the appearance of evil."

(23) Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. (24) God will make this happen, for He who calls you is faithful.

- Paul's concluding prayer for the saints at Thessalonica is that God will make them holy and keep them **blameless** and ready for **Jesus** to come again. The "when" is not the important issue. The "readiness" is where the value resides.

- There is a need for daily prayer.
- There is a need for a list because of our limited memories.
- There are secondary benefits in prayer. We concern ourselves with the needs of other people. We learn their names and circumstances. We develop a heart for world missions and become a mission-minded Christian.

(18) Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

- When our outlook is dismal, practice looking for a way to be thankful. God's wants us to do this. **William Barclay** writes: "1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 give us three marks of a genuine Church.
 - (1) It is a *happy Church*. There is in it that atmosphere of joy which makes its members feel that they are bathed in sunshine. True Christianity is an exhilarating and not a depressing thing."
 - (2) It is a *praying Church*. Maybe our Church's prayers would be more effective if we remembered that "they pray best together who also pray alone."
 - (3) It is a *thankful Church*. There is always something for which to give thanks; even on the darkest day there are blessings to count. We must remember that if we face the sun the shadows will fall behind us but if we turn our backs on the sun all the shadows will be in front."

(19) Do not stifle the Holy Spirit.

- **Burton Coffman** says: "The cares, riches and pleasures of life choke out the word and quench the Spirit. The blessed fire can be put out by the cold drizzle of worldliness, by the heavy blanket of selfishness, or by the companionship of evil people. The negligent student of the holy scriptures can let the fire go out. The stormy winds of false doctrine can blow it out!"

- Those who live in ignorance (darkness) are **asleep**. That is the time **drinkers** lose their sobriety. A distinguishing mark of alcoholics as compared to occasional drinkers, is that alcoholics want alcohol before breakfast.

(8) But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.

- We believers need to be **clearheaded**, wear the **armor** of **faith** and **love** and the **helmet** of **confidence** in the promise that **we** are saved.

(9) For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out His anger on us.

- **God's** desire is for the salvation of all and believers have accepted the offer. God is not **angry** with even the worst sinners who have turned to Him.

(10) Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when He returns, we can live with Him forever.

- We don't have to be currently alive to be saved when Jesus comes. **Forever** with Jesus is guaranteed either way.

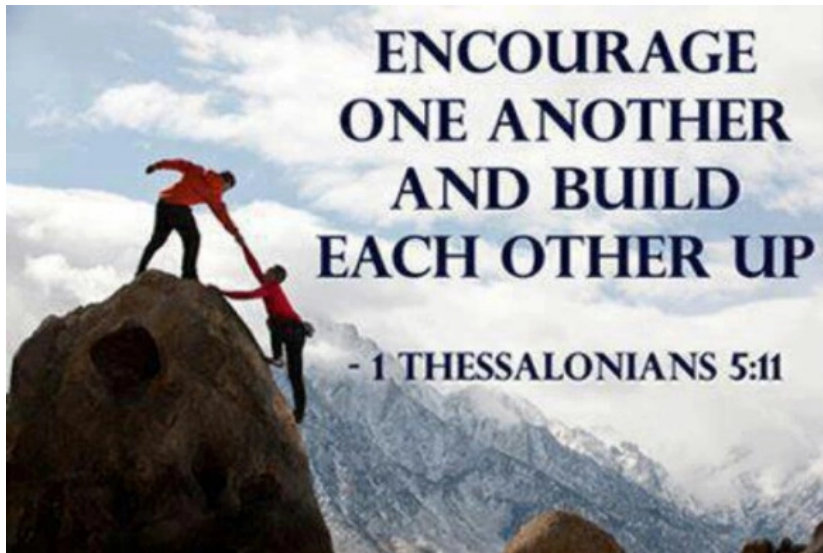
(11) So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

- Paul goes beyond urging believers to avoid causing others to stumble, beyond warning about setting a bad example. Now we can have joy in the present and the future by building others. **Building** is so encouraging. Use our talk time to bring joy to others. Learning to **build** others is key to Christian leadership.

- One of the great features of Christianity is that leaders build other people rather than focus on achieving heights of excellence for themselves.

Jesus was the master of building those people around Him. He selected twelve men that had potential for building and in just a few years, these Galileans spread His message of salvation to the ends of the earth, affecting their world and even ours.

After some training, Jesus sent out His Twelve to preach the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 10:5), but they didn't fully understand the Kingdom themselves as seen in their question in Acts 1:6 about the Kingdom being restored to Israel. However, Jesus had sent them out on a short-term mission as part of their training. His example led the efforts.



(12) Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance.

- One key to encouraging each other is to honor the church leaders. They provide guidance for you. This

points to the elders of the church where they exist. This new congregation may not have had elders yet.

(13) Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.

- Church leaders should be treated with **love** and **respect**. Figure out how to get along peacefully.

(14) Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.

- Special groups:
 - The **lazy**. They need to be **warned**.
 - The **timid**. They must be **encouraged**.
 - The **weak**. Those sick or up in years to be be cared for.
- The needed skill: **patience** with abrasive people.

(15) See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.

- Never **pay evil back** to others. Replace it with **good**.

(16) Always be joyful.

- Complaining is easy and normal. Switch to being joyful all of the time. This requires foresight and planning.

(17) Never stop praying.

- Other translations: **Pray without ceasing**. Paul is saying that believers should maintain the regular practice of praying. He is **not** saying that believers should be praying all of the time. *Continually* as compared with *continuously*.