

Lessons From I Thessalonians

Brotherly Caretaking

(I Th 5:14-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we examined “Respect For Those Laboring Over You.”
 - i. **I Th 5:12-13** “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.”
 - b. This week we will be looking at “Brotherly Caretaking.”¹
 - i. **I Th 5:14-15** “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.”
3. Having just asked the brethren at Thessalonica to respect and esteem their elders very highly he now changes direction to their fellow brethren.
 - a. Keep in mind why Paul said to respect and esteem the elders there.
 - i. They labored among them.
 - ii. They ruled over them.
 - iii. They admonished them.
 - b. Respecting and esteeming their elders meant our Thessalonian brethren were to seek peace among themselves making the elders job easier.
 - i. **He 13:17** “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”
 - c. Thus Paul now turns his attention to the caretaking of the brethren.
4. With that in mind let us now look at our lesson for today.

I. Take Responsibility For Your Brethren

- A. Paul pleads with the brethren to admonish their idle brothers & sisters
 1. This word admonish is the same found in vs 12.
 - i. We noticed last week that it had a twofold meaning.
 - a. It means to warn against one’s dangerous behavior.
 - b. It means to instruct one regarding his/her behavior.
 2. The word idle here is an interesting word.
 - i. It is a military term meaning, “not keeping rank, insubordinate” (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - ii. It also means militarily “neglectful of duty, disorderly.” (from Barnes’ Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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3. Paul is telling the Thessalonian brethren to warn against and instruct properly those that would become insubordinate and neglectful of their duty.
What duty is that? Hard working to support themselves and their families.
 - i. Keep in mind the Greek's philosophy on hard work.
 - a. "...Greeks considered manual labor to be the duty of the lowest of slaves..." (Barry, J. D., Grigoni, M. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). Faithlife Study Bible (1 Th 5:12). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.)
 - ii. Later on we see Paul say this...
 - a. **II Th 3:10** "For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."
 4. Thus...
 - i. It would appear that there were some that held to the Greek philosophy of manual labor and as such were "mooching" off of the wealthier members.
 - ii. Paul warns strongly against such an allowance.
- B. Paul pleads with the brethren to encourage the fainthearted brethren
1. This word fainthearted holds a military meaning as well.
 - i. The word literally means, "little soul."
 - ii. The military meaning is those which finds themselves on the eve of battle, dishearten, and lacking courage for battle due to a sense of feebleness.
 2. Paul was wanting these that felt they could not contend earnestly for the faith to be uplifted.
 - i. They needed to know they were not going to battle alone they fight with likeminded fellows and most important they fight with their Commander and Chief Jesus the Christ.
 - a. **Ph 4:13** "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
 3. Thus...
 - i. We find Paul encouraging other to encourage those that need strength for the spiritual battle.
- C. Paul pleads with the brethren to help the weak of their number
1. This word weak here holds a military meaning also.
 - i. The word literally means, "without strength."
 - ii. The military meaning is dealing with shoring up those that might leave the group exposed.
 - a. In other words strengthen the weakest links.
 2. Paul was desiring that the Thessalonians look at each other, find the weakest amongst themselves, and support them until they are strong enough to defend the church against the attacks of Satan.
 - i. They are not ever left alone but every member must be able to stand on their own two feet if the church is going to be at its strongest.
 - a. **Ro 15:1** "We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves."
 3. Thus...
 - i. We find we need to strengthen each other to shore up the weakest link.

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- D. Paul pleaded with the brethren to be patient with them all
1. Adam Clark wrote, “The disorderly, the feeble-minded, and the weak, will exercise your patience, and try your temper.” (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
 - i. This is so true a statement however...
 - a. Think of how great it will be when the weak become strong.
 - b. When the church becomes that much more empowered, in Christ, against Satan and his relentless attacks.
 - ii. The troops, Christians, will see the progress and be that much more strengthened by their brethren’s resolve to fight the good fight of faith with them.
 2. Paul wanted the young Thessalonian brethren to have patience with each other as they matured in their walk with God.
 - i. Maturity is created through endurance which is handled through patience.
 3. Thus...
 - i. Those that are more mature than the brother or sister next them “must” train the weaker to maturity to be pleasing to God.
- E. Thus...
1. Cain being upset at God said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Paul here in this verse make abundantly clear yes we are our brother’s keeper.

II. Keep The Golden Rule

- A. Though faced with persecution from the Jews & Gentiles Paul tells the brethren to follow the “Golden Rule”
1. **I Th 5:15** “See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”
 2. **Ro 12:17** “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”
- B. Leon Morris once wrote...
1. “Faced with opposition from both Jews and Gentiles, and with some differences within the church itself, this must have been exceedingly difficult for the Thessalonians, yet Paul does not hesitate to put the matter plainly to them. Christian teaching is not meant to be applied only when circumstances are easy. Christianity is a robust faith, empowered with a divine dynamic, and is to be lived out even under the most trying circumstances” (Notes on I Thessalonians by WVBS pg. 58)
- C. Thus...
1. Jesus’ words ring ever clear through the pin of Paul as he teaches that which Christ first taught during the Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. **Mt 7:12** “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

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CONCLUSION

1. Brethren there is upon us an expectation that we should “agape” our brothers and sisters so as to understand we are their keepers.
 - a. With the same desire we have to get to heaven let us help others get there as well.
2. Question: Are you willing to be your brother’s keeper?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**