

Study Notes for 1 Thessalonians 5 (Part 2) :12-28

- Paul begins in verse 12 speaking to the Church about how they view and respond to their "leaders." Consider that those who were in positions of leadership in Thessalonica were most likely just as new in the faith as the other members of the fellowship. How do you think that may have affected the way these leaders were viewed?
- Read 5:12-15 several times, at least once aloud. Make a list of issues Paul addresses in this short section.
- What two admonitions does Paul give the Thessalonians in regard to their church leaders in 5:12-13?
- What is the significance of Paul's referring to the church leaders as those who are "over you in the Lord"?
- Why should the Thessalonians hold their leaders in high regard (5:13)? What "work" is Paul talking about?
- Does holding leaders in highest regard mean never voicing your disagreements? Explain
- Why do you think Paul deemed it necessary to tell the Thessalonians to live at peace with each other (5:13)?
- What four admonitions did Paul give the Thessalonians in 5:14? Put them in your own words, explaining what you think he meant.
- Skip ahead to Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians (written about a year after 1 Thessalonians). Read 2 Thes. 3:6-15. What insights does this passage give you regarding Paul's instructions to "warn those who are idle" in 1 Thes. 5:14?
- Why do you suppose some able-bodied members of the church felt they didn't have to work and could let others support them?
- Paul told the Thessalonians to "be patient with everyone" (5:14). He spoke of patience in many of his letters. Patience is an essential quality of love (1 Cor. 13:4) and a result of the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives (Galatians 5:22). Why would patience be especially necessary for a young church with inexperienced church leaders on the one hand and imbalanced behavior among church members on the other hand?
- (5:15) Why is it so essential for us to learn not to pay back wrong for wrong?
- Paul even urged kindness not only to fellow believers ("each other") but also "to everyone else." Why would this have been a challenge for a church that is experiencing persecution?
- What does it mean in practice to be kind to those who do wrong to us? Should we just pretend it never happened?
- What seems most relevant to you personally in this final section of 1 Thessalonians?