

PTI Conference
Bible Exposition – 1 Thessalonians



1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

In closing, it seems as if Paul has abbreviated what he wants to say to fit everything in. This is compressed teaching!

Church is unique institution. Built by Christ, kept by him, bought with his blood (Acts 20:28). It is the “ground and pillar of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). But that doesn’t mean the church is perfect. This last section is about church life.

How do you look after your leaders?

Paul’s plan was to preach, gather believers, appoint elders and then move on. Several words for leaders are all the same function (elder, overseer, pastor, leader). When Paul talks about those who are “over you in the Lord”, it means these men.

Qualities of leaders are found in 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pet 5:1-4.

It is implied that leaders work hard to care for people. They deserve respect and high regard in love (even when admonishing).

How do you look after them? Respect, submission, high regard in love, living at peace to make their work a blessing.

How do you look after each other?

These commands are for the whole church (brothers). It is not ONLY the job of leaders to care for church but the responsibility of every member of church.

Three “problem children” in the church who need attention. All need different handling. Idle need warning, timid need encouraging, weak need supporting. We are all repeat offenders and so patience and kindness are required in all our care for each other.

How do you look after yourself?

The commands in v16-22 are short, the point and vital for our spiritual health. These are not one-off commands but apply continually (“always”, “continually”, “all circumstances”).

Although it might seem difficult, it must be possible to obey them, with God’s help.

Balance is needed to be careful not to put out the Spirit’s fire, to listen to his word but also to be discerning. Babies swallow anything, maturity brings discernment.

Here is the medicine for so many problems in your church.

Where do you get the strength to do all this?

Paul’s closing prayer make it clear that these commands are not just moral guidelines. Without God’s sanctifying and strengthening we could never make progress. But with him, we will be prepared and ready for Christ’s return.

V24 is strong assurance that this is God’s work and although we feel our weakness, he is always faithful.

Letter ends where it started – prayer, brotherly love and above all, the grace of Christ.

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