

**Studies in the Book of 1 Thessalonians**  
**Lesson 8 - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15**  
**Hope for a Hopeless World**  
**Life in the Church**

Paul's favorite name for believers was brethren. He used it at least sixty times in his letters; and in the two Thessalonian letters, he used it twenty-seven times. Paul saw the local church as a family. Each member was born again by the Spirit of God. They all were part of God's family. It is tragic when believers neglect or ignore the local church. No family is perfect and no local church is perfect; but without a family to protect him and provide for him, a child would suffer and die. The child of God needs the church family if he is to grow, develop his gifts, and serve God. What are the essentials for a happy, thriving church family? How can we make our local churches more spiritual to the glory of God? In this closing section, Paul discussed this subject.

The church family must have spiritual leadership. The church may establish whatever organizations it pleases (so long as these groups are organized according to biblical guidelines). The pastor, however, must lead the flock as God directs. Certainly, he needs, and wants, the prayers and counsel of the people, especially the elected leaders; but all in the church must respect the leadership that God provides. Christians should: (1) accept their leaders; (2) honor their leaders, recognizing the work they do; (3) love their leaders; (4) and follow their leaders. Whenever a church is not united, it is often because the pastor will not take the responsibility of leadership, or because the members will not permit him to lead. Keep in mind that leadership is not dictatorship. The leader sets the example, pays the price, and seeks to help others in Christian love. The dictator uses law, not love; he does not lead, he drives; and his motives are selfish, even if he thinks he is working for the good of the church.

It is not enough to have church leadership; there must also be partnership, with each member doing his or her share of the work. 1 Peter 4:7–11 reminds us that each Christian is a steward of a spiritual gift, and that we must use that gift for the good of others and the glory of the Lord. Paul specifies certain kinds of Christians who need special help: 1. **The unruly** “the careless who will not be ruled, those who are out of line, must be warned.” 2. **The feebleminded** “The fainthearted must be encouraged. 3. **The weak** “Those not mature in the Lord must be supported until they can walk in the Lord.” Our attitude toward all people ought to be one of patience and love, never returning evil for evil.

**Read 1Thessalonians 5:12-15 and answer the following questions**

1. What two encouragements does Paul give the Thessalonians in regards to their church leaders?
2. What is the significance of Paul's referring to the church leaders as those who "*labor among (care for) you*"?
3. Why should the Thessalonians hold their leaders in great respect? What "work" is Paul talking about? (See 5:13)
4. Does holding leaders in high respect mean never voicing your disagreements? Explain?
5. Why do you think Paul thought it necessary to tell all the Thessalonian Believers to live at peace with each other?
6. What four encouragements does Paul give the Thessalonians in 5:14? Explain what each means.

7. Paul told the Thessalonians to “*be patient with all*” (5:14). He speaks of patience in many of his letters. Patience is an essential quality of love and is a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. Why should patience be especially necessary for a young church with inexperienced church leaders on the one hand and childish behavior among church members on the other hand?

8. What are some ways that you could apply what you have learned about patience at home? At your work place? At Church? With yourself?

9. In Romans 14:1-5 Paul talks about helping the spiritually weak. He says those whose faith is weak require more rules and structure to keep them growing in Christ than those whose faith is stronger. What do you think his point is?

10. Why is it important for us to learn not to pay back wrong for wrong?

11. What does it mean in practice to do good both for yourselves and for all?

## Great insight on 1 Thessalonians 5:14

*“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all”*

Who is this verse directed toward? It is for the brethren. In other word’s it is for all believers including me and you. These jobs are not only for the leaders of the church. Every member of the body has their part and we are to be helping and building up each other on a regular basis.

**Warn the unruly:** We are to warn those whose behavior is not appropriate, specifically those who are a bit out of control. Sometimes believers are also out of line. What should we do? Well, we don’t kick them out of the church. Neither should we ignore them. We should come to them, encourage them in the Scriptures which can help in the area they are struggling with. This is not an easy thing to do. But it is necessary. If the church doesn’t correct its own, who is going to?

**Comfort the fainthearted:** Comfort is one of the key themes of this book. Paul has given us a great example about how to focus on comforting others. Many people just ignore the fainthearted. Instead of looking down on those who struggle in various areas, we should come alongside them to help them. This is what Christian fellowship is all about.

**Uphold the weak:** Can you think of any examples in the Bible of people who were weak that received help? In Ecclesiastes Solomon did not write, “Two are better than one, for when one falls the other will go to his friends and talk about him behind his back.” What should we do when someone falls? This is how God has designed the church and Christian fellowship. We too are often weak. What you hope others will do for you when you are weak and struggling is what we should do for them.

**Be patient with all:** Notice that words “*with all.*” Who is the most difficult person in your life to be patient with? That is the person that God is calling you to be patient with today. Some people are very easy to be patient with, but some are not. Perhaps God has brought those difficult people into our lives in order to help us grow in the area of patience. And perhaps God will keep challenging you in this area until you have learned the lesson. What tips can you think of that can help us when we are struggling to show patience to others?