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LEADERSHIP DURING DIFFICULT DAYS

CLOSINGS EXHORTATIONS

1THESSALONIANS 5:12-22

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. ¹⁴ We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances. ²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil.

"PITHY PARADIGM" Many a godly man goes plodding through life, living obscurely — yet living a true Christian life, doing many a quiet kindness to his neighbors and friends — yet seldom hearing a word of appreciation or praise. The vases, filled with the incense of affection, are kept sealed. The flowers are not cut from the stems. One day you stand by his coffin, and there are enough kind things said to have brightened every hour of his life — if only they had been said at the right time. There are enough flowers piled upon his casket, to have kept his chamber filled with fragrance all through his years — if only they had been sent day by day. How his heavy heart would have thanked God, if, in the midst of his toils, burdens, and struggles — he could have heard a few of the words of affection and appreciation which are now wasted on ears that hear them not! How much happier he would have been in his weary days — if he had known how many kind friends he had!

But, poor man! he had to die before the appreciation could express itself. Then he could not hear the gentle words spoken over his cold lifeless body. *The love blossomed out too late!* (JR Miller-The flowers are growing to strew on their graves)

As we continue this study of 1 Thessalonians 5, we are reminded and we find ourselves in the section that calls for us to "excel still more". Beginning in Chapter 4 through chapter 5, Paul reminds this church (and us) that we are not perfect and have not arrived at perfection. Paul now exhorts the brethren how they are to conduct themselves as "children of light" (5:1-11).

With knowledge comes information. Knowledge without a changed behavior is only information. However, when you act in obedience to that knowledge, you give credence that that information has made a personal change in your mind and thus a change in behavior.

In verse 12, Paul makes a request that as a "child of light" you now must act in a different way toward your leaders, specifically church leaders. The verb "request" does not carry the note of an authoritative command but rather that of a friend making an urgent appeal to a friend. The Greek word (ἐρωτάω) "to request" provides the most delicate and tender expression for prayer or request with the one asking and the one being asked being on an equal level, such as the Lord Jesus asking of the Father.

JOHN 14:16 "I WILL ASK THE FATHER, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER HELPER, THAT HE MAY BE WITH YOU FOREVER;

JOHN 17:9 "I ASK ON THEIR BEHALF; I DO NOT ASK ON BEHALF OF THE WORLD, BUT OF THOSE WHOM YOU HAVE GIVEN ME; FOR THEY ARE YOURS;

JOHN 17:15 I DO NOT ASK YOU TO TAKE THEM OUT OF THE WORLD, BUT TO KEEP THEM FROM THE EVIL ONE.

JOHN 17:20 "I DO NOT ASK ON BEHALF OF THESE ALONE, BUT FOR THOSE ALSO WHO BELIEVE IN ME THROUGH THEIR WORD.

Paul ask that they appreciate those leaders who shepherd them as the flock of God. Appreciate is the translation. This does not mean simple face recognition, but that the people are to literally know those who labor among them (today this would refer especially to pastors and staff) well enough to have an intimate appreciation for them and to respect them because of their value.

Please notice the word "those" (τοὺς- Accusative Masculine Plural) The Lord desires and requires a plurality of males leading any congregation! I know that may be harsh in this pluralistic society, but please note it is God's Church! Christ is the Head! He gave His life for the Father to procure the Bride of Christ. He alone establishes the requirements and administration of The Church—His CHURCH.

The value of "those men" is seen in the request through three prepositions: 1) diligently labor; 2) have charge; 3) give instruction. Leaders who the Lord commission's to lead the church must be laboring, giving charge and providing instruction.

Paul instructs the church at Thessalonica that leaders must be engaged in three functions of their offices—

First, they are to "diligently laboring among you".

That is to say, laboring and exhibiting great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion in the work of the ministry! Remember in Chapter 1:3 "Labor of Love"—your labor prompted by love is the toilsome, laborious activity that is prompted and sustained by love when the going gets hard. The stress in the word labor is on the cost, exertion, fatigue, and exhaustion that it entails. Work (*ergon*) may be pleasant and stimulating, but labor implies toil that is strenuous and sweat-producing.

MacArthur adds that labor (*κοπία*)—does not stress the amount of work, but rather the effort. A man's reward from God is proportional to the excellence of his ministry and the effort he puts into it. Excellence combined with diligence mark a man worthy of the highest honor. ([MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press](#) or [Logos](#))

Secondly, "having charge over you in the Lord"

It means standing before someone, leadership or management. Thus their charge is leadership by example. following the example of Christ Who is Servant of all. Leaders set the example for others to follow Chapter 1:6-7 which has the principle of being an imitator and example for other believers to follow.

Stedman comments that... The English translators of the Scriptures were in a church that had a highly structured hierarchical leadership. Thus, many Scriptural references are translated in that direction. The phrase, "those who ... are over you in the Lord," is not a good translation. It reflects a relationship that Scripture everywhere speaks against. Jesus said to his disciples, "do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers." {[Mt 23:8](#)}. Christians are brothers. That is not practiced in very many places, unfortunately. What is really being said here in Thessalonica is, "respect those who labor among you and stand before

you in the Lord." The apostle is referring to those who stand in front and lead the whole group. There is no suggestion of anyone being "over" others. Tradition has caused this proper translation to be lost sight of down through the years. It badly needs correction. What Paul is saying, therefore, is, "follow your leaders."

Finally, "giving you instruction-admonishing you".

Warning, cautioning, gently reproving, exhorting. "*Noutheteo*" speaks of the activity of reminding someone of what he has forgotten or is in danger of forgetting. It may involve a rebuke for wrongdoing as well as a warning to be on guard against wrongdoing. It directs an appeal to the conscience and will of one being admonished in order to stir him to watchfulness or obedience. It is correction that produces change.

Trench adds that the idea of *noutheteo*—"is the training by word—by the word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance (an earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance), of reproof, of blame, where these may be required; as set over against the training by act and by discipline, which is *paideía*." ([Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. Hendrickson Publishers. 2000](#))

Strong's [3560](#) / *noutheteo* ("admonish through instruction") especially *appeals to the mind*, supplying *doctrinal and spiritual substance (content)*. This "exerts positive pressure" *on someone's logic (reasoning)*, i.e. urging them to choose (turn to) God's best.

Conclusions is this—

- They are laboring to the point of exhaustion
- They are "overseeing" or more literally standing before the flock to lead them (in the way of righteousness)
- They are admonishing (almost certainly in the truths of God's Word).

The writer of Hebrews also calls on the saints to acknowledge their leaders exhorting them to—

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. ([He 13:7](#)).

Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. ([He 13:17](#)).

LEGISLATIVE BIBLE STUDY

Blatt Rm. 317—Wednesday, 8:30am

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