

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

May 1, 2022

Congregational Duty and the Churches Role in sanctification

Situational Context: Paul reminded these believers that while we wait for the Lord's return, our waiting is not inactivity but active in obedience. Having reminded them that they are now children of light in obedience far as our battle with the flesh will allow. We are to live active Christian lives in fellowship with one another to encourage each other. **1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**

Lesson Theme: 1 Thessalonians 5:15-22 In a hostile world, the church must continue to carry out its duty to proclaim the gospel and reflect the Body of Christ. Paul reminds them that each part of the body has its duty. The Leaders, or elders must lead and teach well as they are encouraged to labor for the good of the church. While each member has a duty to support the leaders and be involved as a means to promote the well being of the church by promoting peace within the flock, and encouraging one another.

1. Support: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV) ¹² **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.**

Interpretation: Even at this early stage in the life of the congregation there were leaders who had spiritual care and oversight. Paul endorses a proper esteem for church workers and leaders, asking love and respect for them. Not much is known about the organization and leadership of the church at this period, but the reference is possibly to elders. Respect is due not merely because of personal attachment or respect for their high position, but in appreciation for their work. Live in peace. The words apply to Christian relationships in general, but here they probably refer especially to right relations between leaders and those under them.

Supporting Texts:

1 Timothy 5:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

Mark 9:50 (ESV) ⁵⁰ Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Romans 14:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Starters:

How does respecting church leaders build up the church?

Is this about a difference in methods or principle?

What kinds of issues tend to cause the most second guessing?

2. Embrace Our Duty: 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22 (ESV) ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Interpretation: This address indicates that the exhortations that follow assign the responsibility for ministry to all the congregation, not just to acknowledged leaders. The contexts here and show that the form of idleness in view is an irresponsible refusal to work for a living. Many think this behavior was fed by an overripe expectancy of Christ's Second Coming.

It is a remarkable part of Christian morality that the Christian, following the example of Christ, should refuse to seek personal retaliation. Paul admonishes the Thessalonians not to despise legitimate prophecy; both Silas and Paul were "prophets". Nevertheless, claims to divine prophecy must be tested and not

accepted uncritically. Prophecy here is absent the New Testament, that prophets declare the will and word of God.

Do not quench the Spirit is to put out the work of the Spirit in action by refusing the work of the Spirit when the word is being taught, by a hardened heart, or sin, or not worshipping at all.

Supporting Texts:

1 Corinthians 14:29 (ESV) ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,

Matthew 5:38-39 (ESV) ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

1 Peter 3:9 (ESV) ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

Ephesians 4:30 (ESV) ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Discussion Starters:

Describe the difference between proactive and reactive ministry.

How do we develop a more proactive ministry with each other without being intrusive?

Whose responsibility is verses 16-18?

3. Trust God: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (ESV) ²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Interpretation: The complete mending of all human imperfection is not only possible but certain. God is faithful and will accomplish it. The time element must be remembered. Ultimate perfection, to include a glorified body as well, will be accomplished at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We can trust God to the work of our sanctification. We therefore realize that all of our experiences are in some way part of the sanctifying process. The references to spirit, soul, and body mean the whole person.

Supporting Texts:

Philippians 1:6 (ESV) ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

John 17:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

Discussion Starters:

Describe sanctification separation from?

The world vs the kingdom

Sin vs holiness

Self vs God

Immaturity to maturity

Why is it vitally important to know that sanctification is God's work?

Why?

