

**I THESSALONIANS 5:12-13**  
**WALK IN GRATITUDE!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Thessalonians chapter 5 as we continue our study in Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica. Beginning in I Thessalonians chapter 4 and continuing on through the rest of this letter, I Thessalonians chapter 5, Paul has been dealing with this idea of our walk as a Christian.

In other words, how we live out our Christian life. And as you read the letters that Paul has written in the Scriptures, this is an important aspect to these letters. In Ephesians 4:1-3 Paul wrote, "**I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**"

In other words, Paul is admonishing the Ephesian believers, and all of us, to walk worthy of that high calling by which we have been called. We are children of God and thus, walk that way!

And notice that it is a walk, which means there are things that should be manifested in our lives, seen by others, and there are things that should not. I realize that for some of you, this is not that important.

You are all about doctrine and that is very important but if you don't apply that doctrine to your life, then the words are meaningless! Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

In yesterday's article, "A warning about Professional Sports," we mentioned former pro baseball player Orel Hershisser as follows:

“Jackson’s fellow Indian pitcher Orel Hershiser was also an outspoken Christian with a good moral testimony. Hershiser ends his autobiography, *Out of the Blue*, with these words: “But the only thing that’s going to count in the long run is not my won-loss record or how much I wind up with in my bank book . . . . read chapter nine again. It’s the only one that really counts.” (Chapter nine of his book contains the account of how he came to trust Jesus Christ as His Savior.)”

I wrote that in 1997 for the first edition of the report, about a year before Hershiser retired from baseball.

It turns out that Hershiser’s good moral testimony has become questionable.

In 2005, he divorced his wife of 24 years and in 2010 married another woman with a ceremony in Las Vegas.

He has pursued a second career in professional poker.

It appears that “evil communications corrupts good manners” is true after all (1 Corinthians 15:33).

- [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

Now, maybe after hearing that story you are feeling, “Hey, that is nobody’s business but his!” That may be true, but as Christians, we live our life out in the open. Why is that? Because we have nothing to hide, at least we shouldn’t, should we?

Look at the lives of these young believers in Thessalonica, not lived out behind some closed doors but out in the open for everyone to see.

In I Thessalonians 1:1-10, listen to what Paul has to say about them. He wrote, **“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”**

That is how we are to live out our lives as Christians. To let unbelievers see that our faith is real so that they may be drawn to Christ. To let believers see our faith and be encouraged to follow along!

And so, over the last several weeks, we have been looking at our walk in Christ, how Paul admonished these young believers to live out their faith!

Paul started out talking about our walk in holiness, that our lives should be different than what we see in the world! God is holy and He desires us to walk accordingly. Not for salvation but for our identification with Him. Not by the Law but out of love for Him! It is His will for our lives, that we walk in sexual purity!

Then Paul spoke of our walk in love. And this love is an action word, it is not just seen in what we say but what we do. It is a love that is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but it is a love that is unconditional, just as Christ loves us and gave Himself up for us! It is that *AGAPE* love that only comes from God and not only flows into our lives but through our lives!

And if you are struggling in this area and you feel you are justified in your anger towards someone, I will just share these words from Jesus. In John 13:34-35 Jesus said, “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**”

Notice it does not say, “*Love people unless . . .*” They will know we are Christians by our love. Who will know? Unbelievers! Never forget that. If you are struggling in this area, then ask God to help you because this love does not come from within, it comes from above!

Then Paul spoke of walking in honesty. Paul put it like this in I Thessalonians 4:11-12, “**that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.**” May we walk in honesty!

From there Paul speaks of walking in hope. And we saw how our hope is based in the fact that the Lord is coming back for His Bride, the Church, we call it the Rapture. Too often Christians put their hope in all kinds of things and in the end, they are disappointed. You will never be disappointed in placing your hope in the return of Jesus Christ, He is our blessed hope and He is coming back!

And last time we spoke of walking in the light. And to do that we keep our eyes upon Jesus and His Word. And the focus here is that of the Day of the Lord and that this day should not overtake us because we are children of the day and not of the night. Before this day begins, we will be removed from this earth and we will be with the Lord.

And Paul closes that by saying we are to comfort each other with these words. Praise God we can find comfort, peace in God's Word for He has told us what is going to happen before it does.

This morning we are going to focus on our walk in gratitude. Now that may seem like a strange idea, but think about it. Do with thank God for the people He has brought into our lives or do we just complain about the people He has brought into our lives. It is something to think about and we will dig into that more this morning.

And I guess we can say that the rest of this chapter is dealing with how we are to relate to each other as Christians in the local church. Again, that is something that is not carried out many times and it causes all kinds of problems.

Here in I Thessalonians 5:12-13 *Paul explains how we are to relate to leaders in the church.*

Then, in I Thessalonians 5:14-15 we see *Paul explain how we are to relate to each other, fellow Christians in the church.*

In I Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Paul explains how we are to respond to the circumstances, the situations we face in life because how we do will affect the way we impact others in the church.*

And then, in I Thessalonians 5:19-22 *Paul gives a short burst of exhortations.*

And finally, we see that *Paul will close the letter with a short benediction or blessing* in I Thessalonians 5:23-28.

I like the way one commentator summed this up for us. He wrote,

We all know Christian friends or family members who have wandered from God's straight path to meander in the ways of the world. I'm not talking about apostates or heretics, but the frustrated, the disillusioned, the burned-out, the weary. They still confess Christ, but like a boat adrift without a sail or rudder, the circumstances of life have gradually borne them away from their earlier straight course in their walk with Christ. In their spiritual doldrums, they have not only neglected their own spiritual life, but they have been derelict in their duties to their friends, family, and church.

Are their actions a result of unruliness? Faintheartedness? Weakness? Do you confront them or console them? Encourage or rebuke them? And if unbelief isn't their problem, what do you tell them to do? Over the years I've learned that the answer is usually simpler than we sometimes make it. Instead of complicated diagnoses and long, drawn-out spiritual therapy, often the unruly, the faint, and the weak simply need to go back to the basics. This is what Paul elsewhere calls the "simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).

As Paul nears the closing remarks of his first letter to the Thessalonians, he begins wrapping up with a "back to the basics" kind of exhortation. Here we find a quick-fire, but surefire, prescription for getting and staying on target. If we take note of these things and constantly bring them to mind, we'll not only protect ourselves from wandering, but we'll also be able to steer others back into the right course.

- Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights, 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, pp.86-87

Important issues that we need to look at and not only know but apply to our lives! We too often are searching for the big things, the important things, at least we think they are important, and then we get away from the basics and we find ourselves adrift!

So, with that as our background, let's begin reading in I Thessalonians chapter 5, beginning in verse 12 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

## I THESSALONIANS 5

### VERSES 12-13

In these verses Paul is speaking of leadership and when some people here a title like that, they cringe! And yet, when you look at the Scriptures, God does have an order of things. In other words, there are those who are in charge over us. And as much as we might not like it, God has established it.

For instance, there is the order of the family. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family, then the wife and then the children. If you get things out of order, the order that God has established, then you have a mess. And look at families today, Christian families where the wife is in charge or even the children are in charge. That is a house that is not in order.

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 11:3, **“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”**

And you can also read of this order in Ephesians chapter 5 where the wife is to submit to her husband and the husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church and gave His life for it!

And hear me out on this. I am not saying, nor is the Lord saying that men are smarter than women. That they are better than women. That they are more important than women. Not at all, we are all equal before the Lord.

Then what is the point? God has established an order and to show you how important this is we see that Jesus submitted to the Father. That does not make Jesus inferior to God the Father, not as smart, not as powerful, less of a God than the Father. What the Lord is showing us is that there is an order and when God became flesh and dwelt among us, even though He was fully God and fully man, He submitted Himself to God the Father.

If Jesus has done that, then we need to submit to the roles that God has placed upon our lives!

Then there is the role of government and we are to submit to the authority of the government. You can read of this in Romans chapter 13. And I am not going to read through that whole section, but just listen to what Paul said in Romans 13:1, **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”**

As I have said so many times before, we might not like the government leaders, we might not agree with what they are doing, but we are to obey them, pay our taxes and so on. The only time we have the authority not to obey them is if they tell us to do something that would be contrary to what God has told us in His Word.

For instance, the government telling you that you have to have an abortion. Now I now some are thinking, “I don’t like what they do with my taxes!” True, but Paul spoke to the Romans and said that they were to pay their taxes and the Roman government was very wicked, very immoral. Thus, so are we.



And what we see here in I Thessalonians chapter 5 is that there is order in the church. God has placed leaders in the church to oversee the function of the church.

And rebellion in any of these three areas will bring the chastening of God upon you. God has placed order in the family, in government and in the church!

Now, let me say this before we move on here. In all of these areas where we are to submit to those who are in authority over us, that authority is not absolute. What I mean by that, and I spoke a little with the authority of the government, if what you are being told to do goes against God's Word, then you don't have to obey those in authority over you.

In Acts chapter 5 we see the apostles of Jesus arrested by the Jewish religious leaders for sharing Jesus with the people. And an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and they are freed.

What do you think they go and do after being freed from prison? No, they did not hide themselves away. They went into the Temple and spoke forth the Gospel message to the people. Nothing was going to stop them from doing that!

Now when the Jewish religious leaders went looking for the apostles in prison, and they did not find them, they were trying to figure out what to do with these guys.

And when they found them in the Temple preaching the Gospel, they told them, "**Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!**"

That is awesome and yet, they "filled Jerusalem with [their] doctrine." And yes, the Jewish religious leaders did not think so, but it was awesome. So the Jewish religious leaders told them to stop what they were doing.

And the response is given to us in Acts 5:29, “**Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’**”

I think, in the English translation, we miss the impact of that statement. You see, in some of your Bibles, like mine, it says “**... ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’**”

But the Greek word for “**ought**” is DEI and it means “**must**,” they had to do these things, why? Because their faith was real and nothing was going to stop them from speaking forth the truth.

So, please understand, in regard to church leaders, this is not a blank card for them to do whatever they want. If they are teaching false doctrine, you need to talk with them. If they refuse to listen, then you leave. It is as simple as that. I can’t imagine why anyone would stay at a church where they felt false doctrine was being taught, that makes no sense to me.

Therefore, all human authority has been delegated by God and is subject to and it operates under His divine ultimate authority!

Also, the family authority, the governmental authority and church authority is all subject to God and His Word. But, when leaders in any of these areas move away from God and His Word we then see so much trouble, so much chaos! That is an important aspect to all of this.

And think about this for a minute. What God has established is very important. You see, by respecting authority we have a healthy functioning society that is following the design that God has established.

If that is what is rejected, then what we see in this nation and really the world, is the result! Without that respect, you have violence, hatred, and really, it all leads to anarchy because there is no control any longer!

Several years back, when pastor Paul came to visit us from India, he said something that took me back, I never really gave it any thought, but I think he is right.

He was amazed at how disrespectful some Christians are to their leaders, their pastors in America, it is not like that in India. I think he made a powerful point.

Now, let's look at these verses here in I Thessalonians chapter 5 and see how we are to submit to the leadership of the church.

Paul starts out by urging the believers in Thessalonica to **“recognize”** these leaders in the church. And this word means “to take note” and really, the idea here is that of “separating from the rest for the purpose of special consideration.”

“Wait a minute, I am no respecter of persons!” Well, Paul tells us why we are to respect leaders in the church.

First of all, he tells us that they **“are over you in the Lord.”** Now we have talked about this already, God has an order even in the church. There is the pastor, then elders, then deacons, and then the congregation!

That is how our church government functions here at Calvary. Our Church Government here at Calvary is the Shepherd or Pastor is over the flock that God has entrusted to him, the one that He, Jesus has purchased with His own blood.

Then there are the elders who are dealing with the spiritual aspects of the church and our elders are also teaching elders. They are here to assist me in the work of the ministry, to make my job easier so I can present to you the Word of God.

And then there are the deacons who deal with the physical aspects of the church and they are very important also. And this role we really don't have differentiated here because those that are helping in the physical work of the church are really acting like deacons even though they might not have the title.

Now I want you to notice the qualities of leaders, what they should be manifesting in their lives and it is far different than what we see many times.

So, these leaders that are over us, Paul tells us that they "**labor among you.**" The Greek word means "to exhibit great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion."

I knew of a pastor who did the exact opposite. He did not prepare any studies, he just got up there and winged it! That is just being lazy.

For me, I just don't understand it. For the first fifteen years that I was pastor of this church I worked outside the church as a critical care nurse in Sheboygan. And every other weekend I would get up at 6:00 am, go over my notes for church, come to church, get home by around noon, eat, and get ready to go to work and I would get home around midnight or later.

Those were long days but the Lord allowed me to do that, He gave me what I needed to accomplish the work that He had for me.

Now we see leaders who want the best hotel rooms when they come to speak, expensive food, they want to be catered to hand and foot. That is wrong.

The bottom line is this. We are all part of the body of Christ, different roles, but the body of Christ. No one is more important or better than another. We are servants of Christ.

But that can become confusing at times as the pastor or leaders are elevated to a position of such importance that they do nothing. They come in, give a message and they are gone. They don't even stick around to talk with people.

Leaders should be doing more than everyone else because they are to be an example to others. Peter put it like this in I Peter 5:1-4, **“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”**

Now who is Peter speaking of here, elders or senior pastors? I think verse 2 gives us the answer for Peter speaks of them shepherding over the flock that God has given to them, which tells me there were senior pastors or under-shepherds in the churches in Asia Minor who were also elders, just as I am.

Paul, in speaking to the Ephesian elders or pastors said this in Acts 20:28, **“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**

Being a pastor is not a job, it is your life, it is a calling! And the people God has entrusted to you cost Him His life, thus, watch over them, feed them, care for them, lead them, guide them, protect them.

Now there are those who have become pastors because they are great Bible teachers, but that doesn't make them a pastor.

A pastor is totally immersed with his sheep and as one person said, it is “Bent knees, wet eyes and a broken heart.”

I know that Pastor Chuck Smith, in speaking to his assistant pastors would tell them if there is something else you can do, then do it because the ministry is tough, it is a battle and you need to be ready for it. You don't get in and then get out if you are called! And yet the average pastor only lasts a few years.

Peter now focuses on what a pastor is not supposed to do, what he is not to be manifesting in his life, and he will contrast that with what a pastor is to be like, what he is to manifest in his life.

Let me also add this to make this more applicable to all of you. You are leaders in your home, at work, maybe at school, as a coach or whatever. Thus, apply these principles to your life as you are watching over the welfare of others!

First of all, Peter tells us that we are not to serve by *constraint or compulsion* but we serve *willingly*!

There are all kinds of reason why people get into the ministry, maybe pressure from their parents or friends, or whatever. That is not a good reason. You see, ministry is a calling and once you are in the ministry you should not serve as if you are being forced to do it.

A pastor or leader should serve willingly, they shouldn't feel forced or pressured to serve, but it truly is an honor to serve! Serve the Lord willingly!

Next, Peter tells us that we are not to serve for *dishonest gain* but we should serve *eagerly*!

Let's face it, if you are doing something because of the pay you will receive, to make the big bucks, that is dishonest gain or filthy lucre. Your motives are wrong.

You serve because you love the people and you love the Lord and whatever the pay is, praise the Lord.

That is not to say that a pastor is not to be paid, for Paul tells us in I Timothy 5:17-18, **“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’”**

But sadly, many times pastors move from church to church to better themselves, to make more money, to be over a bigger flock and that is not the heart of a shepherd! Serve the Lord eagerly!

Then Peter says a leader is *not to lord over* the people but to *be an example* to them!

Folks, the sheep don't belong to the pastor, they are entrusted to them by the Lord and thus, we don't drive the sheep, we lead them and that is done by example.

I pray that as you look at my life you see a positive example, that I get down in the trenches with you doing the work.

I pray that you have a hunger to know God through His Word and a passion to serve Him. Be an example to the people God has entrusted to you!

And here is the reality, one day we will have to answer to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

You see, what did we do with the flock that He entrusted to us, how did we lead them? Or what did we do with the family that God has entrusted to us? Or what did we do with the workers He has entrusted to us? How did we lead them?

That is very humbling when you put it in that perspective! You see, in a sense we don't work for the sheep, we work for the Chief Shepherd and we care for His sheep!

We are servant-leaders and in that role, we labor, we work hard, we put forth great effort, even to the point of exhaustion. But we do it in love, not complaining but rejoicing what God is doing!

A servant-leader is one who will “**labor among you.**”

Next, Paul, in I Thessalonians 5:12 says that a leader is one who will “**admonish you**” or really warn you, correct you and this is done with the idea of restoration. In fact, and I found this interesting, Morris says of this word, “While its tone is brotherly, it is big-brotherly.”

As much as I want to be everyone’s friend, there are times that I am going to say things that you will not like. You may even be mad at me, angry at me. But if I let that drive me, the fear of man, then I am in trouble.

I fear the Lord, respect Him too much to ignore what He is telling me, what His Word is saying. And, I love you too much to not tell you the truths of God found in the Word of God no matter how you may feel about what I am saying.

Listen to the warning that Paul gave the Ephesian elders when he met them at Miletus in Acts chapter 20, “**Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.**” Acts 20:26-31.



Paul is warning these Ephesian elders of the dangers that are out there with false teachers and false doctrine coming into the church.

And his warning is two-fold. First, there are those who will rise up from outside the church, and like savage wolves they will bring in doctrine that will destroy people's lives. We see that today with all the false doctrine that is flooding into the church.

But, not only that. We see Paul warn them of those from within the church, leaders, who will bring in their own destructive heresies, trying to draw people to themselves instead of the Lord. Yes, they will use spiritual language, but they end up being the authority on this new doctrine and it too can spread like cancer and destroy a church.

This is something that is lacking in the church today, warning, correcting people when they are wrong. People come up with their own ideas, spread them, and the church is silent. And as you let this go, it can be destructive to people's lives.

And the best way to protect the people of God is to warn them of the danger but more importantly, to teach them the Word of God which will expose the lies that are out there.

And let's face it, most of us don't like confrontation, but there are times that in needs to be done and that is especially true as leaders. Paul wanted them to understand that a leader will warn them, correct them to get them back on track.

From there Paul moves to the third point about leaders, in I Thessalonians 5:13. He says that we are to "**esteem them very highly in love.**"

In the Greek it is even stronger. It says, "***hold them in the highest regard in the love of God.***"

Now you may be thinking, "But why? Why should I hold my pastor or leaders in the church in the highest regard in the love of God?"

First of all, let me say this. Don't do that because of the title of the person. We are to respect the office of a pastor or leader but not always are we required to esteem the man. I know, that sounds strange but it is true.

Notice what Paul links this esteem we hold leaders to, "**for their works sake.**" In other words, not because he is the pastor, has a great personality, is good looking, or this or that. The reason they were to do this, the reason you are to do this is because of their labor on behalf of God's people.

My desire, as pastor of this church, is to make sure you are the best loved and the best fed sheep in town! I hope that is the desire of every pastor, it should be.

It is like a parent. We want to make sure our children are loved and they are fed so that they can grow and mature and be on their own one day!

And you do not need to know everything that I do, that is not important. But what is important is that you know how much I love you and care for you.

I did not know all that my dad and mom did for me. The sacrifices they made because of the issues that faced our family. I am sure there are things I still don't know today as an adult.

But that is not necessary. This is the thing that I did know. My parents loved me and cared for me more than I can imagine. I was not the easiest kid to care for and yet, they never got rid of me. Although I thought I saw them putting an ad in the paper that made me a little concerned. No, never did that and I never felt that they didn't love me.

And for feeding me, I grew up in an Italian home. All I got was food, more food, here is a little more! My dad would save some food from supper to eat at another time, not a good idea. He would go looking for it and guess what, I ate it!

The funny thing, and it was funny, is he kept doing it and we would laugh about it. I knew he loved me and that he was willing to give me what I needed to grow.

That is a pastor folk's, that is what we are to be doing and the same is true for leaders. It is never easy because, let's face it, how do you appease everyone? You don't.

I have had people upset with me for some of the silliest things. I still can't grasp why, but they were mad and they still may be mad.

Paul tells us that we are to hold pastors, leaders in the church in high esteem "**for their works sake.**"

Let me share this with you because it will show you how being a leader is not easy, but we are to stand strong. We are to do what is right, not always what people will like. We are told,

Myron Rush identifies tough issues facing every Christian leader in *The New Leader*. We are wise to ponder them slowly.

You must be willing to stand alone.

You must be willing to go against public opinion in order to promote what you believe.

You must be willing to risk failure.

You must become master of your emotions.

You must strive to remain above reproach.

You must be willing to make decisions others don't want to make.

You must be willing to say no at times, even when you'd like to say yes.

You must sometimes be willing to sacrifice personal interests for the good of the group.

You must never be content with the average; you must always strive for the best.

People must be more important to you than possessions.

You will have to work harder to keep your life in balance than people do who are not leaders.

- Paul Borthwick, *Leading the Way*, pp. 177-178

How true that is. But let me also say this. There is no greater joy in serving the Lord. Julie can tell you that when we go on vacation, we have a great time. I love spending time with my wife, alone, and just relaxing.

But as it gets closer to returning home, I am thinking about teaching again, what I need to do because I love to serve the Lord.

Going to Haiti to teach some of the pastors down there how to teach the Word of God, the Bible was a stretch for me.

But to be able to share the Word of God with men who will then share the Word of God with their people, what a blessing.

It was hot, it was humid and it was a joy to see our family down there who love the Lord and want to grow in Him.

And here in I Thessalonians 5:13, did you see that it speaks of work and not play. It is not that we don't have fun, you know me, I have fun in the Lord. But there is work that needs to be done and God has chosen to use people like us to accomplish it. Thus, we must walk forward, we must get our hands dirty and do the work that is before us.

And I like how Paul ends this here in I Thessalonians 5:13. He says, “**Be at peace among yourselves.**”

I don't understand when people say, “I just don't like that person. I can't get along with them!”

And here's the thing. I can diagnose that problem very quickly. It is an "I" problem. Not an "eye" problem but an "I" problem. *I* can't do this, *I* won't do that, *I* don't want to and so on.

Make no mistake about it, God has called us to peace, especially in the local church. And think about it. If there were not leaders in the church, then there would be no order in the church.

You see, everyone would do what they wanted and it would deteriorate into chaos and rebellion.

Let me give you an example with worship. If I listened to everyone's opinion on what worship should be like, we could not even do worship.

You know, drummers and drums, they are of the devil. No, they are not, but you get the idea. Electric guitar, why imitate the world. We are not! Playing with musical instruments is also of the devil, I think that is to drive the point home, we need to get rid of the musical instruments and sing a capella. Okay, there are a lot of musical instruments mentioned in the Bible! The only musical instrument that should be used in worship is an organ. I can see David, as he was a shepherd, bringing this huge organ with him to worship God with. Not!

So, if I listened to everyone, if I tried to please everyone, it would not work. There would be no peace as everyone would be fighting and arguing which is right and which is wrong.

Thus, we do worship like we are doing and the hearts of the worship team is knit with mine and what we have is a time of coming before the Lord and worshipping Him because worship is about Him!

If you don't want drums, fine. If you don't want a guitar, fine. If you don't want musical instruments, fine. If you want only an organ, fine. But once you make it a law, demand that any other way is of the devil, you are wrong. We honor the Lord with our worship and if people don't like it, praise God that there are places that will fit their style of worship.

Let me show you what peace can do when people are willing to work together under the guidance of their leader. We are told,

At a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Jack Lipton, a psychologist at Union College, and R. Scott Bulione, a graduate student at Columbia University, presented their findings on how members of the various sections of 11 major symphony orchestras perceived each other.

The percussionists were viewed as insensitive, unintelligent, and hard-of-hearing, yet fun-loving. String players were seen as arrogant, stuffy, and unathletic. The orchestra members overwhelmingly chose “loud” as the primary adjective to describe the brass players. Woodwind players seemed to be held in the highest esteem, described as quiet and meticulous, though a bit egotistical. Interesting findings, to say the least!

With such widely divergent personalities and perceptions, how could an orchestra ever come together to make such wonderful music?

The answer is simple: regardless of how those musicians view each other, they subordinate their feelings and biases to the leadership of the conductor. Under his guidance, they play beautiful music.

- Today in the Word, June 22, 1992

Ultimately our conductor, the One who guides our lives is Jesus. But He has also placed leaders in the church to help the church to make beautiful music you might say. And as each work together they are working for the betterment of the body.

But without peace, you have fighting, bickering, gossip, you have this and you have that and it ends up being destructive in our lives and in the body of believers of the local church!

John L. Dagg said back in the nineteenth century, “It has been remarked, that when discipline leaves the church, Christ goes with it.” What a warning for us today!

I love how Jesus gives to us an example of what leaders are to be like in Mark chapter 10. In this chapter we see James and John asking Jesus to sit on His right hand and on His left in the Kingdom. They were jockeying for position in the Kingdom.

And in Mark 10:42-45 listen to what Jesus said to them and to us. He said, “**... ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’**”

Here it is. As Christian leaders, we are to be a servant of all! We are not to lord over the people but serve, just as Jesus, Almighty God, did not come to be served but *TO* serve!

Now, as we finish up here, are we thankful for the leaders God has given to us? Is there gratitude for how God is using them? There should be because they are warning you, correcting you in love. And thus, they should be esteemed for the work they are doing for the Lord. Not put on a pedestal but prayed for, encouraged, and so on. And as we surrender to the Prince of Peace with our lives, may we live peaceable lives with each other.

As I close this morning let me leave you with this to think about. We are told,

Don't take a position of leadership in church unless you are prepared to be honest, pure, and loving in your lifestyle. Leadership is a privilege, and with privilege comes responsibility. God holds teachers of His truth doubly responsible because we who lead are in a position where we can either draw people toward Christ or drive them away from Him. This is illustrated in the life of the famous author Mark Twain.

Church leaders were largely to blame for his becoming hostile to the Bible and the Christian faith. As he grew up, he knew elders and deacons who owned slaves and abused them. He heard men using foul language and saw them practice dishonesty during the week after speaking piously in church on Sunday. He listened to ministers use the Bible to justify slavery. Although he saw genuine love for the Lord Jesus in some people, including his mother and his wife, he was so disturbed by the bad teaching and poor example of church leaders that he became bitter toward the things of God.

Indeed, it is a privilege to be an elder, a deacon, a Sunday school teacher, or a Bible club leader. But it is also an awesome responsibility. Let's make sure we attract people to the Savior rather than turn them away.

- Source Unknown

May we walk in gratitude for the people, the leaders God has brought into our lives!