

11/9/25

The Believer's Attitude Towards Leadership

1Thess. 5:12-13

The relationship between the pulpit and pew is like a marriage, committed to each other and resolving problems as they arise.

* The desire to bail out without resolving issues is not the answer! And like a parent sons or daughter relation, not everyone is going to like you all the time!

Paul is coming to the close of his letter and now turns to a series of exhortations that were related to and needful for the Thessalonian church.

1. The responsibility of the congregation towards leadership. vs. 12-13
2. The responsibility of the leadership and believers towards the various members of the congregation. vs. 14
3. The responsibility of all believers to seek the good of all. vs. 15
4. The responsibility of the believer towards God. vs. 16-22
5. The responsibility of God towards the believer. vs. 23-24
6. The responsibility of the church towards the missionary. vs. 25-27
7. The benediction of grace. vs. 28

Remember Paul was at Thessalonica for three weeks reasoning with them from the Scriptures. Acts 17:2

1. Paul, Titus and Timothy had been chased out of Thessalonica and Berea, then Paul went on to Athens, finally ending up in Corinth. Acts 17:10-18:1
2. Paul attempted to return. Twice, but was hindered by Satan. 1Thess. 2:17-18
3. Silas and Timothy met Paul at Corinth having been sent back by Paul from Athens to see how the Thessalonians were doing and to encourage them. Acts 18:15-16' 1Thess. 3:1-3
4. Timothy had just returned with the report, so Paul is giving specific instructions needed to a young church. 1Thess. 3:6
5. From the context of our text it would appear there were some who were not submitting to the authority and care of the leadership, resulting in some tensions in the church. 1Thess. 4:9-12; 2Thess. 3:6-7, 11-15

We want to look at the exhortation of Paul regarding the responsibility of the congregation towards leadership, marked by three things. 1Thess. 5:12-13

- I. The church is to have a proper perception towards leadership. vs. 12
 - II. The church is to have a proper perspective for their affirmation towards leadership. vs. 13a
 - III. The church is to have a proper relation towards leadership. vs. 13b
- I. The church is to have a proper perception towards leadership. vs. 12**

* This involves the attitude of the believer!

- A. The apostle Paul wanted the people in the church to respect those in leadership, “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labour among you.” vs. 12a-c
1. The request included Paul’s companions. vs. 12a
 - a. Paul’s companions were Silvanus and Timothy, represented by the pronoun “we”. 1Thess. 1:1a
 - 1) Silvanus had been sent along with Paul to Berea when the Jews attacked the house of Jason. Acts 17:5, 10
 - 2) Timothy had been sent back to Thessalonica from Athens to encourage and comfort them in their faith, due to the persecution. 1Thess. 3:1-3
 - 3) Both had been at Thessalonica and were known by the church.
 - b. Paul’s plead is one of humility, instead of some authoritative command, by the phrase, “urge you”.
 - 1) The word urge “erotao” means to request and entreat with the idea of begging for immediate obedience, a present active tense.
 - 2) Paul used it for the Thessalonians to walk to please God. 1Thess. 4:1
 - 3) The disciples used the same word when they requested the Lord to heal Peter’s mother-in-law. Lk. 4:38

- 4) John used the word as he pleads with the lady he wrote to. 2Jn. 5
- c. Paul’s plead is based on his spiritual relationship to them, “brethren”.
 - 1) They were born into and belonged to the same heavenly family.
 - 2) The apostle comes along side presenting himself as their equal and under the same responsibility as they.
 - 3) The phrase appears nineteen times in First Thessalonians, this is the third in the chapter, four more will follow. vs. 14, 25, 26, 27
2. The request of Paul was that they recognize those who labor among them. vs. 12c
 - a. The word recognize “eido” means to know, consider, pursue, understand, with the idea of proper recognition of them.
 - 1) They were to know who they were.
 - 2) They were to know what they did.
 - 3) They were to make this a priority.
 - 4) They were to know all those involved.
 - * The idea in context being their regards for them and acknowledgment because of what they do.
 - b. Paul is appealing that they submit to the leadership elders “presbyteros” ordained by God. Acts 14:23; 20:17; Tit. 1:5
 - 1) Paul met with the elders of Ephesus one last time at Miletus. Acts 20:17

- 2) From the context it would appear that there were some who were not submitting to the care and leadership, causing some tension in the church. 1Thess. 4:9-12; 2Thess. 3:6-7; 11-15
- 3) The limit of submission to the authority and power of church leaders is the Scriptures, they cannot and should not go beyond the Scriptures!
- c. Paul is appealing that they obey the leadership because of their example. 1Cor 16:25; Heb. 13:7
 - 1) The apostle Paul qualifies their labor.
 - a) The word labor “kopiao” means to work to the point of exhaustion and weariness, a participle in the present active tense, literally, laboring.
 - b) The same word is used by Peter when Jesus told him to let down his nets and he said, “We have toiled all night and caught nothing.” Lk. 5:5
 - c) The same root, but a different form appears. 1Thess. 1:3; 2:9; 3:5
 - d) The type of service they leader were rendering, revealed they were servants not hirelings.
- c. The apostle declared these men exerted themselves “among you.”
 - 1) They did it in their midst.

- 2) They did it on their behalf for them. Acts 20:18-21, 33-35; 1Cor. 4:9-13; 2Cor. 11:22-30
 - 3) They were not better or above the people, but serving the people in the church!
- B.** The apostle Paul wanted the people to reflect on the authority of those in leadership, “and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.” vs. 12d
- 1. Paul told them to note, consider and pay attention to those who presided over them in leadership.
 - a. The word over “proisteemi” means to stand before, superintend or rule.
 - 1) The word is used of one who leads, to be done with diligence. Rom. 12:8
 - 2) The word is also used of the qualifications for a bishop, ruling his own house well having his children in submission in order to know how to rule the church of God. 1Tim. 3:4-5
 - 3) The idea is not a dictatorial or absolute rule, but one of authority exercised for the care and benefit of the one being superintended faithfully and lead.
 - b. The limitations are clearly stated and qualified “in the Lord.”
 - 1) It means it is being done by a Christian to other Christians.

- 2) It is after the manner and example of Christ by its nature.
 - 2) It is in accord and limited to the revelation of Scripture, not beyond, to abuse their power and authority.
 - 3) It is a delegated authority not one's own, vested to them by Christ.
2. Paul told them to note, consider and pay attention to those "who admonish you".
- a. The idea behind the word "admonish" is not discipline but personal responsibility and accountability to one's professing faith of being a Christian.
 - 1) The word admonish "noutheteo" is a verb and means to put in mind, to warn, caution or reprove gently.
 - 2) The same word is used to **warn** those who were unruly. vs. 14
 - 3) The word appears also in the noun form "nouthesia". 1Cor. 10:11; Eph. 6:4; Tit. 3:10
 - 4) The person who is admonished is reminded of what they are in danger of forgetting, rebuke for wrongdoing and warned to be on guard, appealing directly to their conscience and will to set them right with Scripture.
 - b. They do it out of love for God and the people. Acts 20:31; 1Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28
 - 1) All three participles are described by one article identifying one class of

- person namely an elder who exercised oversight and had to be able to teach.
- 2) They were appointed by Paul in every church. Acts 14:23
 - 3) They do it out of loving care.
 - 4) They do it for the people's own good and protection. Acts 20:31; 1Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:28

Illustration

Today much of society's attitude and perceptions toward spiritual leadership is much like that of motherhood; that they are unnecessary, that they do nothing, don't know what they're talking about or worst, yet they should send people to professional help for their marriages and to raise their children, due to the bad examples and infiltration of Psychology.

Application

1. We are to respect, appreciate and obey leaders God has appointed, but never worship them. Heb. 13:17
 - * "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.
2. We are to acknowledge and submit to their spiritual authority in light of Scripture, not blindly or beyond it. 1Pet. 5:2-4
 - * "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. Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

3. We are to mark their labor and warnings as loving protective care, not a desire to control the people. Acts 20:31-32

* “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

The proper perception towards leadership is most affected by our attitude!

II. The church is to have a proper perspective for their affirmation towards leadership. vs. 13a

* This involves the believer’s actions!

A. The apostle Paul wanted the people to attribute appropriate worth to leaders, and to esteem them very highly in love.” vs. 13a

1. The command is to value the leadership God has provided in an active way not mere lip service.

* If in fact the congregation of believers have a proper perception towards leadership based on respect and recognition of their authority, then they will demonstrate it.

a. The word esteem “hegeomai” means to consider, regard, deem, account or estimate.

* The idea is of recognizing, as well as acknowledging in one’s mind a settled fact about a person or thing.

b. They were to see their leadership as a valuable resource to benefit the church body in view of their labor, oversight and warnings for their spiritual growth.

2. The measure of the value to be ascribed to leadership is clearly stated, “very highly”.

a. The phrase very highly “perissos” from the word beyond, meaning excessive, exceedingly, abundantly or much more.

b. The same word was used by Paul regarding his intensity in prayer to see them. 1Thess. 3:10

c. Paul uses the word to tell the Ephesians all God can do for the believer. Eph. 3:20

d. The idea communicated is that God has gifted and called these men to lead the church and are of great value to Him and should also be to us. Eph. 4:11-16

3. The quality for the manner they were to express their gratitude to the leaders is described, “in love”.
 - a. The source of this love is not human emotional “phileo” or sexual “eros”.
 - 1) This has nothing to do with human love, which is flawed, fickle and selfish, focused on personal benefit.
 - 2) Human love is always looking for the closest thing to perfection and one’s personal benefit.
 - b. The source of love is defined as God’s divine love “agape” describes God’s divine love divine love.
 - 1) God’s “agape” love is the potential of every believer, but not forced to yield to it incredible power and benefit!
 - 2) God’s agape love responds in appreciation and thankfulness, without the worship of the person.
 - 3) God’s “agape” love sees the enabling and gifts of the leader by the hand of God to lead and protect the church.
 - c. The source of Divine agape love affirms only what is according to the Scriptures.
 - 1) Recognizing the leaders are called and anointed.
 - 2) Recognizing the leaders commitment to labor.
 - 3) Recognizing their courage to warn.

- 4) Recognizing men are not perfect and all have feet of clay.
 - 5) Recognizing there will be personality clashes, but handled biblically in love.
 - * Paul tells the Corinthians that as a spiritual parent he would very gladly spend and be spent for them, but the more he loved them, the less he was loved. 2Cor. 12:14-15
- B.** The apostle Paul wanted the people to attribute appropriate worth to leaders for their service to the people, “for their work’s sake.” vs. 13b
- * This is distinct from the labor to the point of exhaustion, which revealed they were servant, their “work’s sake” reveals the sphere of the work, namely the “Lord’s” not their own and their ongoing commitment to do all God has called them to do!
1. Paul refers to the individual person.
 - a. The various individual are indicated by the word, their “autos”, a plural pronoun.
 - 1) There are different men and women called to different positions and offices in the church.
 - 2) There are no two persons alike, even if they served in the same office, position and gifts.
 - b. Their activities are indicated by the phrase “work’s sake”.

- 1) The word work's sake "ergon", means business, employment, what anyone is occupied in or undertaken.
 - 2) It gives to us the word agonize to indicate discipline and commitment, despite the pain, cost or difficulty, as an athlete.
 - 3) It is used of our good works that unbelievers are to glorify God in heaven. Matt. 5:16
 - 4) It is used for the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:19
 - 5) It was used for their works of faith. 1Thess. 1:3
2. Paul refers to all they do regarding the word of God.
 - a. By their diligence to study and teach the whole council of God.
 - b. By preaching the gospel faithfully without watering it down to not offend man.
 2. Paul refers to their care as shepherds.
 - a. By constantly protecting the people from wolves.
 - b. By praying for the people's needs.
 - c. By encouraging, reproving and rebuking the people when needed, instead of attempting to be liked by everyone.
 - d. By training those called to the ministry and giving them opportunity to serve.

3. Paul refers to the wisdom and experience of their years.
 - a. To direct the people in their daily lives.
 - b. To advise the people in their difficult situations in life.
 - c. To cry and rejoice with the people.
 - * We are to esteem others better than ourselves. Phil. 2:3

Illustration

Four-year-old Martha, hugging a doll in each of her pudgy little arms, looked wistfully up at her mother and said, "Mamma, I love them and love them and love them, but they never love me back."

Jeanette W. Lockerbie #3228

* Tragically such is the case for some believers regarding leadership!

Application

1. The affirmation of love goes beyond words; it is active in growing spiritually. Eph. 4:11-16
 - a. To attend the teaching of God's word.
 - b. To be involved in serving.
 - c. To pray for leadership.
 - * John says, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." 1Jn. 3:18-19

2. The affirmation of God's love to be practical, will manifest certain elements, namely the nature of Christ, not being permissive or legalistic. Phil. 2:5

- a. Grace.
- b. Mercy.
- c. Patience.

* "Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." 1Cor. 13:4-8a

3. The affirmation of God's love will always be grateful for all that is done in the Lord and through the Lord by the giving of thanks. 1Thess. 5:18

- a. That they answered their call.
- b. That they have continued in their call.
- c. That they are faithful steward in their call.
- d. That they have expanded their work and call.

* **"in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."**

The proper perspective for their affirmation towards leadership is most effective by our actions!

III. The church is to have a proper relation towards leadership. vs. 13b

- * "Be at peace among yourselves".
- * This involves the believers motives!

A. The apostle Paul wanted the people to be at peace with the leadership.

1. If we have a proper perspective and perception of leadership, then our motivation for the leadership and church will be peace.
 - a. Paul commanded this peace to be their practice, not the exception.
 - 1) The word peace "eireneuo", means to make peace or cultivate it.
 - 2) Literally, "continue to be at peace among your own selves."
 - 3) This is a willingness to check our motives and obey God!
 - b. The Greek tense is the present imperative, active durative meaning they are not urged to make peace, but rather to cultivate and maintain it.
 - 1) We don't create any peace, but only disrupt the peace and unity of the Spirit.
 - 2) This is the reason Paul tells the Ephesians to walk worthy of the Lord, with all humility and long-suffering, bearing with one another, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. 4:1-3
2. The very mention of this instruction and the urgency to obey implies the problem was present at Thessalonica.

- a. Nothing will hinder the work of ministry more than disunity.
- b. Nothing should be done for self glory. but with the mind of Christ for His glory.
- c. Nothing should be allowed by the leadership to hinder the unity of ministry and should be dealt with immediately.
- d. Keep in mind the people are always the more in number, than the leaders.
 - 1) They see everything a leader does.
 - 2) They hear everything a leader says.
 - 3) They assess and judge everything they see and hear.
- 3. The practice of some to come against the leadership is unfortunate, but certain in every church, at one time or another.
 - a. We are to exercise Matthew eighteen for all our conflict, not only for leadership.
 - b. We are to hold people accountable for what they say and do with the minimum number of people, one, two, then three for the sake of the person, the people in the church and to make it easy to find out who leaks information to others.
 - c. We are to at times ask people to leave, if they will not come to be accountable or if they will not repent. 1Cor. 5:5
- 4. The bringing of an accusation against an elder is not to be done thoughtlessly or lightly.

- a. There is to be two or three witnesses, not mere say so by one person. 1Tim. 5:19
- b. There must be verifiable evidence.
- c. The accusers are to come forwards.
 - * People who refuse to come forwards and make themselves accountable to the leadership of the church in their accusation, are not Biblical nor very honest or honorable!
- B. The apostle Paul wanted the leadership to be at peace with the congregation.
 - 1. There are many personalities in the church, at times there are personality clashes, but we are to walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh and resolve them in the Spirit Bibilically.
 - a. Some people are over-sensitive and easily offended.
 - b. Others are looking only to be served, tolerated and never corrected.
 - c. Still others are hyper-critical, examining every little word and inflection of voice, to challenge what was stated.
 - 2. There many kinds of problems that arise among the people in the church.
 - a. At times there are those that form cliques like in the world, being carnal.
 - b. At other times there are people that gossip and slander others.
 - c. At times there is jealousy and envy of others.

- d. All of these are based on pride and carnality, we are to flee these things, they are the works of the flesh and need to be reckon them dead. Gal. 5:19-21

C. Paul the apostle wanted the people to be at peace with themselves.

1. The believer can only have peace, if he or she is obeying the word of God and confessing when they fail. 1Jn. 2:1
2. The believer can only have peace, if he or she is asking forgiveness of anyone they offend, the responsibility resolve the issue falls on the innocent party. Matt. 18
3. The believer can only have peace, if they are lifting all things to God in prayer, to guard their hearts and minds. Phil. 4:6-7
4. The believer can only have peace, if he or she is bringing every thought into the captivity of Christ. 2Cor. 10:4-5

Illustration

Peace come by the act of the will to obey the word of God by the empowerment of the Spirit of God in spite and through the present difficulties. Xavier

Application

1. We are commended by Jesus to, "Have salt in ourselves, and have peace with one another." Mk 9:50
 - a. Don't be rebellious and defiant towards the leadership's Scriptural authority and leading, like Korah. Num. 16

- b. Don't steal the hearts of the people from leadership by flattery as Absalom. 2Sam. 15:1-6
2. We are told to attempt every possible effort as much as depends on us, to live peaceably with all men. Rom 12:18
 - a. Don't create your little party split as the Corinthians. 1Cor. 1:12-13
 - b. Don't try to impose your personal convictions and criticisms on others to stumble and poison them as Korah did. Num. 16:41-50
 - c. We are to pursue peace with all men. Heb. 12:14a
3. We are told to be of one mind, live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with us. 2Cor. 13:11
 - a. Don't try to lead the church and leaders when God has not called you. Rom. 12:3
 - * "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." Rom. 12:3
 - b. Don't refuse to submit to church authority, it is a mark of immaturity. Col. 3:13-14
 - * "Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must*

*do. But above all these things put on love,
which is the bond of perfection.”*

***The proper relation towards leadership is most
effective by motives!***

Conclusion

This is the exhortation of Paul regarding the responsibility of the congregation towards leadership.

- I.** The church is to have a proper perception towards leadership, focusing on attitude!
- II.** The church is to have a proper perspective for their affirmation towards leadership, focusing on actions!
- III.** The church is to have a proper relation towards leadership, focusing on motives!