

# “Our Testimony Checklist”

## 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

We want a good testimony in the timeline. We have looked at the end times events, now let's look at our current times testimony. What are the practical things we should desire in our Christian walk? How do we want people to see us as Christians? More importantly, how are we actually going to do all of these things?

“As Tertullian describes Christian practices in his apologeticus (197 AD), we see how the Christians of his community differ from the culture around them. They are not violent with each other or their enemies. They don't kill their children, even in the womb. They are honest and don't steal. They don't eat meat from animals that have been killed cruelly; they eat simple foods and live modest lives. They are sober. They use their possessions for the good of others. They are chaste and don't surrender themselves to lust. They don't traffic in sex or use prostitutes. Their men don't have sex with anyone other than the women to whom they are married. They don't commit incest. They build wholesome bonds with their family members and households. They seek the good of the world in which they live. They don't commit idolatry of any sort. Their piety is as much an inward reality as it is an outward act. They assemble together as a body. They confess their faith in the triune God at stand with their fellow Christians even at the cost of their own lives. ‘See how they love each other’”

### 1. THEY LOVE THEIR LEADERS (1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-13)

#### A. Recognize them, esteem them, love them, be at peace with one another (Verses 12-13)

- i. When the congregation is at peace it makes everything better. If you want to make your pastors and leaders happy then live at peace with one another!

### 2. THEY ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER (1 THESSALONIANS 5:14-15)

#### A. Exhortation, warning, comfort, assistance, and patience should be practiced by all the Church people not just the pastor. (Verse 14)

- i. Galatians 6:1–2<sup>1</sup> Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,

*considering yourself lest you also be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

## **B. Pursue what is good with both Christians and non-Christians (Verse 15)**

- i. *Romans 12:18–21 <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

## **3. THEY ARE JOYFUL PEOPLE (1 THESSALONIANS 5:16)**

### **A. Nothing kills our witness faster than a defeated joyless Christian.**

- i. *Philippians 4:4 <sup>4</sup> Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!*
- ii. *John 15:10–11 <sup>10</sup> When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!*
- iii. *Psalms 16:11 “...In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*
- iv. “Joy is the flag which is flown from the castle of the heart when the King is in residence there.” – Scottish Minister
- v. It takes 72 muscles to frown—only 14 to smile!
- vi. The story was told some years ago of a pastor who found the roads blocked one Sunday morning and was forced to skate on the river to get to church, which he did. When he arrived the elders of the church were horrified that their preacher had skated on the Lord's day. After the service they held a meeting where the pastor explained that it was either skate to church or not go at all. Finally one elder asked, “Did you enjoy it?” When the preacher answered, “No,” the board decided it was all right! (*Today in the Word, MBI, December, 1989, p. 12*)

## **4. THEY ARE PEOPLE OF PRAYER (1 THESSALONIANS 5:17)**

- i. “All we have to do is to recognize God as being intimately present within us. Then we may speak directly to Him every time we need to ask for help, to know His will in moments of uncertainty, and to do

whatever He wants us to do in a way that pleases Him.” – Brother Lawrence, Practice the Presence of God

**5. THEY ARE THANKFUL PEOPLE (1 THESSALONIANS 5:18)**

- i. Matthew Henry, the famous scholar, was once attacked by thieves and robbed. He wrote these words in his diary: “Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”

**6. THEY ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (1 THESSALONIANS 5:19)**

- i. “The purpose is not that you might get more of the Holy Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit might get more of you.” – Chuck Smith

**7. THEY LISTEN TO PROPHECIES (1 THESSALONIANS 5:20-21)**

- i. 1 Corinthians 14:1 <sup>1</sup> Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
- ii. 1 Corinthians 14:29–31 <sup>29</sup> Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. <sup>30</sup> If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. <sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged

**8. THEY DON'T PARTICIPATE IN EVIL (1 THESSALONIANS 5:22)**

**A. What is and isn't evil is written in the Bible. Be careful not to add or subtract from what it says in this regard.**

**9. THEY DO ALL OF THIS BY GOD'S GRACIOUS POWER (1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28)**

**A. God sanctifies us (Verse 23)**

**B. God is faithful to us (Verse 24)**

- i. Philippians 1:6 “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”

**C. God answers our prayers (Verse 25)**

**D. God works through His word (Verse 27)**

**E. God's power for all of this is a free gift of grace through Jesus Christ (Verse 28)**

Growth Group Questions:

- Why do you think it's important for Christians to have a good testimony of Godly living in these last days?
- Christians are often called hypocrites and accused of saying one thing and doing another. Have you ever had someone use this as an excuse for not coming to Church? What did you say to them?
- What is the right way and wrong way to talk to another believer about their sin issue? (see 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- Christians should be known for their joy (see 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 5:16) Why do you think Christians have a testimony as being "boring", "joyless", and "not having any fun" in our current culture?
- In what ways can we be guilty of "Quenching the Spirit"?
- Why do you think it's so important to trust in God to do the work of making us good rather than trusting in our own efforts?