

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"ALL EAR" | 1 THESSALONIANS 5: 12-28 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What are last minute reminders that you often need?

"Love Your Leaders and Each Other" (1 Thess 5: 12-15)

The church is asked to respect leaders, to warn the disorderly, to encourage the fainthearted, and help the weak, showing different people need different responses. **What helps a believer learn about the person and the needed response?**

"Love God's Will" (1 Thess 5: 16-18)

Believers are told to "rejoice always" and "give thanks continually" and "pray without ceasing" because it is God's Will. **What does this show about God? What does that mean for people today?**

"Love the Spirit Fire" (1 Thess 5: 19-22)

The desire for God from the Holy Spirit can be weakened if believers continue in evil practices or despise prophecies. Believers are to test everything hold on to what is good. **What are ways a believer "holds on to what is good"?**

"Love God's Faithfulness" (1 Thess 5: 23-28)

Paul prays for believers and is confident that God's faithfulness will make their spirit, soul and body pure, what is called sanctification. **How have you experienced God's faithfulness is purifying your life?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul ends his letter with some rapid commands on how to relate to different people and how to relate to God. And he reminds us that God is at work on His people so they can do this. **How have you been relating to other believers lately? How have you been approaching God lately? Trust that He is working in you as you pray for help to follow Him with your whole spirit, soul and body.**

All Ear**I. Slide1 Announce:**

- A. **Good morning and welcome** to everyone online and in the Learning Center.
- B. We are trying something new this morning and doing video announcements. Last spring, we did a **survey** to hear directly from you. One of the things we learned is that some of you are **not familiar with** our ministry leaders. Doing video announcements allows you to **see the faces of our leaders** and **“get to know them” a bit better**. Doing announcements this way also allow you to hear directly from our ministry leaders about what is going on in their ministry, **because nobody knows the information better or is more passionate** about it than the people who are pouring in so much time and attention to our various ministry events. ****Slide2**
- C. **Slide3** The Church Office will be closed Monday for Labor Day.
- D. **Slide4** Prayer tonight 6:30-7:30pm in Agape room. (see open hall door, by our gym)

II. Slide5 Intro: All Ear

- A. As Jesus saved *the best wine for last*, so Paul does the same here for this young church.
 1. This is an **admonition** to the local church. **Listen to this as being your response** to the *unbelievable love of God*.
 2. His Church is *imperfect* in many ways, **yet** she is valued by God.
 3. What is your view of the church? How highly do you value His church?
- B. Paul wraps up this letter going *full-auto*, firing a burst of *17 consecutive commands* as he concludes.
- C. **Obedience story:** A **missionary translator** was struggling to find a word for *obedience* in the native language. As he returned home from the village one day, he whistled for his dog and it came running to him at full speed. **An old native**, who was watching, said admiringly in the native tongue, **“Your dog is all ear.”** Immediately the missionary knew that the word *obedience* should be translated **“all ear”**. [Paul wants the Thessalonians, & CM, to be *all ear!*]

1. He wants them/us to **practice** what he has been **preaching**.

a) Listen as Paul says much - in just a few words.

D. **Outline:** Love your leaders. Love one another. Love God's Will. Love the Spirits Fire. Love God's Faithfulness.

E. **Prayer:** Let me pray (all ear/teachers) then I'll read. Slide6 READ All 5:12-28

III. Slide7 LOVE YOUR LEADERS (12,13)

A. The church family must have spiritual leadership. [not a dictatorship]

1. Church leaders sets the example, pay the price, and seek to help others *in Christian love*. [note: they are both among you and over you]

a) And those 2 counterbalance each other. I am both an under-shepherd and a sheep. What if I only say myself as a sheep? or only a leader?

2. A dictator uses law, not love. They do not lead, they drive. And their motives are selfish, *even if* they think they are working for the good of the church.

B. Why do church leaders deserve your love?

C. They Labor Hard Among You (12a) [labor = wearisome labor unto extreme fatigue]

1. This ought to come by the leaders **reputation** of the **quality** of their work, not from any other cause, for their works sake. To work w/effort both bodily and mental labor.

2. This doesn't mean to *esteem* them w/a **title** ... nope esteem them highly in *love*.

D. They Are Over You In The Lord (12b)

1. God has appointed them to be your leaders, which is reason enough to respect them, and you should follow them says the writer of Hebrews ...

a) Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Heb.13:7

- b) **Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Heb.13:17**

E. **They Admonish You (12c)**

1. They urge you, both **privately** and **publicly**, to obey God by giving you much-needed encouragement, **but also reproof** and **reproach** when necessary. (this is where often people find it easier *to leave*)
 - a) Often christians say, *so I left quietly from that church.* - **If you mean, I didn't gossip to others about it on the way out, that's good.** **Not wanting to confront the problem, not always good.**

IV. Slide8 **LOVE ONE ANOTHER (14,15)**

A. Each Christian is *a steward of a spiritual gift*, and we **must use** that gift for the **good of others** and for the **glory of the Lord**.

B. Paul *specifies* certain kinds of Christians who need **special help**:

C. **Admonish The Idle** (14a) disorderly/undisciplined

1. A military term signifying the soldier who does not keep in proper rank.¹ **Thus**, anything *out of order*.
2. **How is a soldier treated who wont *keep in rank*? an *insubordinate*.**

D. **Encourage The Fainthearted** (14b)

1. The **fainthearted**, those worried about their dead relatives and friends, and about their own salvation. They ***must not be despised*** but comforted and encouraged.

E. **Help The Weak** (14c)

1. Maybe those struggling with *instability, insecurity, inability*.
2. The **spiritually immature** who are tempted to lapse into *immorality* **must not** be abandoned, **but** given all the necessary **spiritual and moral** assistance to help them stand strong for Christ.

¹ Linguistic Key to the Greek NT.

- a) **Some yokes** are made heavier on one side than the other. **Then, an older strong oxen** was paired w/a young weaker oxen. *His yoke is easy - burden light*
- b) **Can you help shoulder the heavy side** upon your shoulder for a while?

F. **Be Patient With Them All** (14c,15)

1. The word **patience** means to *hold out for a long time before taking action*.
2. **See that no one repays anyone evil for evil** - What should our reaction be if we are *mistreated?* - **Illus:** Don't imitate *the cranky ol' woman* whose neighbors forgot to ask her to their picnic. **On the morning of the event** they suddenly realized their affront and sent a small boy to her house with a *special invitation*. *'It's too late now,' she snapped, 'I've already prayed for rain!'*

V. **Slide9a LOVE GOD'S WILL (16-18)**

A. *Rejoice, pray, & give thanks* sound like ordinary admonitions; **but** when you add the **adverbs**, you have a real challenge: *Rejoice always, pray w/out ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances*.

1. The Christian who **walks** with the Lord **and** keeps in **constant communion** with Him **will see** many reasons for **rejoicing and thanksgiving all day long**

B. **Rejoice Always** (16)

C. **Rejoice always** - is actually the *shortest verse* in the bible (shorter in Gk than Jesus wept)

1. **Joy** was one of the marks of *primitive Christianity*, which amazed the heathen world **and** attracted unbelievers to Christ.
2. Paul is concerned that the **joy** of the Thessalonians might be strangled by **suffering**, **so** he urges them to **rejoice not in** what was happening **to** them, **but in their Savior** and all that He has done **for** them (or will do for them that they can't see yet).
3. 1 Cor.6:10 says, *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*. You can taste both at the same time, not just sequentially.

- a) **Slide9b** Boulder Illustration (Piper) explain the cliff. boulder at the base called **Joy** (a Christians joy in God), **small waves** slapping against it, **thus** sometimes the

face of the boulder is above water and shining. **9c** But then sometimes **the waves are great** and go right over the boulder, (representing sorrow & tears).

(1) You might see a believer weeping deeply, **but** what you might not see is ***a massive, profound, unshakable joy*** underneath **the waves**.

D. Slide9d **Pray Without Ceasing** (17)

1. They pray best **together** who also pray **alone**.

a) When our hearts desire, what **God** desires, we are praying all day long as the Spirit intercedes **for us and in us**.

2. **One other way this word was used outside of the NT** was for ***a continual uninterrupted cough***.

a) One where you may not be always coughing, **though** the tendency to cough is always there. *So we will not always be audibly praying yet always have the attitude of praying in our heart & life.* Ryrie

3. Spurgeon said, **As your tempted w/o ceasing, pray w/o ceasing.**

4. ***Prayer is not an exercise, it is the life of the saint.*** Oswald Chambers

E. **Give Thanks in All Circumstances** (18)

1. If you **face the sun** your shadow always falls behind you. If you turn around ... it'll always be in front of you. [**i.e.** don't focus on the scary shadows of circumstances - focus in the direction of the **Son**]

F. **This is the will of God** - refers to all 3 (rejoice, pray, be thankful).

1. **Paul names 4 things that are God's will in 1 Thes.** Avoid sexual sin 4:3. Rejoice always 5:16. Pray w/o ceasing 5:17. Give thanks in all circumstances 5:18

G. **So how do we rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances? By praying without ceasing!** (God help me to rejoice/give thanks in this specific circumstance)

VI. Slide10a **LOVE THE SPIRIT FIRE (19-22)** *fire* :)

A. **Quench** - The image is of a *fire*. Just as fire brings *light, heat, and cleansing*, **so** the Spirit, *enlightens, enables, and purifies* His people. [don't resist/reject the ministry of the HS]

1. Don't become attached to anything that continues to **hurt** the heart of God.

2. What are you presently doing that is *smoldering* the HS's fire in your life?
 3. When we criticize or discourage others, we throw cold water on their inner fire.
 4. Are you grieving the HS this morning w/a cold heart? A rebellious frame of mind? A flippant complacency?
- B. (20) How were the Thes. bel's quenching the HS? By *despising prophecies*.
1. Maybe they felt uncomfortable with *the spiritual gift of prophecy* because of their past experience with idolatry. (eg. the cult of the Greek god *Dionysus*, practiced a form of pagan prophecy that involved ecstatic behavior, eg. mystic trances, out-of-body experiences, temporary madness).
- C. (21) Test - Paul immediately balances it w/*don't accept everything*. Prove it. Test it.
1. Early church writers attribute a saying to Christ, *become approved money changers*. F.F. Bruce - Referring to those who were occupied in changing various currencies and were constantly looking for *counterfeit coins*.
 2. Remember, if 40 million people believe in a dumb idea ... it's still a dumb idea. Test!
 - a) Slide10b Test everything - how? John Stott gave 5 steps to test: (1) the truth of Scripture; (2) the nature of Christ; (3) the gospel of grace; (4) the character of the speaker; and (5) the edification of the body.

VII. Slide11 LOVE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (23-28)

- A. (23) Paul prays for the church's sanctification as if it were a gift. But back in 4:3 however, he discussed sanctification as if it were a calling. Which is it? Is our increasing conformity to Christ our responsibility, or God's? (Yes)
1. Christ for me is my only acceptable standing before God.
 2. Christ in me is my only true victory over sin.
 3. Christ through me is my only real power for spiritual ministry.
- B. God's Sanctification (23,24)
- C. Now the exhortation to complete holiness (23b), on the assured help of God (23a).

1. **Sanctification** is not something Jesus puts inside of us, it is **Himself inside of us**. *Christ in you, the hope of glory.*
- D. **Sanctify you completely** - *through and through*. The whole person in every part.
1. The Puritan Joseph Caryl put it this way, Perfect holiness is **the aim of the saints on earth**, and it is **the reward** of the saints in heaven.
 2. The cost of sanctification? Absolutely everything in us, *which is not of God*. Are you prepared to accept Paul's prayer here for **you** (23)?
- E. **But remember**, our certainty is *wrapped up in God*, who will complete what he has begun. *Our sanctification and preservation are guaranteed in Him.*
- F. **Paul's Exhortation** (25-28)
- G. Paul & his fellow missionaries knew they needed *a little help from their friends*, so they exhort the Thessalonians to **pray for them**.
1. **Paul needed a support group!** [*the epitome of pride ... I can live my Christianity on my own*]
 2. **Thomas Watson** underlined *the effectiveness of prayer* when he said, *The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was Prayer that fetched the angel.*
- H. (26) **Greet w/a holy kiss** – careful in diff countries. Right or left cheek 1st?
- I. **End:** At the **entrance of a coal mine**, a man saw a beautiful white flower growing out of the black earth. "How can it blossom in such purity and radiance in this dirty mine?" he asked. "Throw some coal dust on it and see for yourself," one replied. When he did, he was surprised that the *fine, sooty particles slid right off* the snowy petals, leaving the plant just as lovely and unstained as before. Its surface was **so smooth** that *the grit and grime* could not adhere to it.
- a) **Just as** that flower could *not control its habitat*, so we cannot help it that we have to live in a world **filled with evil**.
 - b) **But God's grace** can keep us so **clean and unspotted** that though we touch every side, it will *not cling to us*.
- J. **Prayer:** God help us to be **All Ear** when it comes to listening for **You and Your** desires for our lives.

K. Communion:

L. Keywords: sfdsd