

# Potential People Problems

[1 Thes.5:12-15]

Paul is a first responder.

He must make a difference in the state of  
the brethren ...or lose them

Paul commends Thessalonians for many  
things...but they're not perfect

3:10, lacking in their faith

4:11-12, general behavior

5:12-15, potential people problems in the  
congregation

## Paul is deeply concerned

- a. Some probably Jews, falsely accused Paul of teaching error, greed...
- b. New Christians were suffering persecution.
- c. Immorality had infected some. [Perhaps they never changed?]
- d. There were doctrinal difficulties. [E.g., the return of Christ.]
- e. They were lax in discipline.

# I. Follow the Leaders, 12-13

# *One of our greatest blessings*

Who are these leaders?

1. Timothy (or others) sent from Paul? (3:1-6)
2. Zealous Christians who motivate other Christians? (4:18; 5:11)
  - Phoebe, Ro.16:1-2
  - Stephanus family, 1 Co.16:15-18
3. Prophets (1 Th.5:19-20)?
4. Elders?

# Elders

- 12: one article ties three participles to describe same set of persons –
- ...Recognize 'the' <sup>1</sup>laboring ones...and <sup>2</sup>ruling ones...and <sup>3</sup>admonishing ones...
- How could some already be elders?
  1. Jews trained in OT for years. Ac.2:5
  2. Pious Jews shifted easily from OT to NT
  3. Rulers of synagogues resembled elders
  4. Spiritual gifts would supply information

## Recognize elders (respect, appreciate)

- *Labor* among you – weary, tired...
  - Because of their work (13):
    - **Nature of work:** spiritual [study, teaching]
    - **Their labor:** souls; endless, exhausting
    - **Their thanks:** often unappreciated

Hb.13<sup>17</sup> Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account' combines both duties.

# Recognize elders (respect, appreciate)

- They *labor* among you – weary, tired, work
- They are *over* you – exercise position of leadership; rule, direct
  - “In the Lord” – spiritual, not political; benevolent, not evil rulers



# Recognize elders (respect, appreciate)

- They *labor* among you – weary, tired, work
- They are *over* you – exercise position of leadership...
- They *admonish* you – brotherly warnings, wise counsel
  - Military word: of soldier out of step / rank
  - 1 Sm.2:24; 3:13
  - “It denotes the word of admonition which is designed to correct while not provoking or embittering” – TDNT
  - Some resent correction
  - Hb.12:5-11. 3 Jn.9...

## Esteem the elders, 13

- Respect (triple intensive) – very highly; quite beyond all measure.
- “Highest form of comparison imaginable”  
– BDAG
- Three times in NT
  - 1 Th.3:10, to see Thessalonians again
  - Ep.3:20, God’s power in prayer –  
“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”

## Proper actions – pursue...

- *In Love*, 13. Soil in which churches grow.
- *At Peace*, 13. Keep the peace.
  - Opposite of constant criticism, grumbling.
  - Acts 6. / Ja.3<sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.
  - James 5<sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

I. Follow the Leaders, 12-13

**II. Fortify the Brethren, 14**

# *A job for every Christian*

## *The strong help the weak*

- **Warn the unruly.** 2 Th.3:6, 11
  - Military term: soldier out of rank; insubordinate
  - Plato: of intemperance in pleasures
  - Today: TV, sports, company, travel... draw away souls from duty to God
  - Man drowning: throw a float or wait for lifeguard??

# *A job for every Christian*

- **Comfort fainthearted** [small-souled]  
Discouraged; overwhelmed by stress or sorrow
  - Third baseman error
  - How to respond?
    - **Death, 4:13-18?**
    - **Confused, 5:1-11?**
    - **Discouraged, thinking about quitting?**
      - Dt. 1:28
      - Phm. 21

## *A job for every Christian*

- Uphold weak. Hold on to them. Support
  - Mt.6:24, hold on to them...
    - Shrinking from persecution? (3:3-5)
    - Sinful lapse? (4:3-8)
    - Spiritual decay?
- Patient with all.
  - “Verb means to hold out long before taking action; God Himself is longsuffering toward us” – Lenski
  - 2 Tim.4:2, preach the word...with all long-suffering and teaching

I. Follow the Leaders, 12-13

II. Fortify the Brethren, 12-13

**III. Forsake all Vengeance, 15**



## *From the hurt to the 'hurters'*

See [pl.] that no one [sg.] renders [sg.] evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue [pl.] what is good

- “A person who has received an injury, and is in a passion, sees too much; his neighbors therefore ought to see (for him)” – Bengal
- Hardest time to take advice: when enraged  
[“Don’t get mad, get even!”]
- 2:14, new Christians just leaving worldly ways see many offenses, hurt feelings...  
society is no help.

## *From the hurt to the 'hurters'*

- One of the strongest impulses in human nature – don't get mad, get even

“Revenge is the most natural and instinctive of vices” – Denney

- Ro.12:17-21
- 1 Pt.3:9, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing

## *From the hurt to the 'hurters'*

Pursue good – (continuous present tense combined with 'always')

- Follow in haste; opposite of half-hearted
- Always look for kind opportunity / whenever you can / to as many as you can / as long as your can ... even to enemies.
- Gal.6:10
- Some Christians did not realize they were enslaved ... to satan by their grudges

## *From the hurt to the 'hurters'*

'I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again' – Wm. Penn