

Responsibility as a Member of the Church

Intro:

1. **ILL: The lieutenant's reaction to the Peal Harbor radar screen.**
2. As members of this church you need to be responsible to your calling.
3. Let's see if we can get serious about these 3 responsibilities.

I Thessalonians 5:12-22

I. v12-14 - Your Responsibility Towards Your Church Leadership

A. **v12** - Respect your elders.

1. **Respect** (οἶδα) = to know through observation.

a. In the New Testament there are 2 words for "know". The other is to

know (γινώσκω) = to know by personal experience.

b. This word implies honor here: (KJV) recognize, (NIV) respect, (New Century Version) appreciate, (LIV) honor.

c. Our elders are men who have been selected from among us who have met certain biblical qualifications. (Titus 1:6-9 & I Timothy 3:1-7)

2. Why respect them?

a. They work hard for the Lord.

b. They are **over you** (προϊστημι) = stand before or are put before you, so they lead or rule.

c. They admonish you.

B. **v13** - Hold them in the highest regard.

1. **I Tim 5:17 - The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.**

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

3. This is done in love because of their awesome responsibilities.

II. v14-15 - Your Responsibility Towards One Another

A. **v14** - Warn the idle.

1. **Idle** (ἄτακτος) = out of order or out of place, doesn't belong, (KJV) unruly. A military term for insubordinate, disobeying commands, going AWOL.

2. You are to warn these people.

B. **v14** - Encourage the timid.

1. **Timid** (ὀλιγόψυχος) = weak-souls; those whose faith has never developed.

2. In the **Parable of the Sower**:

a. What happened? **Matt 13:7 - Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.**

b. What do we learn? **Matt 13:22 - The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life & the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.**

3. You can be a believing, baptized, church attending person whose spiritual life hasn't grown much in 20 years!

4. You are to encourage these people to grow up in their faith by teaching them and showing a godly example before them.

C. v14 - Help the weak.

1. The weak in faith are the brand new Christians.
2. In the **Parable of the Sower**:
 - a. What happened? **Matt 13:5-6** - Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.
 - b. What do we learn? **Matt 13:20-21** - The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.
3. Worldly cares choke a faith before it can grow - the devil can take away faith before it gets a start.
4. You can help (support) new Christians by calling them on the phone, inviting them to church events or to your home. Let them know you care about them!

D. v14 - Be patient.

1. **Patience** (μακροθυμέω) = long or slow to display anger or to come to conclusions. Trench: "a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to anger".
2. This is one of the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22**).
3. **ILL: "Proposal at 74!"** - Patience has it's rewards!

E. v15 - Be kind even when you are wronged.

1. This Christian virtue is one of the hardest to master!
2. Lord Jesus said, "**But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.**" - **Matt 5:39-41**
3. **Rom 12:20-21** quotes **Prov 25** when it says this response will heap burning coals upon your offender's head!

III. v16-22 - Your Responsibility Towards God

A. v16 - Be joyful always.

1. Lord Jesus said to rejoice even when persecuted because your reward would be great in heaven . (**Matt 5:11-12**)
2. **II Cor 12:10** tells us persecution produces strength.
3. The promise in **Rom 8:28** makes this joy possible; **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**
4. You honor God by trusting Him when things are not going right!

B. v17 - Pray continually.

1. This isn't praying all the time & not doing anything else (Monastic Order) - but include talking to the Lord about every aspect & decision in your life. Focus on Him continually!
2. Prayer is easier when you do it often. **ILL: "Use the Pump Often"**.
3. **ILL: Grass growing over your path.** Don't let others say that about you.

C. v18 - Give thanks in all circumstances.

1. How often do you thank God for common things or when things go wrong?
2. In **Act 5:40-41** the apostles gave thanks for their suffering because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Lord!

D. v19-20 - Don't put out the Spirit's fire!

1. Most fires are extinguished by flooding them with water.
2. The Spirit of God can be quenched by flooding your lives with worldly concerns!
 - a. **v20** - By ignoring the preaching you hear.
 - b. **Eph 4:30** - By grieving the Holy Spirit.
 - c. **Gal 5:16** - By not walking in the Spirit - not living a Spirit conscious life.

The Lord is telling us here to take Him & His ministry seriously!
You'll never really be fulfilled until you do!

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