

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 5:12-23**.
- B. An elder in the Lord's church has a most difficult job (ministry). He is to be an overseer of the church just as a shepherd is an overseer of sheep.
- C. When the sheep do what the shepherd says, his job is easy. Only those who will not obey his voice will find themselves in trouble and make the job of shepherding difficult.
- D. Xians are to help the elders do their job and make it a little easier for them.

I. WE ARE TO HELP AND GIVE ESTEEM TO THE ELDERS.

- A. The congregation appointed the elders to their offices, and it is the duty of the membership to support the men they have selected.
- B. Verse 12 says we are to have a three-fold appreciation:
 - 1. Of those who labor.
 - 2. Of those who have charge over us in the Lord.
 - 3. Of those who give instruction.
- C. These are not three different groups of people but different areas of (elders') responsibility.
- D. **1Timothy 5:17** gives a similar thought:
 - 1. Honor those who work hard (labor).
 - 2. Honor those who have charge (elders).
 - 3. Honor those who give instruction (preaching and teaching).
- E. We are to highly esteem (to value and respect) these men because of what they are and do.

II. WE ARE TO HELP OTHERS.

- A. The very best way that we can help the elders is listed first: live at peace with one another (Rom. 12:17-18; Gal. 5:25-26).
(Rom 12:17-18) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
(Gal 5:25-26) If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.
- B. Verse 15 is a good commentary on how to live at peace one with another.
Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
- C. And then we must:
 - 1. **Admonish the unruly.**
 - a. Unruly means to be careless or out of line. It is a military term for a soldier who will not march with others but is intent on going his own way.
 - b. To admonish is to teach with a warning.
 - c. While brethren need to be given freedom to grow and expand, some rules are still necessary. Without rules the result is chaos!
 - d. There is a "code of behavior" in the church and the unruly must learn to accept it.
 - 2. **Encourage the faint-hearted.**
 - a. Some translations here say, "feeble-minded" but this Greek word has nothing to do with mentality. It literally means "little-souled." The word "fainthearted" is better.
 - b. These people are the quitters and negative thinkers. They look upon the dark side of life and can be very discouraging to those to whom they come in contact.
 - c. We are to "encourage" or "call by the side of" and then exhort and comfort.
 - 3. **Help the weak.**
 - a. These weak brethren are those who are not strong spiritually.
 - b. The passage can be translated, "hold fast to the weak." The idea being that stronger Xians

- are to hold on fast to those who are weaker so they won't fall away.
- c. One can successfully handle a weak bro./sis. by showing reassuring love.
- 4. **Be patient with all men.**
 - a. Long-suffering is better. The Greek suggests that we are to hold our temper and anger against everyone.
 - b. In time we will say things that offend, do things that hurt. The same will happen to us. To keep the body together we must learn to hold our anger and endure.
 - c. In time, some who have problems will grow up and become spiritually mature.
- D. It is these groups of people (the unruly, faint-hearted, weak) that give the elders a hard time in doing their job. Let us not be numbered with them and do our part in helping these people with their problems.
- E. Strong, mature Xians know how to live with God, others, and themselves, but some who have not grown spiritually as they should have problems. It is these problem cases that always trouble congregations and elderships.

III. WE NEED TO HELP OURSELVES.

- A. Lastly, in our text (1Th. 5:16-18), Paul mentions some things we can do for ourselves to make sure that our lives are pleasing.
- B. We can do the following:
 - 1. Rejoice.
Sadness, depression, and misery can spread very quickly, so let us spread good cheer.
 - 2. Pray.
Seek God's divine intervention in your life. Does God work in the lives of people today? Yes, if not then why pray?
 - 3. Give thanks.
The more we give thanks the more we know how much we have to be thankful for.
- C. The next sentence tells us to:
 - 1. Do the things of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
 - 2. Eagerly receive the Word of God as it is preached (Ac. 2:41).
So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
- D. We are to examine all things to know what to hold on to and what to abstain from.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. We oil machinery because it makes things work together better. We use medicines of different kinds to help our bodies to heal so they will function better.
- B. The medicine offered in this text is helpful for the smooth running of the church. When problems occur, the elders are to help solve them, but we can be like preventive medicine if we will practice these things.
- C. Are you good standing with X; so that verse 23 will apply?
Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.