

## “L.I.P. = Live in Peace” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-22)

“Practice makes perfect!” How many times have you heard this expression? No doubt, countless times. Yet, we all know too well that “practice doesn’t make perfect!” I wish it did, but it doesn’t. The hope is that *practice makes permanent*. Nowhere is this more critical than in the Christian faith. Christianity is nothing if it is not practical. Or, perhaps I should say, “The Christian faith is no faith at all if it is not practiced.” In 1 Thess 5:12-22, we come to one of the most practical passages on how to do church in the entire New Testament. Perhaps you have wondered, “What are the essentials for a happy, thriving church family? How can I make my local church a more spiritual place?” These eleven verses flesh out what it means to live soberly (5:6, 8). Paul provides four “sobriety checkpoints”<sup>1</sup> that will enable us to function wisely in the body of Christ.

**1. Honor church leaders (5:12-13).** In this first section, Paul gives three specific exhortations on how to honor those in spiritual leadership.

- **Respect your leaders (5:12).** Paul writes, “**But we request<sup>2</sup> of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge<sup>3</sup> over you in the Lord and give you instruction.**”<sup>4</sup> The word translated “appreciate” (*oida*) ordinarily means “know.” However, in this context it means “recognize, respect, or honor.”<sup>5</sup> The notion of appreciation is found in the second request in 5:13, so it seems best to understand this word to refer to respect.<sup>6</sup> There is the need in every congregation to recognize and respect those God has raised up to lead, particularly those pastors and elders who “diligently labor”<sup>7</sup> and provide “instruction.”<sup>8</sup>

Someone has suggested five ways to get rid of your pastor: (1) Sit up front, smile, and say “amen” every time he says something good. He will preach himself to death. (2) Pat him on the back and tell him what good work he is doing in the church and community. He will work himself to death. (3) Increase your offering in the church. He will suffer from shock. (4) Tell him you’ve decided to share your faith and win souls for Christ. He will probably suffer a heart attack. (5) Get the whole church to band together and pray for him. He will get so efficient that some other church will hear about him and give him a call. That will take him off your hands.<sup>9</sup>

- **Esteem your leaders (5:13a).** Paul urges the Thessalonians to “**esteem them [their leaders] very highly in love because of their work.**” The word translated “very highly” (*huperekperissos*) is a triple compound, which means abundant to the point of being excessive.<sup>10</sup> You may say, “That’s laying it on a little thick, don’t you think? It’s one thing to esteem my leaders, I don’t know about holding them so high that it goes beyond all measure. That’s ridiculous!” Oh, really? I can tell you that to ignore this word is to ignore God’s Word to you. I have had so many people try to temper their encouragement because they are fearful that if they say something too positive it might “go to my head.” We frequently run the risk of taking our leaders for granted. Yet, Paul says we are to “esteem”<sup>11</sup> our leaders because of their work. In both 5:12 and 13, he emphasizes recognizing and esteeming work. One of our longtime members, Art Morse, has said, “Pastors are God’s gifts to the church.” Although I’ve never thought of myself as a gift to the church, I understand what Art means because I certainly feel that way about Pastors Kevin and Sean. They are God’s gifts to the body and me. I thank God for both Kevin and Sean. I also am especially grateful for our elders Blythe, Russ, John, and Pat. These men freely serve our body simply because they love the Lord and His church. Often they are misunderstood and falsely accused, yet they continue to faithfully serve, year-in and year-out. I esteem these men. It’s not easy to serve as a pastor, elder, deacon, or spiritual leader. The battles and burdens are many, and sometimes the encouragements are few. It is dangerous when a church family takes their leaders for granted and fails to pray for them, work with them, and encourage them. *Practice makes permanent.*

These verses should not be restricted to pastors only. They apply to *anyone* who has a leadership position in the local church. Do you know who is teaching your children in Sunday school or Awana? Do you know your teenager's youth leaders? Have you ever tried to find the names of the leaders of the ministries that touch your family? You need to know them by name. You need to respect these spiritual leaders who freely and sacrificially serve the body. Unless we are actively involved in volunteer service, we will never understand the great sacrifices that many of our fellow believers make. Today, will you look for a leader that you can encourage? Write an email or a hand-written card. Bring a gift to this leader. Verbally affirm this leader. Ask how you can pray for this person. Offer to help this person in their ministry or in their home. *Practice makes permanent.*

- ***Live in peace with your leaders (5:13b).***<sup>12</sup> Paul closes this section by commanding the Thessalonians to **“Live in peace<sup>13</sup> with one another.”** I think living in peace with your spiritual leaders means you speak highly of them and refuse to criticize them. I find it rather interesting that very few people will criticize leaders to their face, but they will shred them behind their back. I don't think that it is because people are intimidated by most leaders, rather they know what they are saying is not honoring to God. Yet in churches throughout America, gossip and slander continue to be the most prevalent sins committed. In fact, more churches have been split by malicious gossip than by all the doctrinal heresies that have ever been invented. Thus, we should take this sin seriously. If you hear another brother or sister ripping on a leader, rebuke that person. Don't tolerate this sin or you are an accomplice who will be held guilty. If someone is talking about my wife, I'm not going to listen in and remain quiet. I'm not going to worry about hurting that person's feelings. Instead, I'm going to rebuke that person. Too many Christians are afraid of offending someone so we let a leader be run into the ground. This is sin! Perhaps today you need to make a commitment that you will not criticize a spiritual leader. Or maybe you need to commit to not listening in while others criticize your leaders. If there was more praise coming from God's people, there would be more power in our ministries. Tragically, many members have never said a kind word to those who are in leadership. Today, commit to a ministry of encouragement.

[We should esteem church leaders. Why? Because this showcases the unity of the church.]

**2. Shepherd church members (5:14-15).** Having stated the responsibilities of the church to its leaders, Paul now considers the responsibilities of the church to each other.<sup>14</sup> In 5:14, he urges<sup>15</sup> church members to follow a four-fold job description.

- ***Admonish the unruly (5:14a).*** “Unruly” (*ataktous*) is a military expression that means “to break ranks, to get out of line.”<sup>16</sup> It refers to soldiers who are undisciplined, irresponsible, and idle. In the church there are unruly soldiers who are disrespectful, slanderous, and lazy. When a brother or sister becomes unruly Paul says we are to “admonish them.”<sup>17</sup> The word translated “admonish” is an exceedingly strong Greek word that literally means to “put into the mind” (cf. 5:12). You might say we are to talk some sense into them. It implies a face-to-face confrontation, precisely the kind of situation most of us want to avoid at all costs. It is painful, difficult work. It is very scary. To lighten the severity of this responsibility, I always think of walking up to an unruly person, knocking on their head, and saying, “Hello, hello? Is anyone home?” Upon hearing a reply, I would cram God's truth into their heads. Obviously, it is never this easy, yet it is often necessary to admonish a fellow believer. The key, however, is to do so with grace. Someone has that said for every negative statement people need at least five or six positive comments to overcome the discouragement that results from negative feedback. Generally speaking, any negative input should always be preceded by a few positive words and then followed up with a few more positive comments.<sup>18</sup> Will you make a commitment to admonish unruly people in your life? Don't call on a pastor. This verse is your responsibility. *Practice makes permanent.*

- **Encourage the fainthearted (5:14b).** The word translated “fainthearted” (*oligopsuchos*) literally means to be “small-souled.”<sup>19</sup> In the Greek Old Testament this word refers to discouragement due to trials. Paul, then, could be referring either to those who were shaken by the persecutions that the church had to endure (2:14; 3:1-5) or to those who were anxious about various aspects of Christ’s return (4:13-5:11).<sup>20</sup> In the church, the fainthearted can describe those who are overwhelmed with problems. It especially includes those who shrink before persecution, who fall under great temptation, who face trials at home, at work, at school, who find the Christian life one continual struggle. Paul says we are to “encourage”<sup>21</sup> such people. That is, we are to put courage into them. We are to verbally affirm hurting people. We are to use our words to breathe hope into them. A word of encouragement can make the difference between giving up and going on. We must teach the “small-souled” that the trials of life will help to enlarge them and make them stronger in the faith. Who do you know that you can encourage today? *Practice makes permanent.*
- **Help<sup>22</sup> the weak (5:14c).** The word “weak” can refer to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual weakness. This third group of people is a step beyond being fainthearted. They have completely run out of gas. They are the ones who are exhausted, burned out, wrung out, and worn out. They are morally, spiritually, and physically drained. They feel as if they cannot go on. Often, these are most easily overlooked. The weak drift in and then drift out and a growing church never sees them. They slip in late, sit toward the back, and slip out as soon as the service is over. They are on the periphery, looking, searching, and hurting. The greatest way that you can help the weak is by praying for them. *Practice makes permanent.*
- **Be patient<sup>23</sup> with everyone (5:14d).** If we get involved with others, patience is our greatest need. Remember what Charlie Brown said: “I love the world. It’s people I can’t stand.” It’s easy to feel that way, so we need a great deal of patience. Who are the children or teens that are driving you crazy right now? They may be our future pastors and missionaries. When my brother and I were growing up, we were the wild hellions at our church. My next door neighbors predicted that my brother and I would end up in Juvie! Who would have guessed I would become a pastor? No one but God, I’m sure! A simple rule is: Be as patient with others as God is with you.

Paul closes this second section in 5:15 with a very relevant verse: **“See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always<sup>24</sup> seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.”** This verse is speaking of Christian relations in both the local and universal church. The phrases “one another” and “all people” are used elsewhere in 1 Thessalonians of fellow believers in the local church and surrounding region.<sup>25</sup> The idea is if we can graciously forgive and bless our spiritual family members, we can live in peace with unbelievers as well. Thus, when others reject you and even oppose you, continue to serve in love and be ready to forgive. We show our love for God by making a conscious decision to love His children. Of course, this requires divine enablement. We tend to want to bury the hatchet in our brother or sister’s back! Yet, to return evil for good is natural; to return good for evil is supernatural.

Who is really getting on your nerves: a boss, a neighbor, a classmate? Maybe it is a spouse, a parent, or a sibling? How can you be especially kind to this person? What tangible acts of blessing can you pass on to this person? Will you do so today? This will free you from a root of bitterness (cf. Heb 12:15).

[We should shepherd church members because this is how we express love for God.]

**3. Discover God’s Will (5:16-18).** The age-old question that pastors are frequently asked is: “How can I find God’s will for my life?” Paul says that we don’t need to worry about finding God’s will, we merely need to find God and then His will finds us. Paul puts it like this: **“Rejoice always;<sup>26</sup> pray without ceasing;<sup>27</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”** In these three verses are three commands that will help us to discover God’s will.

- **Be joyful (5:16).** This is one of approximately 70 New Testament commands to rejoice.<sup>28</sup> This ought to remind us that choosing joy is a decision of the will. While happiness depends on what is happening around us, joy is independent of happenings. This means we must remember that nothing merely happens by chance. God is working out His sovereign plan in our lives, therefore we must rejoice. This doesn't mean life won't hurt, but even in the midst of the hurts we can rejoice, because we know that God is at work and in control. Consistent rejoicing is only possible if we remember three principles. First, we must remember who God is (Phil 3:1). Nehemiah 8:10 states, "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Joy has its roots in a deep thankfulness for *who* God is. If we focus on God's character and attributes (e.g., sovereign, merciful, faithful, loving), we will always have plenty of cause to rejoice. Second, rejoicing is possible if we then begin to recall *what* God has done, is doing, and will do. We can especially rejoice in what God has given us in Christ (John 4:36; Acts 13:48; Phil 4:4). As we focus on our Lord, we will exude joy. Someone once said, "A coffee break is good; a prayer break is better; a praise break is best."<sup>29</sup> Can you rejoice in the Lord today? Finally, we can also rejoice in what God is doing in and through other believers. Paul only uses the word "joy" one other time in 1 Thessalonians and he uses it of his own joy for the spiritual maturity of the Thessalonians (3:9; cf. 2:19-20). As we begin to keep our finger on the spiritual pulse of God's kingdom program, we will observe that He is doing great things throughout our country and world. Even though you may not feel like God is at work in your life, can you take your eyes off of yourself and see how He is at work elsewhere? I am continually amazed at the widows in our church who rejoice every week. Even though they may lack finances, health, and friends, they are always full of joy. This ought to convict you and me.
- **Be prayerful (5:17).** Praying without ceasing means praying repeatedly and often. The idea of the present tense imperative is not that believers should pray every minute of the day, but that we should offer prayers to God repeatedly. We should make it our habit to be in the presence of God.<sup>30</sup> The Greek adverb translated "without ceasing" (*adialeiptos*) is used outside of the New Testament of a hacking cough.<sup>31</sup> Have you had a cold recently? Then you know what it's like to cough spontaneously, right? There are times you just can't stop yourself. The same ought to be true of prayer. We should be continuously offering up prayers to the Lord because we just can't help ourselves. We often go through life in such a hurry and so overwhelmed by our problems that we think we don't have time to pray. That sense of hurriedness can be spiritually devastating. Carl Jung said, "Hurry is not of the devil; it IS the devil." When you pray, you are forced to slow down. You are forced to shift the focus of your thoughts from yourself to God. You stop thinking of how impossible everything is for you, and you start thinking of how possible everything is for God. You stop thinking of how weak you are, and you start thinking of how powerful God is.<sup>32</sup> If you're a stay-at-home mom, this may mean that you pray when you're getting ready in the morning, when you're home-schooling your kids or driving them to school, when you're cleaning the house or doing the dishes. If you're a career man or woman, you can pray during your commute, when you stretch at your desk, during your lunch break, before you return home for the day. *Practice makes permanent.*
- **Be thankful (5:18).**<sup>33</sup> The apostle Paul didn't say to give thanks "for" all circumstances, but "in" all circumstances.<sup>34</sup> All of life's circumstances are not good, but there will always be something in those circumstances for which to give thanks. Paul uses the word "thanks" only one other time in 1 Thess 2:13, where he thanks God for the Thessalonians receiving the Word. This demonstrates that there are many things that we can be thankful for. What are you thankful for today? Will you express gratitude to God and others? Gratitude is likely the greatest evidence that you and I are filled with the Holy Spirit. God has blessed you and me, but He expects us to respond with hearts full of gratitude.

These three verses are God's will for you." Most of us want to know what God's specific will is for our lives—who we're supposed to marry, where we're supposed to live, what job we should have. Yet God tends to give us freedom in these areas. But if He does want to reveal Himself more specifically to you, He isn't about to do so until you first obey His general will. His general will is that you be joyful, prayerful, and thankful. Do you want specific direction? Do you want to know the will of God? It is found in 5:16-18. Be joyful, prayerful, and grateful. If you're not obeying these commands, you're not walking in the Spirit. You're out of the will of God, no matter how many gifts of the Spirit you might be exhibiting in your life. You may say, "Well, I don't like that." I don't like it much either, but I didn't say it. God said it. The Bible is not only a sword, it is a hammer. Have you been hammered by the Word of God?<sup>35</sup> Will you seek to obey these three commands so that God can reveal more of Himself to you?

[We must discover God's will. How can we do this? By pursuing God and seeking to discover Him.]

**4. Worship with wisdom (5:19-22).** In this fourth and final section, Paul tells us how to worship in spirit and truth (cf. John 4:23-24). He writes, "**Do not quench<sup>36</sup> the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain<sup>37</sup> from every form<sup>38</sup> of evil.**" Paul uses "quench" metaphorically to speak of hindering the operations of the Holy Spirit. People who refuse to submit to the above commands "quench" the Spirit. Those who usurp the ministry of the Spirit in the local church throw cold water on God's work in the congregation.<sup>39</sup> Do you know what it means to quench the Holy Spirit? What do you do when you quench your thirst? You drink some water and the thirst is put away. When you quench a fire, you put it out—you smother it. How do you quench the Spirit of God? You quench the Holy Spirit by not doing something He tells you to do.

Paul now relates this specifically to prophecies. The gift of prophecy is when a man or woman of God speaks a word to build up the body of Christ. Paul says, "Don't despise prophecies." Yet, he also commands us to examine every prophecy. This can be done by asking four questions: (1) Does the prophecy agree with Scripture? (2) Does the prophecy edify those who hear it? (3) Do other believers agree that the prophecy is from God? (4) Does the person with the prophecy present it humbly?<sup>40</sup>

Paul is saying, basically, look before you leap. You don't have to be cynical, but it doesn't hurt to be a little skeptical. Investigate. Test things. Don't allow yourself to be spoon-fed. When you hear a sermon or read a book about spiritual matters, think it through. Compare it with Scripture. Don't be gullible. Reason it out. Test everything, Paul says, and hold on to that which is good, reject that which isn't good. It's not always easy to think things through, but it's necessary. The more you practice discernment, the stronger you become spiritually.<sup>41</sup>

Paul has said, "*Practice makes permanent!*" Will you make it your goal to practice Christianity? Will you live out your faith so that your life makes a difference in your world?

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### **Scripture References**

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22  
Hebrews 13:17  
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13  
Romans 12:9-21  
Philippians 4:4  
Ephesians 6:18  
1 Corinthians 14:26-32

### **Study Questions**

1. Do I esteem my pastors and elders (5:12-13)? If so, how do I express my love and appreciation to them? Am I faithfully living out Hebrews 13:17? Have I made a deliberate attempt to get to know my children's Awana, Sunday school, and youth leaders? How have I sought to encourage these leaders who volunteer to serve my kids and me? What tangible acts can I perform to show these individuals how much I care?
2. In what ways have I been critical of those leaders who are serving me? Have I confessed my gossip or slander to the Lord and others? How can I make a conscious decision to "live at peace" (5:13)? When other members say critical things about leaders in my church, how will I respond? Will I lovingly, but firmly rebuke a fellow believer for having a divisive spirit? Read Psalm 133.
3. Am I seeking to minister to the different types of people in my church (5:14)? Which of the four types of individuals listed is the most difficult for me to minister to? How can I improve my ability to care for these types of individuals? Will I begin to pray for those believers that I struggle with? Will I strive to forgive those who sin against me (5:15) as I myself have been forgiven by God and others?
4. Have I learned to fulfill the commandments of contentment, prayer, and gratitude even when I don't feel like it (5:16-18)? Why are these disciplines so difficult for me to master? Have I asked God to supernaturally enable me to be the man or woman He wants me to be? What fellow believer have I observed who models these characteristics? How can I learn from this person's life?
5. Do I know God's Word well enough to discern truth from error (5:19-22)? How can I strike the biblical balance of not forbidding prophecy and yet not being gullible to believe everything that a Christian says? Read 1 John 4:1-6. Today, will I begin to pray that the Lord will help me to "test the spirits" so that I will know what is truly from Him?

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> This expression was coined by Pastor John Correia of West Greenway Bible Church in Glendale, AZ (<http://www.westgreenway.com>) in an e-mail dated 18 August 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> Paul uses the verb *erotao* (“request”) elsewhere in Phil 4:3; 1 Thess 4:1; and 2 Thess 2:1.
- <sup>3</sup> Paul uses the verb *proistemi* (“charge over”) elsewhere in Rom 12:8; 1 Tim 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17; and Titus 3:8, 14.
- <sup>4</sup> Morris writes, “The three participles are preceded by a common article which indicates that it is one group of persons and not three that is in mind. This points to elders, who alone would exercise this triple function.” Leon Morris, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*. Tyndale New Testament Commentary series (London: Tyndale, 1984), 103.
- <sup>5</sup> The Greek verb *oida* (“know”) can also mean “recognize merit, respect, honor.” See BDAG s.v. *oida* 6.
- <sup>6</sup> See ESV and NIV. Other English versions translate *oida* as “acknowledge” (NET) or “give recognition” (HSB).
- <sup>7</sup> Paul uses the verb *kopiao* (“diligently labor”) in Rom 16:6, 12; 1 Cor 4:12; 15:10; 16:16; Gal 4:11; Eph 4:28; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10; 5:17; and 2 Tim 2:6. Holmes writes, “Paul often uses the verb ‘to work’ (*kopiao*, which sometimes indicates manual labor) to characterize his own activities on behalf of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 4:11; Phil. 2:16; Col. 1:29) or those of members ministering within a congregation (1 Cor. 16:16; cf. Rom. 16:6, 12). This is its meaning here (the corresponding noun, *kopos*, occurs in 1:3 in the expression “labor prompted by love”). Michael W. Holmes, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 178.
- <sup>8</sup> Paul uses the verb *noutheteo* (“give instruction”) elsewhere in Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 4:14; Col 1:28; 3:16; 1 Thess 5:14; and 2 Thess 3:15.
- <sup>9</sup> Gene A. Getz, *Standing Firm When You’d Rather Retreat: Based on 1 Thessalonians* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1986), 143.
- <sup>10</sup> See Richard Mayhue, *First and Second Thessalonians*. Focus on the Bible (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1999), 139. Paul uses the adverb *huperekperissos* (“very highly”) elsewhere in Eph 3:20 and 1 Thess 3:10.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul uses the verb *hegeomai* (“to esteem”) elsewhere in 2 Cor 9:5; Phil 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7, 8; 2 Thess 3:15; 1 Tim 1:12; and 6:1.
- <sup>12</sup> The call to “live in peace with each other” is common in 1 Thess and elsewhere (see Rom. 12:18; 14:19; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 12:14; cf. Mark 9:50). Holmes, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 179.
- <sup>13</sup> “Peace” is emphasized throughout 1 Thess 5:12-24. In 5:13 and 23, “peace” serves to bookend this section. G.K. Beale, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 157.
- <sup>14</sup> Holmes notes, “Some have argued that 5:14-15 are directed to the leaders referred to in 5:12-13, but this is unlikely. The entire community is addressed in 5:12-13 and 16-18 and the introduction of 5:14 is nearly identical to the one in 5:12 (note esp. the repetition of *adelphoi* “brothers and sisters”). Had Paul intended a church in subject in 5:14 he would surely have signaled it more clearly.” Holmes, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 180 n. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Paul uses the verb *parakaleo* (“urge”) a total of eight times in 1 Thess (2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14).
- <sup>16</sup> The adjective *ataktos* (“unruly”) is only used here in the NT. BDAG s.v. *ataktos* defines it: “of volitional state, pert. to being out of step and going one’s own way, *disorderly, insubordinate.*”
- <sup>17</sup> Paul did this very thing with those who refused to work in 2 Thess 3:6-15.
- <sup>18</sup> Getz, *Standing Firm When You’d Rather Retreat*, 150.
- <sup>19</sup> The adjective *oligopsuchos* (“fainthearted”) is only used here in the NT.
- <sup>20</sup> Jeffrey A.D. Weima, “1 Thessalonians,” *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 427; Beale, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 165.
- <sup>21</sup> Paul uses the verb *paramytheomai* (“encourage”) elsewhere only in 1 Thess 2:12; cf. John 11:19, 31.
- <sup>22</sup> Paul uses the verb *antecho* (“help”) elsewhere only in Titus 1:9.
- <sup>23</sup> Paul uses the verb *makrothumeo* (“be patient”) elsewhere only in 1 Cor 13:4.
- <sup>24</sup> The adjective *pantote* (“always”) is emphatic.
- <sup>25</sup> See 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9, 18; and 5:11.
- <sup>26</sup> This is the shortest verse in the Greek NT. It has fewer letters than “Jesus wept” (John 11:35).
- <sup>27</sup> Paul also links prayer with rejoicing in Phil 4:4-6.
- <sup>28</sup> Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Thessalonians,” <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1thessalonians.pdf>, 2007 ed., 37.
- <sup>29</sup> John L. Benson, *I, II Thessalonians: The Prospect of Glory* (Denver: Accent, 1987 [1980]), 74.
- <sup>30</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 521.
- <sup>31</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody, 1959), 80.

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<sup>32</sup> Steve May, “Spiritual Priorities”:

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/series/strategiesforlivinginthe21stcenturesermonseries>.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Eph 5:20; Phil 4:6; Col 3:17; and 4:2.

<sup>34</sup> Thanksgiving was the fuel of Paul’s prayers. Note: the Greek word *eucharisteite* (“give thanks”) is an active, present tense imperative. This means that thanksgiving is not an option or a suggestion; it is a command! If we are to be properly devoted and alert in prayer, we must consciously focus on expressing gratitude to God.

<sup>35</sup> David Jeremiah, *God in You: Releasing the Power of the Holy Spirit in Your Life* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1998), 168.

<sup>36</sup> The verb *sbennumi* can also be translated “extinguish” (NET), “stifle” (HSB), or “put out” (NIV). In its other NT occurrences it refers to literal fire (Matt 12:20; 25:8; Heb 11:34) or metaphorical fire (Mark 9:48; Eph 6:16).

<sup>37</sup> Paul uses the verb *apecho* (“abstain”) in 1 Thess 4:3 of abstaining from sexual immorality.

<sup>38</sup> See Daniel B. Wallace, “1 Thessalonians 5:22—The Sin Sniffer’s Catch-All Verse” [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org).

<sup>39</sup> Grant C. Richison, *1 Thessalonians* (<http://www.gracenotes.info/> 1997), 131.

<sup>40</sup> Doug Banister, *The Word & Power Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 106-107.

<sup>41</sup> May, “Spiritual Priorities.”