



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 1 - Number 20
The week of March 13, 2016

Family Obligations
I Thessalonians 5:12-24

THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT

BIBLICAL COMMUNITY: Fellowshiping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

The local church provides the context for Christians to practice Biblical Community. As we have been reflecting on church membership the past two weeks, we have been using Thom S. Rainer's book, *I am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference* as a resource for our Growth Group study guide. At the close of each chapter Rainer provides a pledge that captures one vital aspect of church membership. These are the fifth and sixth pledges:

The Fifth Pledge: I am a church member. I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well. We will pray together for our church. We will worship together at church. We will serve together at church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this church because He gave His life for her.

The Sixth Pledge: I am a church member. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local body and was baptized. And now I am humbled and honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted, but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others and to be part of something so much greater than any one person or member.

If you are already a member of Loudonville Community Church, I urge you to consider if these pledges reflect the kind of member you are and the kind of member you would like to be. If you are not yet a member of Loudonville Community Church, we ask you would embrace these pledges personally as you join this community. May God help us all to become members who work wholeheartedly to build the Body of Christ in the Capital Region!

This Week's Complementary Passage

Matthew 20:20-28 (ESV)

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." ²²Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." ²³He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." ²⁴And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Marking Guide for Acts
(not all words occur in the passage)

- appointed
- baptized
- Caesar
- enemy/demons/Satan
- eternal life
- fathers & children [in one color different from Moses]
- Gentiles
- gospel
- grace
- Holy Spirit
- in the name of Jesus Christ
- Jesus
- Jews
- Law (of Moses)
- men of the council
- Moses [in different color from fathers & children]
- prayer
- repent (repentance)
- resurrection (raised up)
- salvation
- suffering
- the Way
- the promise of the Father
- witnesses
- word of God

STEP ONE . . .

READING what the passage says
(*Read it at least three times*)

I Thessalonians 5:12-24 (ESV)

¹²We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

STEP TWO . . .

OBSERVING how the passage moves

Return to the passage and **mark key words, phrases and movements:**

- Circle all of the words in this passage that speak of the Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc.).
- Underline the significant verbs/action words in this passage.
- In I Thessalonians 5:12, underline the phrase “respect those who labor among you.”
- In I Thessalonians 5:13, underline the sentence “Be at peace among yourselves.”
- Highlight I Thessalonians 5:14.
- In I Thessalonians 5:15, underline the phrase “always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”
- Highlight I Thessalonians 5:16-22.
- In I Thessalonians 5:23, underline the phrase “sanctify you completely.”
- Highlight I Thessalonians 5:24.

STEP THREE . . .

Ask the five “W” questions and the one “H” question:

1. **WHO** is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? And, to **whom** is it speaking?
2. **WHAT** is the subject of the passage? What does the passage say about the subject?
3. **WHEN** do or will the events occur? When did something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **WHERE** did or will this happen?
5. **WHY** is something said or mentioned? Why would or will this happen? Why at this time? Why this person?
6. **HOW** will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

STEP FOUR . . .

UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.

Commentary on I Thessalonians 5:12-24

5:12 - "To respect." This verb literally means "to know," used in the sense of "to appreciate," "to show people respect," "to acknowledge the value of" or "know the value of." Believers must respond appropriately and respectfully toward God-called leadership.

"Those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you." This term for "labor" means "strenuous effort." This entire section seems to refer to an attitude problem in the church toward its leadership. In this verse the term "admonish" literally means to "put sense into."

5:13 - "To esteem them very highly in love." This phrase emphasizes continuing personal action and reminds us that believers should respect their leaders.

"Because of their work." Leadership is a gift from God. When the Lord assigns the task, he honors the task, not necessarily the person who receives it. The term translated "work" in verse 13 is different from the one in verse 12. This hard working group of leaders may have been contrasted with those who refused to work.

"Be at peace among yourselves." This is a continual command for believers and a common New Testament appeal. This reflects a common problem in the churches. Christianity embraced men and women from many differing backgrounds, which could be the source of conflict.

5:14 - "Brothers." This could refer primarily to the leaders, but the things mentioned would apply to all believers. New Testament Christianity does not make a distinction between "clergy" and "laity." We are all God-called, Spirit-gifted ministers of Jesus. Within this family of gifted ministers God does choose leaders.

"Admonish the idle." This begins a series of commands which expect continuous or habitual action. There are 15 commands in verses 12-22. This command could have one of two meanings: a military term for disorderly conduct or simply refer to lazy people. The latter connotation fits the context of this letter better.

"Encourage the fainthearted." This command is used in the sense of weak in body and/or mind. This may designate the spiritually weak Christians or it may refer to those with physical problems.

"Be patient with them all." This is a command to continually be longsuffering, not short-tempered. This is directed to both leaders and people. It also gives us a window into the problems of the early church. This term for being "patient" can refer to a characteristic of God. Believers are to emulate the character of their Father. It is also used of patience with something or someone. This characteristic is evidence of spiritual maturity and Christ-like living.

5:15 - "See that no one repays anyone evil for evil." Believers must respond in a way different than unbelievers. Believers should act in love, not react in anger. Difficult and unfair situations can often be the most effective witnessing opportunities.

"Always seek to do good to one another and to everyone." This command could be rendered literally "continue to pursue good." This verse speaks to Christians' actions toward believers and non-believers (all people). Believers must also put the good of the community above personal benefit.

5:16 - "Rejoice always." Joy is a worldview based on our relationship with Christ and our covenant relationship with other Christians, not on circumstances.

5:17 - "Pray without ceasing." This command refers to lifestyle prayer or a moment by moment fellowship with God. Paul sensed a need for prayer and believed it affected his ministry.

5:18 - "Give thanks in all circumstances." This is yet another command. Circumstances must not dictate our thanksgiving or our joy. Remember that thanksgiving should flow not "for all things," but "in all circumstances."

"For this is the will of God." The will of God is that fallen mankind comes to believe in Christ. After this there are several "wills" of God. One is to rejoice and give thanks even during persecution and conflict.

5:19 - "Do not quench the Spirit." This command refers to stopping an act in process. Another translation could be "stop stifling the Spirit." "Quench" means "to put out a fire." Our actions affect the working of the Spirit.

5:20 - "Do not despise prophecies." The definition of "prophecy" in the New Testament has been much debated. The gift is included in the list of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians and Ephesians. How the Scripture writing prophets of the Old Testament are related to the post-apostolic gift of "prophecy" is uncertain. Clearly New Testament prophets are not synonymous with Old Testament prophets. The New Testament gift usually relates to practical application issues, not new revelatory information. However, there is a predictive element in Acts 11:27-30 and 21:10-11. In I and II Corinthians, prophecy and prophesy mean proclaim the gospel. Exactly how this proclamation differed between: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers is uncertain. Believers must vigorously reject false leaders, but enthusiastically embrace godly leaders.

5:21 - "Test everything; hold fast what is good." This is a command which means "and all things prove." In context this could refer to: church leaders, spiritual gifts, a spiritual message, or doctrine. The word implies "to test with a view toward approval." Some things appear spiritual but actually are not.

5:22 - “Abstain from every form of evil.” In this context “evil” could refer to evil persons or evil in general, but it is probably parallel to the generic “good” in verse 21. The phrase “every form of” can be understood in two ways: “every appearance of evil” or in a general sense of “all evil,” not just apparent, but real evil.

5:23 - “Sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul prayed that believers be sanctified and preserved by God. This shows sanctification is both a gift at salvation and a continuing task. This sentence emphasizes believers’ call to holiness in every area of their lives. The term “blameless” is only found here in the New Testament. It means free from blame or accusations, therefore, morally pure. It possibly reflects the Old Testament term “blameless” that meant free of defects and, therefore, available for sacrifice.

5:24 - “He who calls you is faithful.” The term “faithful” functions both as a descriptive title and as a characteristic of the Lord. The believers’ confidence is in the established, settled, unchanging character of the Lord!

“He will surely do it.” This verse focuses on the trustworthy God who initiates and perfects. Our hope is in God’s trustworthiness to keep His promises

STEP FIVE . . .

SUMMARIZING the message

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 Paul offers practical instruction on how to behave in three distinct spheres of church life: towards church leadership; towards fellow believers; and toward God in public worship.

First, Paul describes how we are to act toward the leadership of the church (vv. 12-13). Paul directs the church to show respect toward those who labor among them and over them in the Lord. In other words, he exhorts the church to follow its leaders. There are three things that church members are expected to do regarding their leaders. *First, the church is to "respect" its leaders.* The word respect has the idea of knowing them. We are expected to be aware of our leaders and not take them for granted. In some churches pastors are treated as hired servants and elders are shown little respect. The idea is to get to know your leaders; understand that they are real people and not to ignore them. *Second, the church is expected to value its leaders.* Church members are to esteem their leaders for their hard work. Third, the church is to avoid factions that tend to develop around leaders. Paul states, "Be at peace among yourselves." It suggests a deliberate refusal to create divisions over individuals. Do not play favorites and attack others.

Paul gives three reasons why church leaders ought to be treated in these ways: *The first reason is that leaders are sent by the Lord.* Paul says they "are over you in the Lord." Regardless of the human process by which they were selected or hired, leaders have been appointed by the Lord Jesus. *The second reason is that they admonish you.* The word admonish (*noutheteo*) means to warn or reprove those who have done wrong. Admonishment does not indicate a harsh style. The whole spirit of this passage has a brotherly tone to it. And third, *Paul says, because of their work.* Leaders are expected to work hard. Contrary to what some people think, the ministry is a demanding job.

Second, Paul describes how we are to act toward our fellow believers (vv. 14-15). Paul points out the way everybody ought to relate toward three types of people: (1) the idlers, (2) the faint-hearted, (3) and the weak. Paul says, we are to admonish the idle. Secondly, we are to encourage the fainthearted. We are to encourage those who feel inadequate, don't feel like they fit, or feel like they have nothing to contribute. Thirdly, we are to help each other find their place. This is probably a reference to those who are weak in the faith. We are all to watch out for one another because in every church there are those who feel guilty about their past, need the assurance of salvation, or don't have a sense that they have been forgiven by God. In addition, as we care for one another there are three attitudes that should control our approach. First, we are to be patient with everybody (v. 14c). Patience is the willingness to keep trying over and over again. Second, we are to see that no one repays anyone evil for evil (v. 15a). We are not to strike back or try to get even with someone who has tried to hurt us. Third, we are to always seek to do good to one another (v. 15b).

In the last section Paul gives practical instruction about public worship (vv. 16-18). Our public worship should be marked by joy, prayer, and gratitude. These three qualities in our public worship are the will of God for us.

In addition, in verses 19-22 Paul exhorts us not to ignore the Spirit's prompting nor despise the wisdom affirmed by God's Word. The Holy Spirit always prompts us to stop doing what is wrong, and to start doing what is right. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to show love to somebody, do it! Don't quench His promptings. Also, do not ignore the wisdom affirmed in God's Word. "Do not despise prophecies" (v. 20). F. F. Bruce refers to prophecies as those messages that "declare the mind of God in the power of the Spirit." There is so much that is counterfeit today. Since anyone can stand up and say, "This is what God is saying," so Paul adds, "test everything" (v. 21). We must learn to test what is said in public worship or anywhere else by what has already been revealed in God's Word.

Finally, in a marvelous benediction, Paul implicitly invites the whole church to trust in God's sanctifying work in the life of every member (vv. 23-24). We are to remember that God, in His faithfulness, is able to transform the whole person of every person -- spirit, soul and body.

THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

10 CORE BELIEFS OF A DISCIPLE

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

The Godhead *2 Corinthians 13:14*

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ *Colossians 2:9*

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life.

The Sufficient Atonement of Christ *2 Corinthians 5:19-21*

We believe in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

The Resurrection and Return of Christ *Acts 1:3, 9-11*

We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit *John 14:16*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

Unity in Christ *Ephesians 2:14-17*

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternity *Revelation 21:22-27*

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

We believe that everything we have or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

Undiluted Worship *Matthew 22:37-40*

Loving the Lord God with all of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual vigor and, my neighbor as myself.

Constant Abiding *John 15:1-11*

Abiding in Christ in order to be faithful and bear fruit.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

Reading the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for daily life.

Desperate Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

Praying to God to know Him, laying requests before Him and, finding direction for daily life.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

Fellowshipping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

Using my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Total Forgiveness *Ephesians 4:30*

Practicing forgiving others as God has forgiven me in Christ.

Tangible Compassion *Matthew 25:31-46*

Showing compassion to those in need and so minister to Jesus Himself.

Generous Giving *2 Corinthians 8:7*

Giving away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

God Space *Ephesians 6:19-20*

Increasing the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

Love - a sincere affection for others *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

Peace - an abiding sense of harmony *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

Patience - a willingness to stick with things *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty *Psalm 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control.

Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely

Titus 2:11-13

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

Hope - a certainty of what is to come *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Each week this Bible Study will feature either a core belief, practice or virtue vital for growing disciples.

OT in 52
(52 weeks through the Old Testament)

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING IN A YEAR

Monday, March 13 thru Saturday, March 19
Numbers 32, 33-34, 35-36, Deuteronomy 1-2, 3-4, 5-7

Loudonville Community Church
374 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211

www.lcchurch.org