

The Heartbeat of a Healthy Church

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Introduction

I A Healthy Church Honors Its Leaders

- A. **Respect** those:
 - 1. Who work hard among you - 1 Thess 2:9
 - 2. Who are **over** you in the Lord - Heb 13:17
 - 3. Who **admonish** you - Col 1:28-29
- B. Hold them in the **highest** regard in love
 - 1. Because of their work - 1 Tim 5:17
- C. Live in **peace** with each other - Rom 14:19; Eph 4:3; Heb 12:14

II A Healthy Church Is Courageously Loving

- A. Warn those who are **idle** - 2 Thess 3:6
- B. Encourage the **timid** - 1 Thess 2:11-12
- C. Help the weak - Rom 15:1-2
- D. Be **patient** with everyone - Col 3:12-14
- E. Make sure that nobody **pays back** wrong for wrong:
 - 1. But always try to be kind to each other - Rom 12:17-21
 - 2. But always try to be kind to everyone else - Gal 6:9-10

III A Healthy Church Is Spiritually Optimistic

- A. Be **joyful** always - Ps 34:1-3; Phil 4:4
- B. Pray continually - Dan 6:10; Mt 6:6; Eph 6:18
- C. Give **thanks** in all circumstances - Col 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2
 - 1. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus - Ps 34:1-3
- D. Do not **put out** the Spirit's fire - Is 59:2; Acts 7:51; Eph 4:30
 - 1. Do not treat prophecies with contempt - 1 Cor 14:1-3
- E. **Test** everything - 1 Jn 4:1; 2 Tim 2:15; Acts 17:11; Mt 7:15-20
 - 1. Hold on to the good - Rom 12:9
 - 2. **Avoid** every kind of evil - Eph 5:3

IV A Healthy Church Is Set Apart for God

- A. Paul's words of blessing:
 - 1. May God Himself, the God of peace **sanctify** you

- through and through - 1 Ths 4:3; Lev 20:7-8; Rom 12:1
- 2. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept **blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. The one who calls you is faithful - 1 Thess 2:10; 3:13
 - b. The one who calls you will do it - 1 Cor 1:8-9
- B. Paul's words of benediction:
 - 1. Brothers, **pray** for us - 2 Thess 3:1-2
 - 2. Greet all the brothers with a **holy kiss** - Rom 16:16
 - 3. Have this letter read to all the brothers - Col 4:16
 - 4. The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

1. Share briefly your secrets to a healthy family life.
2. According to Paul, what is a church's responsibility to its leaders? How do you express your appreciation and love toward those whom God has placed over you in the Lord?
3. How do Paul's commands regarding the idle, timid and weak challenge you? Would you consider yourself a person characterized by one or more of these traits? If not, how do you generally respond to individuals who struggle in these areas?
4. How are Paul's commands to "Be joyful, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances" related and interdependent? What impact would it have on your life/family/work if you were to fully embrace these characteristics as a lifestyle?
5. Paul exhorts the church not to put out the Spirit's fire. Have you ever seen that happen? What can you do to fan the flame of the Spirit's work in your life and in our fellowship?
6. Paul concludes by encouraging the believers to be sanctified and blameless in preparation for the coming of Christ. What is God's part and what is your part in achieving this objective?
7. Take a few minutes and do a spiritual *heart check!* What can be celebrated? What needs work/surrender? Ask God for help!

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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