

Promoting Peace in the Church



1 Thessalonians 5:14

Introduction

- Peace is an underlying emphasis in First Thessalonians – 5:13, 23; cf. v. 3; 1:1; Mark 9:50; Rom 12:18; 2 Cor 13:11.
- Paul highlights the means to peace – 1 Thess 5:12–22.
 - Peacemakers recognize and regard their leaders – vv. 12–13.
 - Peacemakers respond appropriately to other Christians – v. 14.
 - Peacemakers reject personal vengeance (revenge) – v. 15.
 - Peacemakers rejoice, pray, and give thanks always – vv. 16–18.
 - Peacemakers respect the word of God – vv. 19–22.
- Divine faithfulness and Christian holiness guarantees peace among the people of God – vv. 23–24; cf. vv. 25–28.

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

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Introduction

- Paul links the demand for peace with the exhortation to admonish, encourage, etc. – 1 Thess 5:13–14.
 - The conjunction “and” (Gr. *de*) is unfortunately absent in the NASB (cf. ESV, NIV, NRSV, NKJV) but it shows the connection.
 - The word translated “urge” (Gr. *parakaleō*) occurs eight times in First Thessalonians, has a broad range of meaning (“exhort,” “encourage,” “comfort,” “urge”), but emphasizes the authority of Paul – 2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14; cf. 3:1–2.
 - The expectations to admonish, encourage, help, and be patient are linked (i.e., not separated by conjunctions), and Paul enjoins them on all Christians (“brothers”).

Admonish the Unruly

- The verb translated “admonish” (Gr. *noutheteō*) ranges in meaning from “to counsel” to “to warn” – 1 Thess 5:12, 14; 2 Thess 3:15; cf. 1 Cor 4:14.
- The recipients of admonition are the unruly (Gr. *ataktos*), which implies spiritual or moral disorder – 1 Thess 5:14.
 - The Apocrypha uses the word to describe the “mad dash” of women from Jerusalem (217 BC) – 3 Macc 1:19.
 - Paul uses the adverbial form to describe the activity of those who were subject to withdrawal – 2 Thess 3:6, 11; cf. vv. 6–15.
- Admonition promotes peace – 1 Thess 5:14; cf. Jude 22–23.

Encourage the Fainthearted

- The word translated “encourage” (Gr. *paramytheomai*) is uncommon and emphasizes the notion of consolation – 1 Thess 5:14; cf. 2:12; John 11:19, 31; cf. 2 Macc 15:9.
- The fainthearted (Gr. *oligopsychos*) need others to console them so that they find strength in the Lord – 1 Thess 5:14.
 - The description “fainthearted” in the OT (LXX) can suggest a pitiable or contemptible condition – Prov 14:29; Isa 57:15.
 - Paul seems to speak of sound but broken people – 1 Thess 5:14.
- Encouragement promotes peace – 1 Thess 5:14; cf. Rom 12:15b.

Help the Weak

- The verb translated “help” (Gr. *antechō*) is emotionally stirring as it typically means “to cling to” or “to be devoted to” – 1 Thess 5:14; cf. Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13; Titus 1:9.
- The adjective translated “weak” (Gr. *asthenēs*) can describe physical, emotional, or spiritual weakness – 1 Thess 5:14.
 - The strong ought to give special attention to the (physically or spiritually) weak – Matt 25:34–46; Rom 15:1–2; Gal 6:1–2; Jude 22–23; cf. 1 Cor 11:30; 1 Pet 5:8.
 - Sadly, some weak individuals do not want help!
- Help promotes peace – 1 Thess 5:14; cf. 1 Cor 9:22.

Be Patient with Everyone

- The verb translated “be patient” (Gr. *makrothymeō*), when connected to other persons, connotes forbearance – Matt 18:26, 29; Luke 18:7; 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Pet 3:9.
 - Patience toward others does not suggest passivity or indifference but longsuffering and goodwill – Matt 18:21–22; cf. vv. 15–20.
 - Love compels us to be longsuffering toward others – 1 Cor 13:4.
- The phrase translated “with everyone” (Gr. *pros pantas*) ought to be “with all of them” (NRSV) to demonstrate the need of patience for unruly, fainthearted, and weak people.
- Patience promotes peace – 1 Thess 5:14; cf. Eph 4:1–3.

Application

- We must desire peace—real peace!—among ourselves, otherwise we will never do what is necessary to attain it – 1 Thess 5:13; 2 Cor 13:11; Heb 12:14; Eph 4:3.
- Leaders must direct the church into peace—and we must follow!—by admonishing, encouraging, etc. and equipping us to do the same – 1 Thess 5:12–14; Heb 13:17.
- We must discover the needs of other Christians and provide appropriate assistance (whether they ask for it or not) – 1 Thess 5:14; Gal 6:1–2; Rom 15:1–6.

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