

1 Thessalonians 5: 13b-28

“Keys to a healthy church”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 13b-14a Keys to a Healthy Church

III.) Vs. 14b-24 Keys To a Healthy You

IV.) Vs. 25-28 Prayer, Fellowship, and the Word of Grace

We conclude this wonderful little letter we the context of remembering that every chapter ended with a reminder that Jesus is coming back soon for His Church. This finally section is a “*check list*” of items that each Christian and every Church ought to keep handy to ensure that we stay healthy. It is interesting how success within the church today has centered upon size instead of health. That’s not to say that a large church can’t be healthy but it is to say that just because it is large doesn’t mean that it is healthy.

- Saint’s Jesus is coming for His church.
- His kingdom will be established on earth.
- Our earthly life is a gift that will come to an end sooner than we realize.

Because of these facts it is best to adapt that motto of the old poem written by C.T. Studd whose father had been led to Christ by D.L. Moody:

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,

Only what's done *by* Christ will last.

II.) Vs. 13b-14a Keys to a Healthy Church

Vs. 13 **BE AT PEACE**: Paul gives yet another thing the body of Christ can implement so that they can make the leaderships load a lot lighter; be at peace with each other. The church needs to learn to “*get along*”, take the Lord’s side and bridge the gap by being a

“*peacemaker*”. Apparently “*getting along*” was an issue in this church so much so that Paul in verse 14 is going to give list three types of difficult situations and the ways in which to be a peacemaker among them.

- a.) **Warn those who are unruly**: The “*unruly*” person is a word that comes from a military term which describes a person is careless and out of line. It speaks of a soldier who is not in his present rank because of idleness and has neglected their duties. It also describes a person who is so rebellious that they cause disorder. Now the word “*warn*” is the same word as “*admonish*” in verse 12 and it to caution or reprove gently. According to Paul it is not only the responsibility of the leadership to correct someone that is neglecting their duties to the Lord which is affecting others, it’s everybody’s responsibility. Saint’s we are acting as a peacemaker if we see someone in the body that is beginning to slip away, we need to lovingly bring them to the word to correct their idleness.
- b.) **Comfort the fainthearted**: The word “*fainthearted*” means the “little souled” and it describes someone that because of their situation or circumstance has quit coming to church. We have all at times been at the end of their ropes and are struggled in our faith. The word “*comfort*” means to, “get close and speak tenderly to.” When we in the body of see someone going through tough stuff we need to get close to them and speak tenderly to them. The first part of this is to get close to them! Far too many times the Church looks like Jobs friends who tried to correct him without getting close to him. This will take discernment on our part as we certainly don’t want to encourage sinful and destructive actions by coming close and speaking tenderly.
- c.) **Uphold the weak**: The context of the weak here is to their spiritual state as being weak in the faith to the point that they are not able to stand. The word “*uphold*” means to hold up

and carries the idea of **teaching someone to walk by way of having them place their weight on you and lean on your balance**. What a great picture of how to handle someone who can't stand in their faith yet, you let them put their weight on you and you hold them up in the balance of the "*Word of God and the Spirit of God.*"

The body is to respond not just the leadership in being a peacemaker. If we all take a role in this the church will continue to be a healthy one.

III.) Vs. 14b-24 Keys to a Healthy You

Now Paul moves on to **seven things to make sure you are healthy with before you can help someone else.**

- 1.) Vs. 14b **BE PATIENT**: Notice that Paul say that they need to be patient "*with all*". The goal of helping others is to see them grow in the Lord and the most important trait you can possess to be a part of change is patience. We can all try each other's patience, so before you go deal with someone else you better deal with yourself.
- 2.) Vs. 15 **WATCH YOUR MOTIVES**: Paul says that before we check out others hearts we need to check out our own heart. We are not to render evil for evil when we are dealing with someone that has done us wrong. Instead we need to act in a way that pursues good for both. I have noticed in my own life that it is easy to be right on a situation Biblically, yet behave wrongly.
- 3.) Vs. 16 **BE FULL OF JOY**: The only way this can truly be accomplished is from having a heavenly perspective. When dealing with another person smile, make sure your heart is on the eternal perspective and not just the circumstance.

- 4.) Vs. 17 **PRAY CONTINUALLY**: Be constantly in prayer. The word “*without ceasing*” is used in the Greek to describe a hacking cough that is not always audible. We are to be praying in our heart through the situation. The most important person to be praying for is just as much you as it is the other person!
- 5.) Vs. 18 **GIVE THANKS IN EVERYTHING**: Notice that it does not say “*for*” everything. Paul chooses to say here that a thankful heart in the midst of every situation is God's will for you. You cannot always thank God “*for*” the situation but you sure can thank Him “*in*” the situation for you know Him..
- 6.) Vs. 19-21 **HOLD ON TO THE WORD**: This was before the Bible was complete in fact the letter we are reading became part of the Bible. Paul warns them not to quench the Spirit of God by despising prophecy. There are two types of prophecies:
- a.) **Foretelling**: Which has to do with the future and no doubt spoke of the soon return of Jesus.
 - b.) **Forth-telling**: Which has to do with speaking the Word of God.

They were not to quench the working of the Word of God through the Spirit of God. Instead they are told to hold fast that which is good. We ought to check out teachers by way of the Word of God and not by whether or not you liked what they had to say. Don't get mad at the Bible teacher because you are convicted by what they teach because if it is the Bible that is being taught it is designed to hit you between the eyes, so praise the Lord.

- 7.) Vs. 22-24 **BE HOLY**: Paul tells them to keep clear of anything that can be called unholy. In verse 23 he goes on to say that it is God who is the one that

has set you apart for His pleasure and that it is His complete end to preserve you cause you to be blameless when you see Him face to face. What a comfort, we are all still in this process of being made more like Him which will only be completed when we are no longer in these bodies. The truth of this folks is not based upon our faithfulness but rather on His, (verse 24)!

IV.) Vs. 25-28 Prayer, Fellowship, and the Word of Grace

Vs. 25-28 Paul concludes this letter with this benediction and *four keys to maintain a healthy church:*

- 1.) Vs. 25 **Prayer**: The greatest thing you can do to insure a healthy Bitterroot Valley Calvary Chapel is pray for the church, one another, and especially the leadership!
- 2.) Vs. 26 **Fellowship**: Back in those days that is how you greeted people that you loved to be with. So Paul is exhorting then to, continue in a love relationship with each other.
- 3.) Vs. 27 **The Word of God**: Here Paul commands that this letter be read to all, because it is the Word of God! Folks, a church that departs from the whole council of the Word will never be healthy no matter how large it gets.
- 4.) Vs. 28 **The Grace of God**: All the above will not work if it is done in the strength of man. Folks, we must always be a church that operates in and through the grace of God!