

## Introduction

A few weeks ago, on September 1, 2023, a seven-year-old named Aspen Brown, visited Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. It was her birthday, and her father, Luther Brown, took his family to the State Park to celebrate her seventh birthday. It was hot and the family sat down to rest a little. Aspen went over to some big rocks by the fence line, and then she came running back to her father, saying, “Dad! Dad! I found one.” She had found a 2.95 carat diamond. It is a golden-brown color, and is a complete crystal, with no broken facets. It was the second biggest diamond found at the State Park this year. It is reportedly worth \$29,000.00. The park has a large field where visitors can search for diamonds. At first glance, it just appears to be a normal field, where one might plant corn or cotton, but it is actually the world’s eighth largest diamond reserve. There have been nearly 35,000 diamonds found there since the park opened in 1972. Sometimes, when we dig deeper, we find diamonds hidden in a field.

I have found the word of God very much like that field in the Crater of Diamonds State Park. At first glance things we don’t see the treasures that are hidden in it. As we search the word, we find these rich deposits and treasures. Our text today is 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28, and it contains the parting words from Paul, Silas, and Timothy to the newly planted church in Thessalonica. It appears that they gave fourteen random exhortations to these new believers. When I first read the passage, it reminded me of a soup or stew, where someone cleaned out the fridge of all the vegetables on hand and threw them into the crock pot. However, that is not the case at all. The cook had planned the meal, bought all the vegetables and meat for the stew, and had carefully prepared the meal, adding the right amount of spices to make a savory stew. Paul, Silas, and Timothy did not just give some random exhortations that were unrelated; they gave some careful consideration to what they were going to say, and were led by the Holy Spirit, and gave us a passage that is rich with flavor. They gave us a field that is loaded with diamonds. In our passage, we will look at their Pleas, their Petitions, and their Partings.

## Parting Pleas and Prayers

1. Pleas (1 Th 5:12-22)
2. Prayers (1 Th 5:23-24)
3. Partings (1 Th 5:25-28)

(1 Th 5:12–28) “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, {13} and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. {14} We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. {15} See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. {16} Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. {19} Do not quench the Spirit; {20} do not despise prophetic utterances. {21} But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; {22} abstain from every form of evil. {23} Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. {24} Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. {25} Brethren, pray for us. {26} Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. {27} I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren. {28} The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

## 1. Pleas (1 Th 5:12-22)

Paul, Silas, and Timothy begin this section with, “But we request of you, brethren.” Then, in verse fourteen, they said, “We urge you, brethren.” They are asking, beseeching, intreating, requesting, urging, encouraging, and exhorting the Thessalonians to act in certain ways. They are not commanding the Thessalonians; they are pleading with them. One of the differences between Christianity and some other religions is how people are motivated. Jesus taught that change comes from within. The Pharisee looked clean on the outside, but were dirty on the inside. They were like white-washed tombs, but were full of dead men’s bones and uncleanness on the inside. When Christ comes in to our lives, there is a change in the heart that results in a change in outward behavior. Outward behavior is not forced upon believers. There are severe consequences for not conforming to certain expectations in some religions. Paul, Silas, and Timothy plea with the Thessalonians to do certain things. They request, urge, and encourage them to do certain things, but they do not force them to comply.

(1 Th 5:12–14) “But we request of you, brethren ... {14} We urge you, brethren ...”

(Mt 23:25–28) “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. {26} “You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. {27} “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. {28} “So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

There are fourteen different pleas given to the Thessalonians. On the surface it looks like there are fourteen miscellaneous areas of conduct that Paul, Silas, and Timothy want the Thessalonians to work on. The NASB entitles this section as “Christian Conduct,” and that is an appropriate title for the section. However, these are not random things that they have written; they have been carefully thought-out and written.

Many years ago, Dawson Trotman founded the Navigators ministry. He created a wheel to disciple believers. At the center of the wheel was a hub, and out of the hub there were four spokes. The hub of the wheel stood for a believer’s relationship with Christ. Christ has to be at the center of your life. The two vertical spokes represented the primary way that we relate to the Lord, which is prayer and the word of God. The two horizontal spokes of the wheel represented our relationships with others. On one side the spoke represented evangelism, our relationships and outreach to unbelievers. The other horizontal spoke represented fellowship, our relationship with believers.



These fourteen please that Paul, Silas, and Timothy gave to the Thessalonians are very similar to the Navigator’s Discipleship Wheel. Similar to the Navigator’s wheel, these fourteen pleas pertain to our relationships. There are eight pleas about our relationship with one another, and six pleas that deal with our relationship with God. In verses twelve through fifteen, they encouraged them to have right relationships with one another. In verses sixteen through twenty-one, they urged them to have the right relationship with God. The whole passage is about our horizontal relationships and our vertical relationships. It is appropriate to focus on these fundamentals with new believers.

Jesus said the greatest commandment was to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. All the other commandments are summed up in these two commandments. Our vertical relationship with God, and our horizontal relationships with people are the most important things we can focus on. These new believers needed to focus on these various principles that pertained to their relationship with God, and with one another.

(Mt 22:36–40) “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” {37} And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ {38} “This is the great and foremost commandment. {39} “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ {40} “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

A. **Our relationships with one another** (1 Th 5:12-15)

B. **Our relationship with God** (1 Th 5:16-21)

A. **Our relationships with one another** (1 Th 5:12-15)

The first relationship that is addressed is with the leaders of the church. They requested them to appreciate those who diligently labor among them and have charge over them in the Lord, and give them instruction. The ESV translates it “to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.” The KJV renders it to “know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.” The Greek word that is translated as appreciate, respect, or know is oida (Strong’s G1492). That word literally means to see, be aware of, or to know. The Complete Word Study of the New Testament defines it as “to know intuitively or instinctively.” People in the congregation are encouraged to get to know their leaders. They are to be in relationship with their leaders.

(1 Th 5:12–13) “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, {13} and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

This is not always easy to do, especially in larger churches. In smaller churches, and in churches that meet in homes, this is easy to do, but in a large congregation it is very difficult. I was listening to a pastor in one of the larger churches in Marietta and he told the congregation that he was committed to only having relationships with his elders, and if you wanted to be in a relationship with him, you had to be an elder. It is true that we only have time for a select number of friends. Jesus spent time with His twelve apostles, and then even more time with Peter, James, and John, His inner circle. But there were others that traveled with Jesus. In Luke 10:1, He sent out seventy people, so there were many others besides the twelve. Jesus was touchable. He was approachable. He was relational. Pastors need to be available, touchable, and in relationship with their flock. Many pastors have unlisted numbers, and protect themselves from the sheep, particularly because some of them bite. One pastor told me that it is important to stay away from those that drain your time and energy. While that may be partially true, pastors need to be available and to spend time with the sheep. That is their part, but those in the church have a responsibility also, and that is what Paul, Timothy, and Silas are asking the Thessalonians to do: Get to know your leaders.

One reason for getting to know your leaders is that they are the examples that the sheep are to follow. They are the mold, cast, or die that the flock is to be shaped from. In addition to following their example, relationship helps establish trust, and that is very important. Passion and zeal are often caught, not taught, so leaders need to be with the flock.

They were not just encouraged to know their leaders, but to esteem them very highly in love for their work. The word that is translated as esteem is *hegeomai* (Strong's G2233), which means to lead or go before. They are to honor those that lead them. There are several reasons that Paul, Silas, and Timothy mention about why they should appreciate and esteem them. First, they are diligently laboring among them. The Greek word is *kopiao*, (Strong's G2872), which comes from *kopos* (Strong's G2873), to be wearied by labor. They are not just laboring, but are working hard. They are wearying themselves with labor over the flock. Second, the leaders have charge over the flock. They are going to give account to God for the members. They have authority, given by God, to care for the flock, and they are going to be held responsible for that. God tells us to make this a joy for those who have to give account, or it would be unprofitable for us. Third, they give instruction to you; they teach you. The KJV says they admonish you. The leaders are helping you to grow and mature, so it is only right to be in good relationship with them, and to esteem them highly for that work.

(Heb 13:17) "Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

The second plea that Paul, Silas, and Timothy make to the Thessalonians is to live in peace with one another. Christians are exhorted to live in harmony with one another. There should not be strife, quarreling, and unforgiveness between believers; we are called to live at peace with one another. There are going to be offenses among people, and how we deal with those offenses is critical. We must forgive one another, and we must have conversations about those offenses so that the issues can be resolved. Paul told the Romans that each person needs to do his part to live in peace. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

(1 Th 5:13b) "... Live in peace with one another."

(Ro 12:18) "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

Third, they urged the Thessalonians to admonish the unruly. The Greek word for unruly is *ataktos* (Strong's G813), which is a compound word, "a" plus "tasso." Tasso is to be properly arranged, or in order. The "a" is a negative prefix, so this is talking about those who are not in order. The word for submission is *hupotasso*, which means under proper order or arrangement. Believers are to admonish those who are rebellious and not submitted to authority. Notice that they do not say to go to the leaders and have them deal with those who are unruly; all believers are urged to admonish the unruly. Those in closest relationship with the unruly should take it upon themselves to do this.

(1 Th 5:14) "We urge you, brethren, **admonish the unruly**, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone."

The word for admonish is *noutheteo* (Strong's G3560), which means to put in mind, to caution, or gently reprove. We are to correct with gentleness.

In Galatians 6:1, Paul gave some instructions about correcting those who are in sin. He first identified who should bring correction, saying, “you who are spiritual,” which means that we need to be in right standing with God. Second, he stated the goal, which is to restore such a one. It is not to tear down, put down, destroy, or to punish, but it is restoration. Third, he instructed how we are to correct, and that is with a spirit of gentleness. Fourth, he gave a warning, that we are to look to ourselves so that we are not tempted. We need to be humble and careful, so that we are not tempted.

(Ga 6:1) “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.”

The fourth plea given is to encourage the fainthearted, or little-spirited. Things happen in life, and people get discouraged. There could be a death, sickness, sin, broken relationship, disappointment, or a host of things that can get someone down. The church needs to be a place where people are encouraged. In Hebrews, we are exhorted to encourage one another day after day. We are taught to consider or give some thought about how we can encourage others. People should look forward to fellowshiping with others, knowing that they are going to be encouraged. Many of the people that I have spoken to that are not going to church do not go because they have been judged, attacked, or hurt at church. The church should be a place of encouragement and healing. When this happens, people will want to come to church.

(1 Th 5:14) “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, **encourage the fainthearted**, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

(Heb 3:12–13) “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. {13} But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

(Heb 10:24–25) “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, {25} not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

The fifth area that the Thessalonians are urged to do is to help the weak. The word for weak is *asthenes* (Strong’s G772), which means without strength, feeble, or sick. It is translated as sickness about 25% of the time.

(1 Th 5:14) “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, **help the weak**, be patient with everyone.”

In the parable of the separation of the sheep and goats, Jesus told the sheep that when He was hungry, they had fed Him. When He was thirsty, they gave Him something to drink. When He was naked, they clothed Him. When He was sick (*astheneo*), they visited Him. Jesus is giving a description of those who are weak, and how we are to help the weak. Jesus ended by saying that when we have done this to the least of the brethren, we have done it unto Him.

(Mt 25:35–40) “‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; {36} naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ {37}

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? {38} ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? {39} ‘When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ {40} “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.’”

The sixth plea was to be patient with everyone. Some people try our patience more than others, but we are to be patient with everyone. The Greek word for patient is makrothymeo (Strong’s G3114). Makro means long, and thumos means to breathe hard, to get worked up, to be passionate, or fierce. It is most often translated as wrath, but it can be used in a positive way also.

(1 Th 5:14) “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, **be patient with everyone.**”

Here are a couple of things to help us to be patient with everyone. First, walk in the spirit. Set your mind on the things of the spirit. If we walk in the Spirit we will not carry out the deeds of the flesh. The fourth fruit of the Spirit is patience.

(Ga 5:16-22) “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.... {22} But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”

Second, try to see from the other person’s perspective. I am a fast walker, and if I am walking with someone else, I have to be patient or I will be way ahead of them. I have to see that their legs are not as long as mine. They may have a physical limitation, or they may be in pain when they walk. If I am mindful of this, it helps me to be patient. Second, be cognizant of their spiritual maturity. Many people may not have been taught something, and may be ignorant of some principles. It takes time for people to mature, and we need to be patient with people as they are being matured.

The seventh plea given to the Thessalonians is not to repay another with evil. In a similar passage that Paul wrote to the Romans, he said the same thing, “Never pay back evil to anyone.” He taught them to never take their own revenge, but to leave room for the wrath of God. We are not to take revenge, and do something back to the other person. I have told many people that nobody else makes us sin. If someone sins against us, that does not give us the excuse to sin against them. We are responsible for our responses. We must forgive the other person. That does not mean that we should not confront the person; we should confront people when appropriate. Sometimes, we just need to forgive and let things go, while at other times, we need to have a heart-to-heart conversation with the other person.

(1 Th 5:15) “**See that no one repays another with evil for evil**, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.”

(Ro 12:17–19) “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. {18} If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. {19} Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.”

The eighth plea given was to always seek after that which is good for one another and all people. Essentially, this is not to live selfishly. We are to live unselfish lives and to think about doing things that are good for others. In Philippians 2, Paul dealt with the same topic, and said not to merely look out for our own interests, but also the interests of others. He said not to do anything from selfishness. We are to seek after that which is good for others.

(1 Th 5:15) “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always **seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.**”

(Php 2:3–4) “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; {4} do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

## B. Our relationship with God (1 Th 5:16-22)

The remaining six pleas pertain to our relationship with God. The ninth plea is to rejoice always. Christians are to maintain an attitude of rejoicing. We are to rejoice at all times. We are to count it all joy when we encounter trials. We are to rejoice when we suffer. We are to rejoice when things are going well. Our joy is in the Lord, not our external circumstances.

(1 Th 5:16) “Rejoice always;”

Some people have named Paul’s letter to the Philippians as Joy. I believe it is about being unified as a body, but joy is certainly an emphasized theme. Three times Paul tells the Philippians to rejoice. In chapter three, he exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord. Then, in chapter four, he tells them again to rejoice in the Lord always. In case they did not get it, he immediately repeats it again, “Again I will say, rejoice!” We are to always maintain an attitude of rejoicing.

(Php 3:1) “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.”

(Php 4:4) “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”

Some people see God as the Judge who is looking down, ready to bring judgment on any sin. While God is a holy God, and He is going to judge everyone, I don’t think that He maintains a critical, judgmental attitude. We find that in the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy. I see God as one who is full of joy. I want to be one who rejoices with Him in all things.

(Ps 16:11) “You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”

The tenth plea is to pray without ceasing. We are to maintain an attitude of prayer at all times. We are to be in constant fellowship with God. God has given us His Holy Spirit so that we can know the thoughts of God. We are to speaking with Him at all times about all things, and we are also to be listening to Him. I say that we are to have an attitude of prayer at all times, because when we sleep, we are not actively praying. When we are concentrating on a tax return, engineering problem, chemical equation, or following a recipe in the kitchen, we will be focused on what we are doing, not actively praying. But we should maintain an attitude of prayer in all that we do, including these activities.

(1 Th 5:17) “pray without ceasing;”

The eleventh plea is to give thanks in everything. I believe that the ninth, tenth, and eleventh plea all go together. We are to maintain an attitude of rejoicing, praying, and thanks at all times. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, and when we give thanks, rejoice, and pray we are filled with the Holy Spirit. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he encouraged them to be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with their hearts, always giving thanks for all things. This is an attitude of joy, thanksgiving, worship, and prayer, and when we live this way, we will be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.

(1 Th 5:18) “in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

(Eph 5:18–20) “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, {19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; {20} always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;”

How do we develop this attitude of thanksgiving? Psalm 103 tells us to bless the Lord and forget none of His benefits. We need to regularly take time to think about the many benefits and blessings we have in Christ. He pardons our iniquities and heals our diseases. He redeems our life from the pit and crowns us with lovingkindness and compassion. He satisfies our years with good things. These are just a few of the things He does that David mentions in that Psalm. I give thanks to God for answered prayers.

(Ps 103:1–5) “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, *bless* His holy name. {2} Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; {3} who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases; {4} who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; {5} who satisfies your years with good things, *so that* your youth is renewed like the eagle.”

I regularly thank Him for His provision for Karen and I, and for His faithfulness in providing for us throughout our life, especially when we had a large family. We need to take time to reflect and verbalize our thanks. We should also get in the habit of starting our prayer times with offerings of thanksgivings. In Psalm 100:4, God tells us that we enter His gates with thanksgivings and His courts with praise. That should be our approach before His throne room. I believe we should come reverently and to honor Him before we start asking Him to do this and that. Sometimes Karen and I will spend our whole prayer time in giving thanks and blessing His name. He already knows what we need so we really haven’t missed out on letting our requests to be made known. We have honored Him, which is our highest priority.

(Ps 100:4) “Enter His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.”

I believe that we should develop an attitude of gratefulness in every area of our lives. We should constantly be thanking God, and we should also get in the habit of thanking other people. We can thank them for their prayers. We can thank them for their service to God and to us. We can thank them for emails, phone calls, gifts, their friendship, and many other things. I make a habit of thanking Karen for every meal.



The twelfth plea is to not quench the Spirit. The Greek word is *sbennymi* (Strong's G4570), and it means to extinguish. The Holy Spirit is like a fire, and we are not to extinguish it. Many tie this with the next plea, which is not to despise prophetic utterances, and I believe it certainly includes that. However, I believe that there are many ways to quench the Spirit of God, and despising prophetic utterances is just one. When we do not take time to listen to God and spend time in His word, I believe it quenches the Spirit. When we live carnal or fleshly lives, it quenches the Spirit. Disobedience of any kind quenches the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians, Paul told the church two times that they were temples of the Holy Spirit. In the first example, they were quarreling with one another, and it quenches the Spirit. In the second example, there was immorality in the church, and it quenches the Spirit. In our lives, we want to live uprightly, and then be filled with joy, thanksgiving, worship, and prayer, because that ushers in and fills us with His Spirit.

(1 Th 5:19) "Do not quench the Spirit;"

(1 Co 3:16–17) "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? {17} If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are."

(1 Co 6:18–20) "Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. {19} Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? {20} For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

The thirteenth plea pertains to prophetic utterances, which is one of the ways that God speaks to us. It is one of many ways that we can quench the Spirit. God does not want us to despise prophetic utterances. The Greek word, *exoutheneo* (Strong's G1848), that is translated as despise is quite interesting. It literally means to set at nought, not even one. Therefore this verse could be rendered that we are not to set prophetic utterances at nought, which means to disallow prophetic utterances. Many people have been taught that prophecy went away in the first century, and is no longer a gift in operation today. Therefore, many churches do not allow prophecy, which is exactly what God is telling us not to do in this verse.

(1 Th 5:20-21) "do not despise prophetic utterances. {21} But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;"

Instead of disallowing prophetic utterances, we should desire, welcome, embrace, and encourage prophetic utterances. In 1 Corinthians 14, God tells us to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, and to especially desire prophecy. Instead of despising and disallowing, we should earnestly desire prophetic utterances.

(1 Co 14:1) "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy."

However, church services must have order, because God is a God of order. He tells us that all things must be done properly and in order. God wants to protect His people from false teaching and false prophecy. God tells us to let two or three prophets speak, and let others pass judgment. We must examine everything carefully, and judge whether the prophetic utterance is from God or not. Prophetic utterances be examined closely to see if they line up with Scripture. If the prophetic utterance is deemed to be wrong, the leadership has the responsibility to expose the

error, and the word is not to be followed. The church should abstain from every form of evil. If the prophetic utterance is good, the church is to hold fast to that which is good.

(1 Co 14:39–40) “Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. {40} But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.”

(1 Co 14:29) “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.”

The fourteenth plea is to abstain from every form of evil. This plea is usually included in the previous plea of examining every prophetic utterance. If the prophecy is good, the church should hold fast to it, but if it is not good, the church should abstain from every form of evil. The principle of holding fast to that which is good and abstaining from every form of evil applies to all areas, not just prophetic utterances. Christians need to abstain from every form of evil. There are not some evils that are acceptable; Christians are to abstain from every form of evil.

(1 Th 5:22) “abstain from every form of evil.”

## 2. Prayers (1 Th 5:23-24)

Paul, Silas, and Timothy end this letter very similarly to other letters, with a prayer and a greeting. Their prayer is for God to sanctify them entirely, that their spirit, soul, and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter four, they wrote that God’s will for us is sanctification and to abstain from sexual immorality. Now, they pray for them to be sanctified. That is a great prayer for the church today, and our own lives.

(1 Th 5:12–24) “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. {24} Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

This prayer expresses God’s heart for us; He wants every area of our lives to be impacted by the gospel. There are not to be hidden compartments in our lives that are not changed by the gospel. We are to be sanctified entirely. Our spirit, soul, and body are all mentioned.

There are a couple of different views about this. I believe in a trichotomy, which is that man has a spirit, soul, and body. This verse in 1 Thessalonians is one of two verses that I believe support this view. God wants our spirit, soul, and body to be preserved, and these are three separate parts. In Hebrews 4:12, the word of God is piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit. I believe God’s word helps us discern whether a thought or word is coming from our soul or our spirit, and that is an important thing in discerning God’s voice. If our soul and our spirit was one and the same, this would not make sense. God is a Spirit, and we have a spirit. Unfortunately, when Adam sinned, he died spiritually. Adam’s mind, emotions, and will did not die when he sinned; he still existed as a person, but he was separated from God spiritually, because he was dead spiritually. God teaches us that unless we are born of the Spirit, we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We must be spiritually reborn, or born again of the Spirit. When we are born of the spirit, we can know the thoughts of God and fellowship with Him.

(Heb 4:12) “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

(Jn 3:3–7) “Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” {4} Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” {5} Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. {6} “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

There are some who believe in a dichotomy, which is that man has a soul and body. They believe that the soul and spirit are used interchangeably in scripture, and are one and the same. Bible scholars have debated this issue for many years.

What is our soul? Our soul is composed of our mind, emotion, and will. Our soul is the seat of our intellect, where we think. It is also the seat of our emotions, how we feel. It is also where we have a will. God does not want us to seek our will, but to always seek His will for our lives. God wants every area of our life to be sanctified entirely. He wants our lives transformed by the renewing of our minds.

After praying for them to be sanctified entirely, they encouraged the Thessalonians about God’s faithfulness, saying, “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” God hears our prayers, and is faithful, and will answer our prayers.

### 3. **Partings** (1 Th 5:25-28)

Paul, Silas, and Timothy prayed for the Thessalonians. Then, they asked them to pray for them. He does not tell them what to pray for them, only to pray for them. They told them that they were praying to see them face to face (1 Th 3:10), so the Thessalonians could agree with them in that prayer. They said they were experiencing much persecution (1 Th 3:3-4), and they could pray for them about that. They said they had been hindered by Satan from coming, and they could pray about that (1 Th 2:18). There are many things that can be prayed for leaders; these are just a few.

(1 Th 5:25) “Brethren, pray for us.”

The application for this is that we should humble ourselves like Paul, Silas, and Timothy and ask others to pray for us. James wrote that we have not because we ask not. Humbly ask others to pray for you. One man asked me to pray for him, which I did. After I had prayed, I asked him to pray for me, which he did. God touched me and my lower back was healed instantaneously when he prayed. God tells us to pray for one another, and we should do that. Take initiative and ask for prayer.

(Jas 4:2c) “.... You do not have because you do not ask.”

(Jas 5:16) “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

The second parting request was that they greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. That was the common greeting in their culture, and Paul, Silas, and Timothy wanted the church to be warmly and affectionately greeted on their behalf.

(1 Th 5:26) “Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.”

The scriptures had not been canonized, and there were no printing presses. Therefore, most people did not have copies of the letters. A letter would be sent, and some copies were made, but most people heard when a letter was read publicly to them, probably in their services. Since they were meeting in Jason's home, they probably would read the letter in their meeting, and then discuss the letter. They probably discussed to get clarification about some points, and then the applications in their own lives. They probably took time to pray for Paul, Silas, and Timothy during that meeting. It was also common to have the letters passed along to other churches, so Philippi and some of the other churches in Macedonia may have been sent a hand-written copy of the letter.

(1 Th 5:27) "I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren."

Paul, Silas, and Timothy ended the letter with a blessing, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Grace is God's unmerited favor; something we don't earn. We are saved by His grace and that not of ourselves. We need His grace. Grace is also the ability and desire to do God's will. We all need His strength, favor, anointing, and help to do the things that He has called each of us to do. God's grace is different in each of our lives, but He gives each one of us the grace that we need.

(1 Th 5:28) "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

(Eph 2:8-9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

## Conclusion and Applications

Paul, Silas, and Timothy gave fourteen pleas to the Thessalonians. The first eight pertained to their relationships with others, and the remaining six had to do with their relationship with God. These were not just random pleas; they were about the two greatest commandments, to love God and to love one another.

(Mt 22:36-40) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" {37} And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' {38} "This is the great and foremost commandment. {39} "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' {40} "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

When I looked at how Paul defined love in 1 Corinthians 13, I saw that the passage today mirrored those attributes. In 1 Corinthians 13:4, we see that love is kind. In verse fourteen, the Thessalonians were urged to encourage the fainthearted and help the weak, and both of these involve kindness. In 1 Corinthians 13:4, love is patient. In verse fourteen, the Thessalonians are urged to be patient with everyone. In 1 Corinthians 13:5, love does not seek its own. In verse fifteen, the Thessalonians were urged to always seek that which is good for one another. In 1 Corinthians 13:5-7, love does not take into account a wrong suffered, is not provoked, and bears all things. In verse fifteen, the Thessalonians are urged not to repay anyone with evil. Our passage today contains pleas about loving one another. We are to love one another, and we are also to love God.

<b>Love: 1 Cor 13:4-7</b>	<b>Love: 1 Th 5:13-15</b>
Love is kind (1 Cor 13:4)	Encourage the fainthearted (1 Th 5:14) Help the weak (1 Th 5:14)
Love is patient (1 Cor 13:4)	Be patient with everyone (1 Th 5:14)
Does not seek its own (1 Cor 13:5)	Always seek after that which is good for one another (1 Th 5:15)
Does not take into account a wrong suffered (1 Cor 13:5) Is not provoked (1 Cor 13:5) Bears all things (1 Cor 13:7)	No one repays another with evil for evil (1 Th 5:15)

In our relationship with God, we are to maintain a proper attitude. We are to rejoice always, give thanks in everything, and pray without ceasing. We are also to earnestly desire to prophesy. We are not to despise prophecy, but we are to use it properly. We must examine everything carefully. We are to hold on to that which is good, and abstain from every form of evil.

In closing Paul, Silas, and Timothy prayed again for the Thessalonians, and then asked them to pray for them. We should pray for one another. We should long for one another, and to spend time together, face to face. We should greet one another warmly and give grace to one another.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Father God, thank You for this wonderful letter to the Thessalonians. Thank You for all the instructions about what happens when we die, and the coming of the Lord. Thank You for the practical instructions about loving one another. May we be a church that walks in love. May we be a church that loves You, and loves one another. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Parting Pleas and Prayers

### Introduction (1 Th 5:12–28)

#### 1. **Pleas** (1 Th 5:12-22, Mt 23:25–28, 22:36-40)

##### A. **Our relationships with one another** (1 Th 5:12-15)

- Leaders (1 Th 5:12-13, Heb 13:17)
- Live in peace with one another (1 Th 5:13, Ro 12:18)
- Admonish the unruly (1 Th 5:14, Ga 6:1)
- Encourage the fainthearted (1 Th 5:14, Heb 3:12-13, 10:24-25)
- Help the weak (1 Th 5:14, Mt 25:35-40)
- Be patient with everyone (1 Th 5:14, Gal 5:16, 22)
- Do not repay another with evil (1 Th 5:15, Rom 12:17-19)
- Always seek after that which is good for one another and all people (1 Th 5:15, Php 2:3-4)

##### B. **Our relationship with God** (1 Th 5:16-22)

- Rejoice always (1 Th 5:16, Php 3:1, 4:4, Ps 16:11)
- Pray without ceasing (1 Th 5:17)
- Give thanks in everything (1 Th 5:18, Eph 5:18–20, Ps 103:1-5, Ps 100:4)
- Do not quench the Spirit (1 Th 5:19, 1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:18-20)
- Do not despise prophetic utterances (1 Th 5:20-21, 1 Cor 14:1, 14:39-40, 14:29)
- Abstain from every form of evil (1 Th 5:22)

#### 2. **Prayers** (1 Th 5:23-24, Heb 4:12, Jn 3:3-7)

#### 3. **Partings** (1 Th 5:25-28, Jas 4:2c, 5:16, Eph 2:8–9)

### Conclusion and Applications (Matt 22:36-40, 1 Cor 13:4-7, 1 Th 5:13-15)