

WHEN THE LORD BUILDS HIS CHURCH



FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BUILDERS

1. An exhortation and summary statement regarding our attitude toward leaders—those responsible for the continued, faithful, building up work of Lord in the church fellowship, 5:12-13.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 ESV) We ask you, brothers, **to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.** Be at peace among yourselves.

A. Review: We are to come alongside and build one another up in the work of the Lord.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV) Therefore **encourage one another** and **build one another up**, just as you are doing.

Notice the building principle in the Ephesians text stated both negatively and positively. What comes out of our mouths is a very serious matter before God ... but maybe not so much to us?

- (Ephesians 4:29 ESV) **Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up**, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

B. We are to respect those responsible for the continued faithfulness of the work of the Lord in the church.

What does respect mean? What insight might we gain since the word literally means know?

Respect - literally know ... οἶδα [oida] – to see; to perceive with the eyes; to perceive by any of the senses; to notice, discern, discover; to pay attention, observe; to inspect, examine.

Perhaps we may better know our leaders if we take into account the providence of God in calling men to serve in particular churches—that God's knowledge of a man is why he calls him to shepherd a particular flock. This should carry more weight than what we want or expect the person to be. We should understand that our choice in leadership will sometimes conflict with God's. An outstanding example of this is the rejection of Moses as leader which we will examine in our excursus.

- A key to gaining insight into knowing those who diligently labor among us is trusting God's choice.
- God has chosen his leaders to be over his flock.
- He chooses men who are willing to admonish his people.

Admonish ... νουθετέω [noutheteō] – instruct, teach on proper behavior and belief; rebuke for a wrong done; to warn, exhort, advise on the consequences of a wrong action or behavior.

C. We are to esteem our leaders ... an attitude of respect that superabounds in love because of the work they do in seeing to the continued faithfulness to the Lord's work.

D. **Summary statement:** Find peace in God's choice in leadership by understanding that this is God's providential shepherding care for his sheep.

We need to acknowledge the reality of God's sovereign, divine providence by which God chooses the men to lead his people

EXCURSUS: IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE LEARN FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES IN ACCEPTING GOD'S CHOICES IN LEADERSHIP

Not accepting and supporting God's choices in leadership is not merely an exercise of our freedom or rights as humans but is actually fulfilling the desire in our hearts for evil.

I. We have been given clear, biblical examples of those who have fallen to the desire for evil in their hearts.

- (1 Corinthians 10:1–6 ESV) **For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers**, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. 5 **Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.** 6 **Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.**

II. Example #1: "Hey, Moses, who do you think you are? You're not the only one through whom God speaks."

- (Numbers 12:1–4 ESV) **Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses** because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. 2 **And they said**, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. 3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. 4 **And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam**, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out.
- (Numbers 12:8b–9 ESV) "**Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?**" 9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

III. Example #2: "Hey, Moses, who do you think you are? You've gone too far. You're not the only holy person around here. We're holy too. Why are you making yourself out to be something you are not?"

- (Numbers 16:1–4 ESV) Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. 2 **And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people** of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. 3 They **assembled themselves together** against Moses and against Aaron **and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"** 4 When Moses heard it, he fell on his face.
- (Numbers 16:8–11 ESV) And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 **is it too small a thing for you** that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, **to bring you near to himself, to do service** in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, 10 and **that he has brought you near him**, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also? 11 **Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your company have gathered together.** What is Aaron that you grumble against him?"
- (Numbers 16:19 NLT) **Meanwhile, Korah had stirred up the entire community against Moses and Aaron**, and they all gathered at the Tabernacle entrance. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to the whole community.

IV. Example #3: "Hey, Moses, you killed off God's people."

- (Numbers 16:41–50 ESV) But on **the next day** all the congregation of **the people of Israel grumbled** against Moses and against Aaron, saying, **"You have killed the people of the LORD."** 42 And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 **"Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."** And they fell on their faces. 46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your

censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun." 47 So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 **And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.** 49 **Now those who died in the plague were 14,700**, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. 50 And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

V. These things have been written down for our instruction that we may endure and have hope.

- (Romans 15:4 NIV) For everything that was written in the past **was written to teach us**, so that through the **endurance** taught in the Scriptures and the **encouragement** they provide we might have **hope**.
- (Romans 15:5–7 NIV) May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 **so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 7 Accept one another, then, **just as Christ accepted you**, in order to bring praise to God.

—END EXCURSUS—

2. An exhortation and summary statement regarding every person's responsibilities as those who "build up" in the continued, faithful work of the Lord in the church fellowship, 5:14-15.

- (1 Thessalonians 5:14–15 ESV) **And we urge you, brothers, admonish** the idle, **encourage** the fainthearted, **help** the weak, **be patient** with them all. 15 **See that no one repays anyone evil for evil**, but **always seek to do good to one another** and to everyone.

A. Every person in the fellowship is accountable for these responsibilities to build up and encourage the overall health and continued faithfulness of the church.

- i. We are to admonish the idle.
- ii. We are to encourage the fainthearted.
- iii. We are to help the weak.

iv. We are to be patient with them all.

B. Summary statement: We are all responsible to see to it that in the sometimes intense building process that no one resorts to repaying evil for evil but that our intent is always seeking to do good to one another.

CONCLUSION: Basic, solid construction principles for honorable workers of the kingdom of God, 5:16-22.

Some general, but very meaningful and necessary, principles that God's workmen must believe in, practice and hold fast to in order to bring praise, glory and honor to our Lord in creating and maintaining an environment of faithfulness in the work of the Lord.

A. God gives his workers very clear principles to regulate our behavior and attitude while doing Christ's work in his church as those who are commissioned to encourage and build one another up in His Church.

• (1 Thessalonians 5:16–21 ESV) Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good.

B. Summary statement: Hold ourselves off (self-control) that we may keep ourselves and those in our fellowship from every form and category of evil.

• (1 Thessalonians 5:22 ESV) **Abstain from every form of evil.**

