



Living together

The end of this letter could appear to be a list of unconnected bits of advice. But what unites them is that they teach how to live in loving, united Christian community.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 12-28

How to treat others

- ❓ *How should we treat:*
 - *our leaders (v 12-13a)?*
 - *each other (v 13b-15)?*

▼ Apply

Notice Paul urges this church—and our churches—to do this. It doesn't come naturally. We will have many excuses not to bother. But it is important if we are to please God and grow as his children.

- ❓ *Are you willing to listen to another Christian warning you, encouraging you? Are you willing to be helped?*
- ❓ *Are you someone who loves others enough to risk humbly warning, encouraging and seeking to help them?*
- ❓ *Is there anyone in your church you bear a grudge against? Will you obey v 15?*

God's will for us

- ❓ *What is God's will for us (v 16-17)?*
- ❓ *What have we seen in this letter that will enable us to rejoice, move us to pray, and motivate us to give thanks, in bad times as well as good?*

⬆️ Pray

Pause now to obey verses 16-17.

Listening well

Verse 19 is best understood in terms of the next three verses. Paul seems to be encouraging us to listen to prophecy (preaching and the application of the truths that have been preached, whether that's formal up-front application or informal conversational application) with an expectation that the Spirit will work in us. We're never to be unchanged by prophecy or think we can do without it (v 20); but equally, we're never to accept prophecies unquestioningly (v 21). Paul teaches us a balance—listen expectantly, but don't listen unthinkingly.

- ❓ *Which do you think you're more prone to—listening to preaching and application with contempt, or without testing?*
- ❓ *What is Paul praying for (v 23)? Why is he confident his prayer will be answered (v 24)?*

▼ Apply

- ❓ *As you reflect on the letter as a whole, what has most:*
 - *encouraged you?*
 - *challenged you?*
 - *moved you to praise the Lord Jesus?*
- ❓ *How has the Spirit been calling you to change in order to preach Christ and please God? How will you ensure that you "do not quench the Spirit"?*