

Corporate Living

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Date: 23 November 2025

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[0:00] Well, then you'll turn with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. And we'll read from verse 12.

! In verse 12.

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord, and we admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard and love because of their work.

Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, all those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone. Rejoice always. Pray continually.

[1:14] Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test them all.

Hold on to what is good. Reject every kind of evil. May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it. Brothers and sisters, pray for us. Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Let's pray and ask God's blessing on our time in the Word. Our Father, we thank you for your Word opened before us this morning.

And we ask now, Lord, that you would grant us insight, Lord. We pray, Lord, that you would teach us and show us wonderful things in the Scriptures. And so we pray now, Lord, your blessing, as we ask that you would not only be hearers of your Word, Lord, but also doers of your Word.

[2:23] Father, we commit this time to you, and we ask you these mercies in Jesus' name. Amen. By the way, this is the Word of the Lord. There's so many things that happen in this service.

We're trying to keep track of everything, and oftentimes I think to myself, I've probably forgotten something, but it's okay, we'll press on as long as we take care of some of the more important aspects of our Lord's Day service, which among them would be the preaching of the Scriptures.

If I forget this, then I'm in trouble. I can drop the ball on every other thing. If I leave here and we've not done this, and then, you know, you need to call me back and ask me to finish. Well, we're in 1 Thessalonians 5 this morning, and the last few months, we've been looking at and thinking through the subject of corporate worship.

We've been taught what that means, what that's about, the things that we ought to do in our worship time, reading the Bible, preaching the Bible, praying the Bible, singing the Bible.

And so we've spent time thinking about corporate worship, how the church ought to be worshipping God. In the spirit of that, this morning I thought it would be helpful for us to consider a related subject, and that is the subject of corporate living.

[3:37] How we all ought to live together as a church. We've seen the many references throughout this passage to brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters. And that is an indication that as Christians, we are called to live not only before God, but we are also called to live with one another.

And so this morning, we want to look at the subject of corporate worship. As Christians, our lives that we lead, we do not only lead and live in vertical worship of God, but also in horizontal fellowship with one another.

I think oftentimes we live between those two extremes. Oftentimes it's only the focus and the emphasis on our relationship with God and our worship of God and how we ought to do that and how we ought to relate to Him, that vertical focus.

And an extreme on that end is what I'd call a form of godliness that deny its power. The power for everyday life.

The power for engaging with people. But then there's the other problem where we live on the other extreme where it's always just about our relationships with each other, our relationships with one another and the focus on the horizontal.

[4:50] And this is a kind of moralism that denies God. And so we've got this dilemma of living between these two extremes. And the Bible calls us to have a right worship of God, but also to have a right relation and life with others.

Paul gives us in this passage at least 14 different kinds of instructions to this end. I thought it helpful to group those together instead of having 14 points this morning, which may take us a while to work through.

I thought it's helpful to group that together. And there's at least five categories under which I want us to consider these instructions. Five categories, so it's five quick points instead of 14, right?

You had a choice between five or 14. And so we don't have three, but we've got five. And emphasis on brief and quick. And I'll give it to you up front so you know where we're going. The five points under which we look at this passage, the five instructions to guide and help us in our life with each other are these.

Honor your leaders, help the weak, do good to all, practice or pursue piety or godliness, and worship in spirit and in truth.

[6:10] And I'll repeat that as we go along. The first one, of course, we consider begins in verse 12. Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord.

Or another translation would have it, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. In verse 12, we have a group identified here as leaders, as spiritual leaders.

And so the first category is quite easy to identify. The focus would be on spiritual leadership in the church. Here, Paul will have in mind pastors, elders, and he sees the importance of instructing the church in Thessalonica about their attitude towards leadership, leadership in the church.

Firstly, note that the place and responsibility that leaders have in the life of the believer in the church. Paul writes about those who are over you or who care for you in the Lord.

Those who are leaders in the church have not assumed a responsibility by themselves or for themselves, but they've been given a responsibility. They've been given a task by God.

- [7 : 27] And so in the church, you'll see the visibility, the presence of leaders, and they are not there by accident or by chance, and they are not just there to make sure things go smoothly and to take care of the administrative procedures.
- They're not just there to fill a space, but they've been given by God to care for you. They've been given by God to be over you. Those who are leaders in the church, fulfill this responsibility.
- It is possible to be too spiritual and to think it too low of a thing that God would place people over us.
- But the only person over us is God. The only person over me is Christ. Now it's true that the Lord is ultimately and most importantly the one who rules over you, cares for you, but in His wisdom and in His providence, He has given gifted men to the church to be over the church, to function as what we call under-shepherds.
- To the degree that we welcome these faithful under-shepherds, to that degree we welcome the rule and the care of God over our lives. Secondly, note the responsibility of leaders in the church.
- [8 : 46] I count at least four duties that are related here, that spiritual leaders occupy in the life of the church. We see their number one labor. Paul says, acknowledge brothers and sisters, those who work or labor among you.
- They labor among you. Spiritual leadership is a duty to serve, responsibility to oversee and to engage in a form of toiling, a form of laboring.
- Church leadership is not and ought not to be an idle endeavor or done for any personal gain. And it's most certainly not just a responsibility exercise for an hour on a Sunday, contrary to popular opinion.
- It is a service of labor. Paul says to the church in Philippi that he is being poured out as a drink offering for them. We also see it's a labor of spiritual care, spiritual oversight.
- Those who are over you in the Lord, those who care for you. Book of Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17, the author says, obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your soul.
- [9 : 57] That's a description of spiritual leadership. They are keeping watch over your soul. And by implication, brothers and sisters, that is what we need. We need those appointed by God to keep watch over our souls.
- The task of keeping watch over our souls, it's not just between me and the Lord, but there's another designated group of people in the life of the church that God has given and tasked to keep watch over your soul.
- They're called leaders in the church. Leaders in the church. We also see, very importantly, not only work, or not only labor, and care, but also admonishing, a labor of instruction.
- To teach the word of God is the great labor and work of the Christian leader. It's the primary means by which the spiritual leader cares and exercises oversight.
- How does he exercise this care and oversight over my soul? Well, it's not by lording it over me, but it is by opening up Holy Scripture and teaching me the word of God.
- [11 : 09] Teaching me the word of God. And so we see the word labor. We see the word care. We see the word admonish. And we also see, of course, the word work. Verse 13.
- Esteem them very highly because of their work. We often only think of work as that which makes a material difference and brings financial gain.
- That for which we dress up from a Monday to Friday. And that gives us the best opportunity to apply our learning and our education. Now, I'm not saying it's not that.

What I am saying is that in this passage, we see that spiritual leadership is named in the Bible as a work to which men give themselves and it may not yield great material benefit.

It may not bring great financial incentives or gain, but it is an honorable work done for the Lord with immeasurable eternal consequences.

- [12:12] It's a work of honor. That's why Paul says of those who desire to want to be elders, he says they desire a noble thing. And so we note the presence of leaders, the responsibility of leaders, but also, I want you to see the response to leaders.

How would Christians, the church, believers, act toward their leaders? Again, four words that sum it up, the Christian attitude from the passage. Acknowledge your leaders, that is to say, respect them, esteem them, esteem them very highly, in love, that there ought to be genuine love toward your leaders.

And I know the relationship, any hierarchical relationship of one over the other sometimes poses challenges of affection, warm affection.

But in the Christian faith, when they are leaders, God expects us and wants us to respond to those who are over us, not only in a sense of duty, but also with a sense of love.

In love, love them. And then, the fourth response, I'd say, from the passage, peace. And so, four duties of leaders and four responses from those whom they are watching over.

- [13:31] The second category, we see not only honoring leaders, but also, the second category of instruction, I call, help the weak, or helping the weak.

So again, we're answering this question, how ought we to live our lives among ourselves as a church? We've had a couple of months of how ought we to worship God? And this morning, we're asking the question, how ought we to live among ourselves?

And the first answer is, we need to recognize, esteem, acknowledge, respect, and love those who are over us. Number two, help the weak. Help the weak.

Notice the three different descriptions descriptions of the same category of person, namely the weak. In verse 13, we read, hold them in the highest regarding leadership, in love, because of their work.

Live in peace with each other. Verse 14, and we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive. Encourage the disheartened or the faint-hearted. Help the weak.

- [14:32] Be patient with everyone. There's a number of instructions in there, and the main category I'm giving that is an instruction to help the weak. Helping the weak. Notice, not necessarily the same person, but different weaknesses that different people in the church may have.

That is important. We have to be sensitive that the body of Christ, though it has an all-powerful head, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the body is comprised of all sorts of parts and members and people who possess all sorts of weaknesses.

All sorts of weaknesses. There are in the church those who are weak due to external circumstances. There are those in the church who are weak due to internal reasons.

Or maybe we could say there are those in the church who are weak because of things that are out of their control and it brings a certain kind of weakness in their lives. There are those in the church who are weak because they are not taking control, they're taking responsibility.

We fulfill our responsibility, we fulfill our corporate responsibility towards other believers by meeting their weakness with help.

- [15:54] by meeting their weakness with help. Not gossip, not condescension, not indifference, not judgment, and the list can go on and on and on. How do we meet the explicit and evident weakness among our brothers and sisters in the local church?

We meet that weakness with help. With help. Their weakness must not be exploited but alleviated. And so Paul says, and he starts listing the type of weakness, he says, admonish the idle.

Admonish the idle. Here's a form of weakness that is a result of not taking responsibility, at least in the context of this particular epistle. Look at chapter 4, verse 11, just very briefly, it's just probably a page backwards or to the front.

Chapter 4, verse 11, Paul writes again there, he says, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, you should mind your own business and work with your hands just as we told you.

In the second epistle, he writes to this church in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3, he makes this principle, he reiterates this principle, if you do not work, you will not eat.

[17:12] And so there's a problem among the local congregation, there's a problem in the context of Thessalonica that people are idle. Right here he uses the negative, the positive is work, the negative is idle.

And so right here in our passage, Paul says, admonish the idle. Admonish the idle. Here he addresses those who do not want to work, who are lazy, who are overly spiritual, that they are not bothered by earthly things such as work.

And one of the things we need to redeem as a church and as we study the scriptures is the dignity and the honor of work. I know we live in a context and in a culture where it's thank God it's Friday, right?

Which casts this dismissive glance on the rest of this week and on work itself because thank God it's Friday. But the Bible teaches us that work is honorable.

Work has dignity dignity towards it. In fact, do you know where work comes from? If we start reading the Bible, we don't have to go very far but in Genesis chapter 2, we see that God creates Adam and Eve and then he sets them to work.

[18:28] You say, yeah, but remember that sin and the fall. No, no. Sin and the fall happens in chapter 3. We're talking about when everything was still good. God says, okay guys, you're going to have to work.

But before sin, before the fall, and so as much as Mondays may persuade us that work belongs to the fall, I assure you, it does not.

Now, has it gotten worse and more difficult and more strenuous and yes, yes, all of those consequences come as a result of the fall but fundamentally, work is to be honored because it comes from God.

Work is God's idea. Work is what God has given us. This may seem radical but work is a blessing. Work is a gift that God has given us and so when we begin there and we encourage work, we're not encouraging something, you know, because obviously we've got this mindset of work as this strenuous, post-fall, sinful thing that we have to do now and so when we have that mindset and we're encouraging people into that, it's like, what are you doing?

But if we're redeeming the honor and the dignity of work as we ought to and we're encouraging people into that, we are encouraging them into a good. Into a good.

[19:53] And that's what work is. Work is from God. Work brings blessing. God is a worker. God works.

Does He not? Work brings fulfillment. Oftentimes people suffer from depression. People suffer from all sorts of mental discomforts and illnesses.

I'm not saying all of it but in part because they are just idle and not being fulfilled by the work that God rightfully intended them to give themselves to. And so when Paul is making a big thing about work in Thessalonica in his two epistles to this church, it's because he comes with a Genesis 2 mindset that work is from God.

Work is a blessing and work brings fulfillment to us. And so, you're the one who's not working. The idle person is not only inactive insofar as work is concerned but tends to be but tends to get very busy with the wrong things.

Paul says in our passage in chapter 4, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, you should mind your own business and work with your hands just as we told you. Which means there was a prior discussion about this idea of not being idle and of working.

[21 : 16] And then in 2 Thessalonians there will be more discussion about this. So it seems to be a big problem in the church. Idleness. Idleness. Idleness. Not in this church, of course. Talking about 2,000 years ago in that church in Thessalonica.

I know this is, you know, this is like preaching to the choir and you're like, get on to the next point but indulge me. He says there's a problem just like we told you. Just like we told you. It's possible to be idle and a busybody.

In fact, idleness, not being productive, breeds busybodies. Overly concerned with other people business. This is why Charles Spurgeon said idle people tempt the devil to tempt them.

Idle people tempt the devil to tempt them. Idleness leads to all wrong sorts of busyness. I said earlier that leaders in the church are given the task of admonishing but here we see it's not only the work of leaders to admonish but the work of the church.

Paul writes to the entire church and he says admonish the idle. Admonish the idle. Idle people must not be comfortable in a healthy church.

[22 : 29] They must be encouraged and admonished not to be idle. This is how we help the idle person. The second set of instruction under this category is encourage the faint hearted.

We see or the disheartened. Encourage the faint hearted. There's an instruction that we ought to be workers of encouragement. Now this may be a form of weakness that results from things outside of one's control that leaves one faint hearted because we are finite because we are not all knowing because we do not have everything in our own hands.

Perhaps we need a reminder this morning about those things. Perhaps we do not control our lives. Perhaps we do not know what's going to happen tomorrow or next month and because of all of these limitations this means that we are quite exposed and quite vulnerable.

Faint heartedness can be brought on by various discouraging experiences and realities. The work of encouragement is an often neglected and overlooked ministry in the local church.

The ministry of encouragement there's a man in the Bible in the New Testament whose name is literally called the son of encouragement. Barnabas means the son of encouragement.

[23 : 53] God is a God who encourages us. A great theme of the Bible is encouragement and there are weak people there are those who are suffering from a certain amount of disheartenedness a certain amount of being faint hearted and they require our encouragement.

They require encouragement. This can go a long way in coming alongside those who are struggling. In fact, the word encouragement literally has in it the idea of coming alongside others.

Support. Providing that sense of help. We have to move on. Then, of course, Paul writes very explicitly help the weak. This is really a summary instruction that takes in all the preceding ones the idler, the faint hearted and then the weak.

First notice that within the church you will find those who are weak. I think he's speaking about those who are spiritually weak. The church is not a place where you will find only spiritually strong people, whatever that may mean.

We must not expect to only find and have the strong ones among us. We must look out for those who are struggling. When we discover the weak, they must not be made to feel inferior, out of place, or lesser believers.

[25 : 18] Instead, those who consider themselves strong must help the weak. Again, these are instructions given to the church to all believers. The ministry of helping the weak is not a particularly pastoral one, but it is a Christian one and it falls on all of us to look out for the weak and to help the weak.

And then the last set of instructions in this category is be patient with all. Do you see how these sets of instructions all come together and build on each other? Patience is the spiritual virtue that makes it all possible.

In admonishing the idle, do it with patience. In helping the weak, do it with patience. Helping the weak, encouraging the faint hearted, and admonishing the idle, they all require patience.

patience. You know, it is for a lack of patience that we often give up on people, lose hope in people, and write people off.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit, and therefore we can say for a lack of the Spirit that we fail in these duties, that we do not exercise the required amount of patience.

[26 : 37] But those who consider themselves spiritual are those who are given to helping the weak. Paul says in Romans chapter 8 that the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. This is the work of the Holy Spirit to help others in their weaknesses.

So we can be an instrument, we can be a channel through which the Holy Spirit is helping others who are weak. Thirdly, verse 15, the third category, honor your leaders, help the weak.

Then Paul says, he broadens it up and he says, do good to all. Now verse 15 sets us off on this category and it reads, make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do good for each other and for everyone else.

You see that's where I get the title for this category from. Strive to do good for each other and for everyone else. Now there are, of course, the beginning of this section, Paul has specific instructions about not paying back wrong for wrong.

Now there are at least two specific evils or wrongs in this context of this letter that may have provoked believers towards a certain kind of vengeance.

[27 : 56] For instance, there's the wrong of fellow believers unwilling to work and relying on others, living off of others. And this, after a while, can bring a sense of grievance, that they are taking advantage, they are being exploited, that their goodness is being treated like nothing, and so there's a sense of feeling used.

And this idea of idleness and work is a big thing in the church of Thessalonica. And so that can be the first sense of wrong they're experiencing. And then there are those who are afflicting the church outside the church, so persecution.

This church was founded upon persecution, and here we see, and throughout this letter we get glimpses that there's still persecution, people being persecuted for their faith from those outside the church.

And so there's these two wrongs, if you will, people in the church wronging others by using them, and people out of the church wronging the church by abusing them physically.

And Paul says, in this context, he says, make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

- [29:13] That's amazing. That's the Christian ideal. That's the Christian calling that in the midst of, that despite opposition, grievance, and even personal insult, this particular instruction is not suspended, but it continues.

Try to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. the instruction applies in all such cases. I will get you back is not Christian.

Amen? Revenge is not Christian. Retaliation is not Christian. Have you read the passion of Christ and what was done to our Lord and his response to the insults, his response to the assault, his response to the crucifixion.

Doing good to others starts by resisting the temptation to get even. And it expands the perimeter of those to whom we must do good.

It expands that. Yes, even the one we would like to instead get even with. Notice that the good we are exhorted to do is not only to fellow believers, but to all.

- [30:44] To all. So then, Paul says in Galatians 6 verse 10, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially those who are the household of faith.

To the household of faith, but to everyone, let's do good. Yeah, but like Paul, do you know the context? Do you know what they're doing to us? Do you know what they've done against us? Paul says, let's strive to do good to all.

Doing good to all. number four, second last, penultimate, we're almost there, continue in piety, or pursue godliness if you like a more contemporary expression.

Pursue godliness. The fourth category of instruction is from verse 16. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Piety is an old English word that just means godliness or godly living. Here we are encouraged to continue in piety.

- [31:47] Notice the words associated with these acts, with these pious acts, these godly acts. Firstly, what are those godly acts mentioned here? Well, they are, as we see in verse 16, rejoicing, praying, giving thanks.

And notice the words that are associated with them always, without ceasing, and in all circumstances. What Paul is commanding here must be done continuously.

Now the instructions here are all connected. As you can see, this is not just loose instructions, these are all connected. And Paul counters the temptations of verse 15 to retaliate.

He counters the temptations of verse 15 to seek vengeance to get even with the piety and the godliness of verse 16.

In other words, in order to not be vindictive, in order to not seek vengeance, in order to resist the temptation to get back, the Christian is called to rejoice always, to pray continually, and to give thanks in all circumstances.

- [32:56] Did you see how those two verses are connected? pray always. Yes, Paul, but I need to suspend this very quickly because I need to deal with that thing quickly.

No, no, Paul says pray always. Rejoice always. Yes, but you don't understand, my joy has just been taken away by this person's attitude towards me. No, rejoice always.

Give thanks in all circumstances. While I'm not particularly grateful now because of what just happened. What's the circumstance? Paul says give thanks in all circumstances.

The spiritual resources to resist vengeance and a spirit of vindictiveness are given to us. Rejoicing, praying, giving thanks.

These are wholesome and good instructions for the Christian to generally follow, but they are especially necessary when faced with the situation where we've been wronged, where people have mistreated us and circumstances have dealt us and unfavorable outcome.

[33:58] It is then we must rejoice. Pray through that and give thanks despite it all. So we are told in this passage, this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

This is the will of God. Yeah, but impulsively and intuitively when there's this wave of wrong, this is my will. Paul says this is the will of God for you.

We live against the carnal expectations. The will of God goes against our natural impulses, goes against our carnal expectations, goes against the contemporary view of what must be done in such a situation where we've been wronged.

The word of God says this is what must be done. And finally, the last set of instruction that Paul gives from verse 19, I call this worshipping in spirit and in truth.

We read, do not quench the spirit, do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test them all, hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. Firstly, the spirit is emphasized here, of course, we see in verse 19, do not quench the spirit.

[35:17] I want to say that the final set of instructions is an exhortation to live in the spirit and truth, or as Jesus put it, to worship in spirit and in truth.

As we said, the spirit is not opposed to truth, or for that matter, instructions. He's given us 14 instructions at least in this section here. The spirit is not opposed to instruction.

So Paul can say, do not quench the spirit, and then immediately associate prophecy a form of truth to it. In fact, do not quench the spirit, and do not despise prophecy, go together quite comfortably, and they even explain each other.

The way these believers tended to quench the spirit was to despise the truth, was to despise prophecy. The spirit is the agent by whom we receive biblical revelation and truth.

He's the one who gives us prophecy. Now, what the context here teaches us is that there was confusion and uncertainty regarding end time prophecy in these two epistles.

[36:23] Especially as it relates to the coming of the Lord. You'll notice if you go back home, which I'm sure you're going to do, and you're going to go read 1 Thessalonians this afternoon after lunch, and if you read every chapter carefully, by the end of each chapter, you can go check this out at home, at the end of each chapter is a reference to the coming of Christ.

Chapter 1 is a reference to the coming of Christ, chapter 2, chapter 3, in fact, chapter 4 is mostly about the coming of Christ, chapter 5 has references to the coming of Christ. And so, this idea of Christ's coming, the prediction, the prophecy that Jesus will return was a very real and impressive, it was impressed upon them, truth.

Some perhaps became indifferent towards these words and the prophecies of Christ's coming and Paul warns them to not despise prophecy. It is a form of quenching the Spirit.

Hostility toward the Word, toward prophecy, toward the Scripture, is hostility toward the Spirit. Our life in the Spirit must be a life in the Word, in the truth, a life open and receptive to God's Word.

If it says that Jesus is returning, we believe this. Yeah, but when and how and it's been said before, we believe this. We don't become indifferent to this.

[37:46] We don't cast this off as some imaginary tale that we tell ourselves when things get hard. This is the truth. This is basic Christian doctrine. Jesus Christ will return.

He will come. He will come again. Also, we see, we have here, we see here that life in the Spirit is not a life open to anything and to everything that claims to be spiritual.

What does Paul say here in this passage? Paul says, test everything. Because we are now in the territory of prophecy. And the particular prophecy in mind is the prophetic word about Christ's return.

And so in the realm of prophecy, Paul says, don't be gullible. Test everything. This has always been the standard for evaluating what is from the Lord. Test everything against the word of the Lord.

spiritual people do not merely receive everything claiming to be spiritual. Spiritual people are discerning people. They are testing people.

[38 : 49] They are people who evaluate. Why do we discern? Why do we test everything while we are told here? Because we need to know what we must hold on to and we need to know what we must abstain from.

What builds us up and blesses us and what breaks us down and corrupts us. We have to conclude and as we conclude, I want you to see the references to Paul's audience here.

We see it in verse 12, brothers and sisters. We see it in verse 14, he identifies them as brothers and sisters. We see it in verse 25 again, brothers and sisters.

We see it in verse 26 again, brothers and sisters. Now if you're reading the NIV, you'll see it there, but it's implied in the other Bibles, of course. What does this tell us?

The church is part of one family and the implication is that we have been redeemed by Christ, united to his body, and that he makes us family.

[39 : 50] These instructions are for how to be a Christian family. Brothers and sisters, right? Brothers and sisters language, give it away. How to be a Christian family.

And it already presupposes the previous work of Christ who saved us, who rescued us, and who brought us. And in other words, and this is very, very important, especially as we've looked at 14 different kinds of instructions, this is very important.

In other words, these instructions are not for entrance into the family of God. That happens through Jesus Christ and faith in him alone. These instructions are for those who have already by grace and faith been brought into the family.

We don't do these instructions to get in. We get in through faith in Christ. Christ, but once we are in, we are given the word of God that regulates and governs our lives, not only towards him, but also towards each other.

And verse 23 teaches us that even this happens through the work of God. may God himself, says Paul, the God of peace sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[41 : 02] The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. So in case we are overwhelmed by these instructions set before us this morning, take heart.

He will do it. Take heart. He has already done the work to bring you in and you will do the work to see that as you are in his family, that you regulate your life not only towards him, your father, but also towards your brothers and sisters in this one family of God, the body of Christ.

Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you for your word open before us this morning and we thank you for teaching us, Lord, we thank you for the precious gospel promises that we have, that if we believe in you, you will forgive us our sins and secure our eternity, that if we trust in you, Lord, we will live with you in peace and with blessed assurance.

We thank you for all of these wonderful gospel promises, that we have a living hope, Lord, and we also thank you for the gospel instructions, the instructions of how to live our lives, Lord, for we know not, Lord, but you teach us, and so I ask that you would help us to take to heart these instructions to honor those who are over us, to help the weak, to do good to all.

Oh, Lord, help us to pursue godliness. Oh, Father, help us to live our lives in spirit and in truth, honoring your word and not despising those portions we may become indifferent towards.

[42 : 44] And so we ask that you would give us strength for this as we pray and ask you these mercies in Jesus' name. Amen.