**Community Group Discussion Guide**

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-28**

**Sermon Overview**: This sermon will emphasize the rapid-fire commands given to Christians in the way we relate to one another. We will be challenged to consider each command and how the Lord is calling out one in our lives today.

*Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28*

*Set the Context…*

**Context**:

In the final verses of chapter 5, Paul prepares to conclude his letter to the Thessalonians. He shares a final set of instructions and encouragements with them. He outlines how Christians are to live their lives, view and treat authority, admonish those who are idle, pursue peace, love one another, and trust in the hope of Christ Jesus. Paul’s message is twofold in purpose: (1) teach believers how to live as Christ commands, (2) encourage believers that Christ is enough and is faithful.

**Commentary:**

As Paul prepares to complete his first epistle to the church at Thessalonica, he outlines the importance of those in leadership within the local church and gives an account for how each Christian is to act and respond to such authority. He writes, **“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you”** (v.12). Paul acknowledges the responsibilities placed on leadership within the church to lead, labor, and admonish. Similarly, he gives an account for how the body of believers and the individual believer is to respond to such authority — **“esteem them very highly in love because of their work”** (v.13). Paul continues from v.14-22, and then in v.25-28, exhorting believers in how they are to live and act. (e.g**. “admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all”**). Every command deals with how Christians are to bear one another’s burdens and help one another become all that Christ has called us to be. He also exhorts those who have experienced immense persecution to remember that as Christ followers “***no one repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone***.” (v.14) This portion of Paul’s letter, similarly to Ephesians 4, emphasizes the importance of living worthy of the manner to which Christ saved the Christian for and called the Christian to. In v.25-28, Paul also gives explicit directions to the Thessalonians on praying for one another, reading his letter aloud publicly, and how they are to greet one another. Paul states that the purpose behind these directives is for sanctification and so **“your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (v.23). Beautifully stated, Paul reminds both the Thessalonians and us that the Christian can obey these commands and grow in Christlikeness not out of pure will power, but rather because **“He [Jesus] who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it”** (v.24).

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them* and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …

**Key Points:**

* Respect those the Lord has placed over you (v.12-13)
* Live in a manner worthy of your calling (v.14-22, 25-28)
* Know Christ is faithful and enough (v.23-24)

**Discussion and Application Questions:**

Verses 12-13

1. How do we/can we acknowledge and recognize those the Lord has placed over our lives?
2. What are ways we can grow in showing respect to those the Lord has placed over us?
3. Do we acknowledge that when our pastors “admonish” us, they do so out of love and duty? How ought we respond if/when this occurs?
4. How can we be intentional to respect and live out the imperatives of this passage (v.14-22), when being taught, corrected, rebuked, or admonished by those the Lord has placed over us?
5. In v.13, What does it mean to “esteem them highly in love,” and why is it important to “be at peace among yourselves”?

Verses 14-22, 25-28

1. In light of recent events in our nation and city, how can you work this week to encourage the fainthearted and remain patient when doing so?
2. Paul says to “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances…” (v.16-18). Why does Paul emphasize *always* remaining focused on Christ? Discuss implications…
3. How does your witness (i.e. living out your faith in word and action) impact those around you, and how can you implement what Paul is saying in these verses to have a positive witness?
4. Of these exhortations which one convicts you the most? How can you address that with faithful action this week?
5. Paul states, “Do not quench the Spirit [or] despise prophecies, but test everything…” (v.20-21). How does knowing your Bible and growing in Christlikeness aid in what Paul is saying here?

Verses 23-24

1. Why is it important to preach the Gospel to ourselves on a daily basis and be reminded of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished?
2. When we focus on Jesus’ faithfulness and the promise that “he will surely do it” (v.24), how ought it impact our actions and perception of life looking forward?
3. When we realize only through Christ Jesus can we obey the instructions given by Paul and truly “be kept blameless” (v.23), how is our understanding and response to Jesus impacted?
4. By keeping our eyes set on Jesus, we remain rooted in our faith. How does this reality affect the way we respond and interact with lostness in the world around us?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28…*

**Prayer Guide:**

* Pray for our church that we would love our pastors well, submit to their authority, glorify Christ in our words and deeds, and remain faithful to pray diligently for one another.
* Pray for our city that they would encounter authentic Christians living on mission, would see Christ in and through us, and be taken captive by God’s grace—turning from darkness to light.
* Pray for our world that they would see an outpouring of love and faithful obedience among Christians, and in response, come to have a saving relationship with Christ.