

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT – PART 3 –  
THE SHEEP’S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CHIEF SHEPHERD

--1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 5:16-18--

INTRODUCTION:

In Paul’s concluding section of 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, he exhorted the church on Christian conduct. These exhortations have been grouped into relationships that exist in the church and how we are to conduct ourselves in those relationships. Paul began with the relationship of shepherd and the flock under his care. Next, he exhorted the Thessalonians on the inter-relationship of the sheep, or how we are to conduct ourselves toward others in the church, especially towards those sheep who are struggling.

Today we will look at a third relationship, the relationship between the sheep and the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. What is our responsibility in our relationship to the Lord Jesus? This is the most important relationship that we have within the community of the church. If God’s flock is to be healthy, then the relationship between the sheep and the Chief Shepherd must be right. Paul gives three exhortations or commands for us to obey. These are not Paul’s commands, but what God expects of His sheep.

- I. CONSTANTLY REJOICING (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:16)
- a. Paul begins with our duty to \_\_\_\_\_ always. (Psalm 32:11; Habakkuk 3:17-18; Philippians 4:4; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:12-13)
  - b. Paul understood the existence of negative human emotions like sorrow and distress, but he also knew that believers could rise above their sorrows with a continual \_\_\_\_\_ on true joy.
  - c. The phrase “\_\_\_\_\_ always” translated literally means “at all times be rejoicing.” (Romans 8:28)
  - d. When we have a right understanding of biblical \_\_\_\_\_, we are provided with numerous reasons to rejoice.
    - i. First, we can rejoice always in gratefulness for God’s \_\_\_\_\_ character. (Psalm 28:7)
    - ii. Second, we should rejoice always out of appreciation for Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ work.

- iii. Third, we can always rejoice in the ministry of the Holy \_\_\_\_\_ on our behalf.
  - iv. Fourth, we who belong to Christ can rejoice always because of all the spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ that we have in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3-14)
  - v. Fifth, we should rejoice always in God’s providence as he directs everything for our \_\_\_\_\_ to bring us into conformity with His Son. (Romans 8:28-30)
  - vi. This verse leads us to the sixth reason we should rejoice always and that is because of our \_\_\_\_\_ in God’s promise of future glory.
  - vii. Seventh, we should always rejoice over \_\_\_\_\_ prayer. (John 16:24)
  - viii. An eighth reason to be always rejoicing is that God has given us His \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalm 119:111)
  - ix. Ninth, we should rejoice always for the privilege of genuine \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Timothy 1:3-4)
  - x. Tenth and finally, we should always rejoice at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel, just as the early church did. (Acts 15:3)
- e. The always rejoicing believer is more concerned about \_\_\_\_\_ God than worrying about and fretting over temporal difficulties.

- II. CONSTANTLY PRAYING (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:17)
- a. Rejoicing sheep are also \_\_\_\_\_ sheep.
  - b. Jesus Christ is our example of praying without ceasing, we witness His faithfulness in \_\_\_\_\_ during His time on this earth. (Luke 22:41-44)
  - c. The emphasis of the \_\_\_\_\_ of prayer is clearly seen throughout the New Testament. (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 3:10)
  - d. The emphasis on prayer in Scripture must mean that there are many \_\_\_\_\_ for Christians to pray without ceasing.
    - i. The first, and what should be the highest motive for prayer is to \_\_\_\_\_ our Lord. (Matthew 6:9-10)

- ii. Second, a desire to \_\_\_\_\_ with our Lord and Savior should motivate us to pray. (Psalm 41:1-2)
- iii. Third, believers pray that God might meet their daily \_\_\_\_\_. (Matthew 6:11)
- iv. Fourth, we are to pray and ask for \_\_\_\_\_ as we live in this sinful world. (James 1:5)
- v. Fifth, the need for \_\_\_\_\_ is another reason to pray and it motivates one to pray. (Jonah 2:1-2)
- vi. Sixth, we are motivated to pray to receive \_\_\_\_\_ from fear and worry. (Philippians 4:6-7)
- vii. Seventh, we may pray out of gratitude for the \_\_\_\_\_ we receive from God's hand.
- viii. Eighth, we pray to be freed from the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin. (Psalm 32:5)
- ix. Ninth, out of concern for the \_\_\_\_\_ we should pray without ceasing for their salvation.
- x. And finally, we should pray without ceasing for our own spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ and for the spiritual growth of our brothers and sisters in Christ. (Ephesians 3:14-21)

### III. CONSTANTLY THANKFUL (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:18)

- a. Paul's final exhortation is for us to give \_\_\_\_\_ in everything. (Romans 1:21)
- b. To be a Christian and be \_\_\_\_\_ is spiritually abnormal. (Romans 8:28)
- c. When the early \_\_\_\_\_ met, one of the main purposes was to give thanks.
- d. Paul's letters remind believers to be thankful and express their \_\_\_\_\_ thereby setting themselves apart and distinct from the ungrateful, unbelieving culture around them. (Ephesians 5:3-4; 5:18-20; Philippians 4:6-7)
- e. Paul ends these three verses with this statement, "...for this is God's \_\_\_\_\_ for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18b, NASB95)

### CONCLUSION:

Christian conduct is Paul's concluding topic as he wraps up this first letter to the Thessalonians. He wants to make sure that they understand how they are to conduct themselves in the relationships which exist in the church. He began by speaking about the relationship between the leaders and the congregation, then he spoke about the relationship between the members of the church, specifically in regard to those sheep who were struggling with the congregation. This morning he began to look at our most important relationship within the church and that is our relationship with the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. If this relationship is not right, then the church cannot be healthy. Paul exhorted us to do three things to be in right relationship with the Lord Jesus, or to be in God will. We are to constantly rejoice, we are to constantly pray, and we are to constantly be thankful. These three we must do for they make up God's will for us who are in Christ Jesus.