

## CHRISTIAN CONDUCT – PART 1 -SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

--1<sup>st</sup> THESSALONIANS 5:12-13--

### INTRODUCTION:

After dealing with the Thessalonian believers' concerns on the Rapture and the Day of the Lord, Paul finishes this first letter with a series of exhortations for those in the church. Paul has already commended the church for their faith, for their love for one another and for their service but with each of those commendations he urged them to excel still more. As he finishes out the book, he is going to tell them how they can excel still more, and it has to do with their Christian conduct within the community of the church and the relationships which exist within that community. He begins in verses 12-13 giving them direction concerning the relationship between pastors and those in the church. Paul sees this relationship between a pastor and his flock as crucial if the church is to be healthy. If the shepherds and the sheep do not fulfill their spiritual responsibilities to each other, the church cannot be what God intends it to be. Paul gives responsibilities to the shepherd in relationship to the sheep and gives responsibilities for the sheep in relationship to the shepherd.

- I. THE SHEPHERD'S RESPONSIBILITIES (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:12-13)
  - a. Let's begin with the shepherd's \_\_\_\_\_ in relation to his flock.
  - b. As we come to these verses, we find Paul gently \_\_\_\_\_ his readers to follow his instructions.
- II. SHEPHERDS LABOR AMONG THE FLOCK (1 Thes. 5:12b)
  - a. Paul in verse twelve says that pastors are to diligently \_\_\_\_\_ among the flock.
  - b. The apostle Paul is the ideal \_\_\_\_\_ of such a hard-working, attentive shepherd. (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:6-7)
  - c. When Paul was giving his farewell exhortation to the Ephesian elders, he reminded them several times of how diligently he had \_\_\_\_\_ among them. (Acts 20:18-20, 31, 33-35)

- d. The apostle Paul is the ideal example of the diligent \_\_\_\_\_ that should be characteristic of every shepherd. (Eph. 4:12-13)

- III. SHEPHERDS EXERCISE AUTHORITY (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:12c)
  - a. The second responsibility for the pastor that we see in these verses is in the end of verse twelve where Paul writes that they "...have \_\_\_\_\_ over you in the Lord..." (1 Thessalonians 5:12c, NASB95) (1 Peter 5:1-4)
  - b. The phrase "in the Lord" emphasizes that shepherds are not \_\_\_\_\_, and their authority does not come from fallible human beings.
- IV. SHEPHERDS INSTRUCT (1 Thessalonians 5:12d)
  - a. The third responsibility that Paul gives to the shepherd is that he gives \_\_\_\_\_ to his flock.
  - b. Paul, then, is saying that shepherds are to be skilled \_\_\_\_\_ of the Word of God. (1 Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:7-9; Eph. 4:11-16)
- V. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SHEEP (1<sup>st</sup> Thes. 5:12-13)
  - a. Have you ever wondered why Scripture compares those who have put their faith in Christ to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - b. When believers do not obey the Lord's commands or submit to the leadership of His appointed leaders, they can make life in the local church \_\_\_\_\_ and unproductive.
- VI. SHEEP APPRECIATE YOUR SHEPHERDS (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:12b)
  - a. The first responsibility of the sheep towards their shepherd is that "you \_\_\_\_\_ those who diligently labor among you." (1 Thessalonians 5:12b, NASB95)
  - b. As \_\_\_\_\_ it is easy for us to be unkind, critical, and indifferent toward a pastor that we do not know them well.
  - c. Appreciation also involves giving those who diligently labor among you \_\_\_\_\_ support. (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Cor.9:14)
- VII. SHEEP ESTEEM YOUR SHEPHERDS (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:13a)

- a. The second responsibility of the sheep towards their shepherds is that you \_\_\_\_\_ them.
- b. Paul increased this duty even further by telling the Thessalonian believers that they must have this high esteem for their shepherds in \_\_\_\_\_. (Galatians 4:14-15)
- c. God has called pastors and set them apart for the important work of \_\_\_\_\_ the church.

VIII. SHEEP SUBMIT TO YOUR SHEPHERDS (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:13b)

- a. The final responsibility that Paul has for the sheep toward their shepherds is to \_\_\_\_\_ to them.
- b. Many years, nearly twenty after Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians, the writer of Hebrews took up this same \_\_\_\_\_ and further expanded on the necessity of believers to submit to their pastors, their spiritual leaders. (Heb. 13:7,17)
- c. Paul's third exhortation to the Thessalonians is to \_\_\_\_\_ to their leaders so that they may experience peace, harmony, and unity as they worship and serve the Lord together for His glory.

CONCLUSION:

In the final verses of his letter Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to excel still more in their Christian conduct. He begins by exhorting them concerning the relationship that exists between the church and its spiritual leaders. For the local church to function as God intended and receive His blessing, its spiritual leaders must be responsible to labor among the people, exercise God's authority over them, and provide instruction to them. At the same time, the people have obligations to appreciate their spiritual leaders, esteem them and submit to them. When the spiritual leaders fulfill their responsibilities and the people fulfill theirs, the church becomes the unified, joyful, peaceful, and healthy flock God intended it to be. Faithful shepherds and faithful sheep ministering together bring honor to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, advance the kingdom of God, and this all for the glory of God.