



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V25 N18

April 30, 2023

## NOT HOME YET

“Rules from the Sandbox”

1 Thessalonians 5:13b-15

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Kindness/Goodness

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

*“Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:15



How are others to be treated?

Occasionally we give people nicknames based on something peculiar in their past or particular to them personally. More often than not these names are not very flattering. Joseph was an exception. Because of his remarkable acts of kindness, the apostles preferred to call him Barnabas, which means “Son of Encouragement,” rather than Joseph. Mark 1:17 tells us that James and his brother John were given a name that means “Sons of Thunder,” leaving little doubt as to their dispositions. Likewise Joseph’s new name leaves little doubt as to his disposition. He encouraged his brothers and sisters in Christ through his kind *words* and *deeds*. *Encouragement* is kindness.

In fact he encouraged the whole church. Acts 4:32-37 tells us that no one did without in the early church because Barnabas and others who had them sold their houses and lands to provide for the rest of the Christian community. Barnabas sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles. His gift must have been exceedingly generous for Luke to draw special attention to it in his book. This suggests that he deserves to be viewed as the personification of the words the apostle John wrote decades later. He said, “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:17, 18). The fact that his faith was accompanied by good deeds (Jas. 3:14-18) confirms that the love of God was truly in Barnabas. *Generosity* is kindness.

He actually encouraged the man who attempted to destroy the church. Acts 9:26-28 tells us that after Saul was converted, he tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem to no avail. They were not prepared to welcome their persecutor into the fold! No one knows how long Saul would have remained an outsider had it not been for Barnabas. He took him in and vouched for him

before the others. Later when the number of believers exploded in Antioch, Barnabas went to Tarsus, found Saul, and brought him to Antioch where the two worked together for more than a year (Acts 11:22-26). *Empathy* is kindness.

He later encouraged a man who had earlier deserted him. For some reason young John Mark abandoned Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). When he wanted to take Mark with them on their second journey, Paul would not stand for it. Their disagreement was so sharp that they parted ways over Mark. Barnabas saw potential in Mark and was determined to help him realize that potential even if it did mean parting company with Paul. Ultimately Paul changed his mind and affirmed Mark’s value (2 Tim. 4:11). *Affirmation* is kindness.

If the story of Barnabas strikes you as too general to be very helpful – perhaps you’re looking for a list of specific random acts of kindness – here’s a list of ways, some quite obvious, to be kind to others: 1) Practice good manners, e.g., remember to say, “Please,” “Thank you,” and “Excuse me;” 2) Be attentive to others, e.g., listen to them; 3) Offer to help without being asked; 4) Be present, e.g., give others your undivided attention; 5) Give to those in need to the extent you can; 6) Compliment others sincerely, e.g., applaud their admirable traits; 7) Pay it forward, e.g., pay for the order of the car in the drive-thru behind you; 8) Apologize quickly when you need to; 9) Run errands or provide transportation for others; 10) Greet people warmly with a smile; 11) Give someone else your place in line; 12) Clean up someone else’s mess, e.g., in the office breakroom; 13) Put your shopping cart back; 14) Call, text, or email someone you haven’t lately; 15) Be patient, e.g., give others the benefit of the doubt; 16) Respond to criticism *graciously* rather than *defensively*; 17) Accept, don’t reject, others who are not like you . . . and the list goes on. You can easily add to it.



## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Read 1 Thessalonians 5:13b-15

13b *Live in peace with each other. 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.*

### Read in other translations

13b *Live in peace with one another. 14 We urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek what is good for one another and for all people.* (NASB)

13b *Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all. 15 See that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all.* (NET)

13b *And live peacefully with each other.*

14 *Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.*

15 *See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.* (NLT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle “peace” in v. 13b.
- Circle “each other” in v. 13b.
- Box “and” indicating *conjunction* in vv. 14, 15
- Bracket “we urge you” in v. 14.
- Circle “brothers and sisters” in v. 14.
- Circle “warn” in v. 14.
- Underline “idle and disruptive” in v. 14.
- Circle “weak” in v. 14.
- Box “but” indicating *contrast* in v. 15.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about \_\_\_\_\_.”



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22 with Romans 12:9-21. How are they similar?
  2. To whom *exactly* does “each other” (v. 13b) refer? Put differently, identify who is to “live in peace.”
  3. Comment on the *ongoing* relevance of Paul’s command in verse 13b.
  4. Who *exactly* is expected to obey the listed commands in verses 14-15? Explain.
  5. Put what “the idle and disruptive” need and why in your own words.
  6. Put what “the disheartened” need and why in your own words.
  7. Put what “the weak” need and why in your own words.
  8. Comment on whom “everyone” refers.
  9. Explain the *contrast* in verse 15.
  10. **Discussion:** Talk about the *ongoing* relevance of the commands listed in verses 14-15 and the *practical* benefit of obeying them.
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## Commentary On The Text

Generally speaking, Paul's letters, like Greek letters in general, have three parts: an *opening*; a *body*; and a *closing*. Many of them include two other parts: a thanksgiving/ blessing sandwiched between the opening and the body; and *paraenesis* (pronounced pah-rên-a-sis)—a staccato list of seemingly unrelated practical and ethical exhortations— sandwiched between the body and the closing. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 contains, in the words of one writer, "*shotgun paraenesis*," which explains the following words of another: "This section at first sight appears to be something of a grab bag of miscellaneous exhortations and instructions. Scholars have long debated whether such sections in Paul's letters reflect specific issues in a particular church or are merely generic admonitions that have no intrinsic connection with the circumstances of the recipients. The observation that 5:12-22 have numerous parallels and similarities with Romans 12:3-18 has led some to conclude that here Paul shares with the Thessalonians traditional material applicable in a general way to any church" (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 177; see literary analysis in Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, BECNT, 376-81). What makes the passage hard to understand is determining how its short commands relate to one another and to the situation in the church.

Following the commands Paul gives to congregants regarding how they should treat their leaders (5:12-13a), we find seven commands he gives them regarding how they should treat each other (vv. 13b-15). The seven imperative verbs listed are as follows: "*live in peace*," "*warn those who are idle and disruptive*," "*encourage the disheartened*," "*help the weak*," "*be patient with everyone*," "*make sure nobody pays back wrong for wrong*," and "*strive to do what is good*." Paul isn't giving these commands to *correct* bad behavior but rather to *commend* good behavior—intended to prevent disorder and promote unity in the church.

First, Paul wants his readers to "live at peace with each other" (v. 13). The question is with whom? Put differently, to whom does "each other" refer—congregants and their leaders, or congregants among themselves, which would, of course, include their leaders? If verse 13 is connected logically by proximity to verse 12, which deals with how congregants are to treat their leaders, perhaps Paul has congregants and their leaders in mind. After all, leaders are the ones who "admonish" others, a potential source of conflict. One commentator writes: "'Live in peace with one another' may indicate that Paul was concerned to prevent needless conflict between the leadership and the congregation as a whole" (D. Michael Martin, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NAC, 171).

Second, Paul wants his readers to "warn those who are idle and disruptive" (v. 14). His introductory words, "we urge you, brothers and sisters" indicates that with respect to what follows he has congregants in general in mind. The term translated "warn" is the same one translated "admonish" in the previous verse, and it connotes *correction* and implies *culpabil-*

*ity* on the part of the one admonished. The recipients of the admonishment are to be those who are "idle and disruptive." The NIV uses two words to express the twofold connotation of just one Greek word (*ataktos*), which means to be "disorderly," "unruly" (NASB), or "undisciplined" (NET) in general, but can mean "idle" or "lazy" in particular. The term apparently alludes to the refusal of some in the church to work with their own hands so that they will not be dependent upon anybody (cf. 4:11-12). According to one commentator, Paul's reference to this minority "is best rendered as 'the rebellious idlers'—those who are not merely lazy but who also compound their sin by rebelliously refusing to obey the command of both their congregational leaders and even Paul himself" (Weima, 393).

Third, Paul wants his readers to "encourage the disheartened" (v. 14). The "timid" (NLT), "discouraged" (NET), and "fainthearted" (NASB) are those in danger of giving up following Christ. One commentator explains: "Either the adversity they suffered (1.6; 2.14; 3.3-4) or the death of the loved ones in the community (4.13-18) would have been sufficient reason for some of the members of the church to become greatly discouraged. The responsibility of the rest toward these people was to encourage them so that they would not lose heart in the midst of their worries. These people did not need to be admonished but persuaded not to give up" (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC, 253).

Fourth, Paul wants his readers to "help the weak" (v. 14). The term translated "weak" can refer to either *physical* or *spiritual* weakness—to either those who are ill, or to those who struggle to live lives pleasing to God (cf. 4:1). In either case, the strong are to be devoted to such troubled congregants, to hold them fast and support them.

Fifth, Paul wants his readers to "be patient with everyone" (v. 14). Here again there is a question regarding the referent of a word. This time it's "everyone." To whom does "everyone" refer? Given its proximity to the three preceding commands, "everyone" may refer to the three groups of needy believers just mentioned—the "idle and disruptive," the "disheartened," and the "weak" (cf. "be patient with all of them," NRSV). However, given the general applicability of "patience" as a virtue and a fruit of the Spirit, "everyone" is more likely intended in its broader sense.

Sixth, Paul does not want his readers to pay back wrong for wrong (v. 15). "Here is an allusion both to the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount [Mt 5:39, 44] and to his own remembered refusal to hit back [1Pe 2:20-23; 3:9]. All personal revenge and retaliation are forbidden to the followers of Jesus" (John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Thessalonians*, TBST, 123).

Seventh, Paul wants his readers to "strive to do what is good" (v. 15). Verse 15a is a categorical prohibition against repaying evil for evil (cf. Rom 12:17); verse 15b is an equally absolute command empathically stated "always" actively pursue "what is good." His command is not to *try* to do this if they can, but to *earnestly work* at it.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 13b *peace* I.e., “the absence of discord and the maintenance of harmony between persons (Sir. 28.9, 13) . . . This call to peace among the members of the community is rooted in the teaching of Jesus (Mark 9:50), and the call to live in peace with everyone, both inside and outside the church, became a common element of Christian moral instruction (Rom. 12.18; 2 Cor. 13.11; Heb. 12.14; ad see Rom. 14.17, 19; 1 Cor. 14.33; Jas. 3.18). *Peace* was considered one of the fruits of the presence of the Spirit in the life of the believer (Gal. 5.22; Eph. 4.3)” (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC, 251). “Though there is no grammatical link, logically the command to live in peace may continue the discussion of the congregation and its leaders in vv. 12-13a. The act of admonishing implies at least the possibility of conflict. And the need to instruct the church to hold leaders in high regard at least contemplates the possibility of the opposite happening. Understood in this light ‘live in peace with each other’ urges the people and their leaders to seek a relationship marked by ‘peace,’ that is, a relationship in which destructive conflict is absent and a sense of well-being pervades the church” (D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, NAC, 175-76).

v. 13b *each other* “The opening paragraph of 5:12-13 dealing with congregational leaders comes to a close with a command whose wording is somewhat uncertain. Did Paul originally write ‘Be at peace among *them*,’ that is, the congregational leaders (so Witherington 2006:161), or ‘Be at peace among *yourselves*’? The manuscript evidence is virtually equal (see additional notes), with many significant witnesses containing the simple pronoun ‘them’ (*autois*) and many other significant witnesses containing the reflexive pronoun ‘yourselves’ (*heautois*). But while the external evidence is evenly divided, the internal evidence suggest that the reflexive pronoun ‘yourselves’ is original (so nearly all translations and commentators)” (Jeffery A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, BECNT, 388; see also Gary S. Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, vol. 13, ZECNT, 220).

v. 14 *we urge you* Cf. v. 12. Paul seems to use the words translated “ask” (v. 12) and “urge” (v. 14) *synonymously* (cf. 4:1). “The introductory statement ‘we urge you, brothers’ (v. 14) marks the beginning of a new paraenetic section (cf. ‘we ask you, brothers,’ v. 12) . . . ‘We urge you brothers’ (v. 14) and ‘we ask you, brothers’ (v. 12) are parallel, each introducing a paraenetic unit. The formula in v. 14 leads to a series of imperatives that continues through v. 22. [Present imperatives often convey a *general rule for life*.] Both vv. 12-13a and vv. 14-15 deal with relationships in the church. Both address matters that could cause considerable

disruption in the fellowship if handled with a contentious spirit. If v. 13b is not connected with vv. 12-13a, it may function as a bridge between the two areas of concern” (Martin, 176).

v. 14 *brothers and sisters* Lit., “brothers” (ESV); “brothers and sisters” (NASB). Paul is either addressing the whole congregation (see Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT, 209; also Weima 391; Martin, 177) or to the leaders among the congregation charged to “admonish” its members (Gary S. Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, vol. 13, ZECNT, 221). The majority of commentators favor the first interpretation.

v. 14 *warn* “While the verb (which in 5:12 the NIV renders as ‘admonish’) can carry a positive sense (e.g., Rom. 15:14), here it clearly includes a note of disapproval (cf. 1 Cor. 4:14)” (Michael W. Holmes, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 180). “Admonishing is correction administered either by word or deed. It implies blame on the part of the one admonished” (Robert L. Thomas, “1 Thessalonians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, 288).

v. 14 *idle and disruptive* Cf. “unruly” (NASB); “undisciplined” (NET). “The word ‘idle’ (*ataktous*) refers to someone or something that is out of order. In an active sense such a person is unruly or insubordinate. In a passive sense such persons are not doing what they ought and thus are lazy or idle. The brevity of this imperative makes it impossible to determine which meaning Paul had in mind” (Martin, 177). Some commentators are inclined to the *active* sense (e.g., Holmes, 180; cf. NASB); others to the *passive* sense (e.g., Weima, 392; cf. NLT); the NIV includes both senses, “idle and disruptive.”

v. 14 *weak* “The ‘weakness’ can involve moral temptation, spiritual shortcomings, physical weakness, or economic need” (Holmes, 180). “That the two previous groups whom Paul mentions were troubled in their moral conduct or religious character suggests that the third group similarly refers to those who are *spiritually weak* (so most commentators)” (Weima, 394).

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## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Believers are to patiently meet the needs of others while making sure they always do what is right for everyone else.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

My family seems to live in constant chaos, one of the many reasons we're referred to as the Thomas Tornado. Most of us are loud with big personalities that tumble over each other. Our home has a revolving door with kids plus friends constantly coming in and out, eating, playing Mario Kart, wrestling through chores, and taking ice cream runs. It's a beautiful mess. I remember going over to a friend's house and all three of her children were playing quietly in their respective rooms. It was silent and they seemed to be living at peace with one another. Or were they just living in separate rooms? Peace isn't necessarily the absence of conflict as much as it is the ability to resolve conflict in a manner that honors God. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit and characteristic of living in "one-another" community. Our first and most important "one-another" community is the family. Because living with siblings is excellent practice for living with the outside world, we need to help our kids learn to live at peace with one another and with us. There is a proper time for loving admonishment, encouraging the downhearted and helping the weak, and it's our job to help our kids identify that time as well as learn the proper response to challenging situations, how to be patient and give up their right to be right. We can't teach what we don't know, however, so our first step is to take inventory of ourselves. Do you model these qualities in your home? Ouch. I'm praying the Holy Spirit will move me toward peace. I'll pray for you, too!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:13b-15.

1. How should we each live with one another?
2. What does Paul say we should do?
3. What does Paul say we should *not* do?

### What Do You Think?

What does it really mean to live in peace with other people?

### What Do You Do?

As a family, come up with a code word to help remind you to take a break when conflict arises. When you say the code word, everyone should stop and pray for peace. Practice using the code word and praying this week.

## CORE COMPETENCY: Kindness/Goodness

I treat others better than myself.

## MEMORY VERSE: Romans 15:13

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

## KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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