

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
Huge Truths in Few Words

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

²⁵ Brothers, pray for us.

²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.

²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

—1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 (ESV)

vv 12 -13 – We ask you brothers...
more lit. – “we implore, make an earnest request”
There was a great need to hear this

To respect, appreciate your leadership
“and are over you” – more lit. those who are standing before you, who are leading by example
And admonishing – according to God’s word; not always well-received
“Esteem them exceeding in love” because of their work
This should be the relationship of a church with its leaders: love flowing in both directions,
all with appreciation and thanksgiving to God

Be at peace among yourselves – again, there were apparently some problems

v 14 – And we urge you...
“admonish the idle...” – more lit. the “out of line, unruly”
address with love and effectiveness the various conditions among believers; everyone is
never in the same condition

v 15 – See that no one repays evil for evil...
Should not occur within the church, it does
The body of Jesus Christ is no place for “getting back” at people
Beyond that, we are “always to seek to do good to one another” – this is the standard
And to *everyone* – not just within the church

v 16 – Rejoice always

No footnotes

and Paul wrote it

v 17 – Pray without ceasing

Unceasing be in prayer – the state of the Christian

v 18 give thanks in all circumstances

In everything give thanks

Again, no footnotes

For this is the will of God

All that has been mentioned so far

v 19 – Do not quench the Spirit

How would we?

Strife

Sinful behavior

Resistance to God; refusal to hear

Opposition to the Spirit's message

v 20-21 – Do not despise prophecies, but test everything

Prophecy – *forthtelling* and *foretelling*

How do we test?

God's word

Trustworthy teachers

Prayer

Experience/fruit

v 22 – Abstain from every sort of evil

There is no "list"

We are to honor Christ and turn our backs on sin of every kind

v 23 – Now may the God of peace...

Sanctification—and of the *whole* person—is God's work

May your whole spirit, soul, and body

—See special topic sheet: Body, Soul, and Spirit

vv 25-27

Pray for us

Greet one another in love

Be responsible and faithful to God's word

v 28 – the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you

Body, Soul, and Spirit

Men and women are three dimensional: body, soul, and spirit. People will always be three-dimensional, at least, beyond the Resurrection(s) and Judgment.

Body – everything that is “physical,” although it is not to be assumed that we have discovered everything regarding all that is physical in nature, including all types of energy. Everything that is of the earth.

Soul – Our soul is our being, our personhood. It is the part of us that is self-aware, that can reflect, that can look at ourselves from an outside perspective (e.g. “I’m not sure what I think about that.” “What kind of a person am I?”) It is the part of us that perceives transcendence—that sees “meaning” in physical occurrences—and reflects upon it, acts upon it, is influenced and guided by it. It is the part of us that has a conscience, that can understand right and wrong, that is creative, that desires to express itself. It is an inseparable part of what makes us to be created in God’s image. I *have* a living soul, and I *am* a living soul—there is some truth in both. But our soul – our being – needs light and life through the spirit.

Spirit – If our soul is *what* we are – a living person, created in God’s image - our spirit is *who* we are. Your spirit is “you”—all the non-physical things that make you to be you. It is real and is its own entity. It is eternal. It is you. And it is in our spirit that we most engage (or not) with God—person to person. “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”¹ “For God is my witness, whom I serve *with my spirit* in the gospel of his Son.”²

You have spiritual existence and spiritual relationships and ownership. If a person is unsaved, his spirit is under bondage to the spirit of this world. When a person is born again—a new person—a new spirit—is born who has fellowship with God and who is no longer under the power of sin, the spirit of the world. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”³

The Holy Spirit dwells within us believers along with our own spirit. Indeed, His Presence in us is the very Presence of Christ and the seal of our salvation. “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”⁴ “But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.”⁵ “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?”⁶

Our spirit largely defines us. Even though we know that angels have bodies—or can have bodies—they are also described in scripture as “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the

¹ John 4:24

² Romans 1:9, emphasis added

³ John 3:6

⁴ Romans 8:16

⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:17

⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:19

sake of those who are to inherit salvation.”⁷ We know that the Lord Jesus certainly has a body—although it is a glorified body—but even about him, the apostle Paul writes that while “the first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit.”⁸ And he also writes “For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”⁹ And in speaking of heaven, though the redeemed will have bodies, the Bible says that “you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly¹⁰ of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and *to the spirits of the righteous made perfect*, and to Jesus...”¹⁰

There is an entire realm of creation, which we cannot perceive with our senses, that consists of beings who are spirits. These are not “influences.” These are living, acting, power-exerting beings. Some are good; some are evil. We do not understand the relationship of spirits to bodies or even to physical space. Spirits, including our own, may not “take up” physical space at all, in the way that we normally understand that. But we do know that multiple spirits are able to occupy a single body—in some circumstances, in the case of evil spirits, even against the will of the one whose body it is. And the body of a believer is shared by the Holy Spirit and his or her own spirit.

Spirit is, if anything, more “real” than matter. Our inability to perceive what is “spirit” with our five senses should not mislead us. God, who is Spirit, created matter!

We are in a battle over the souls of men. But those battles are fought first and foremost in the spirit.

⁷ Hebrews 1:14

⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:45

⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:11

¹⁰ Hebrews 12:22-24, emphasis added