

# Christian Essentials 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24

by J.R. Miller

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of love, joy, prayer, and consecration to God, as outlined in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24.*

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:14

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Duties"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the essential duties of Christians as outlined in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24, urging believers to warn the idle, encourage the timid, and support the weak with patience and kindness. He highlights the importance of joy, continuous prayer, and gratitude in all circumstances, asserting that these elements are vital to a Christian's life. Miller also warns against quenching the Spirit and encourages believers to test all teachings against Scripture, avoiding every form of evil. He concludes with a prayer for sanctification, reminding that God is faithful and will help believers live blamelessly until Christ's return.

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## Transcript

"We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle!" There is a duty of warning others. We may not always speak words of commendation and approval. When people are living in a disorderly way, that is, not in harmony with the Word of God--they are to be admonished. We must make sure, however, that we do this in the spirit of Christ, in love, in order to help those we admonish. No other duty requires more wisdom--than that of telling others of their faults.

"Encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone." Then we should always be encouragers, for there are many timid, faint hearted people who continually need to be lifted up and helped onward. We should never be discouragers of others--but always encouragers. There are those, too, who are weak and need the strength and support which we can give them. The strong should help the weak. We should bear each other's burdens. We are also to be patient to all, no matter how they may treat us. It is not easy--but we are not Christians, if we are not trying to live after this law of love.

"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else." The teaching of Christ also requires us to render always good for evil, never evil for evil. This is a very practical counsel, and it is never easy to follow it. Yet it is an inseparable part of all Christian life. If one contends for the heroic in Christian character, nothing could be more heroic than this. To return love for hate, kindness for injury, is far braver than to be angry and resentful, demanding satisfaction. We should always follow that which is good, that is, we should think ever of the good of others and in all things

make this our aim for them. Anything that would injure or harm another, is absolutely un-Christian.

"Be joyful always!" Joy is never to be left out of any scheme of Christian life. We are to rejoice not now and then only--but always. Even sorrow should not hush the songs in our hearts. This element of joy can be only in the life in which Christ lives and rules. There is difference in people in the matter of joyousness--but true Christian joy is not that which nature inspires--but the joy which comes from the heart of God--and which nothing ever can overcome or destroy.

"Pray continually!" Prayer is another essential element in every true Christian life. Not to pray--is not to live at all as a Christian, for prayer is 'the Christian's vital breath'. The exhortation to pray without ceasing, may seem a strange one. It means, however, that our communion with God never need be broken, never should be broken. We cannot be always on our knees; for we have work to do, duties to perform, which we may not neglect, and which are just as sacred as praying. But we may pray at our work, by keeping always close to Christ, so that anywhere, any moment, we can look up into his face and speak to him and get an answer.

"Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Thanksgiving should never be lacking in a Christian life. It is not enough to observe one day in the year for 'Thanksgiving' although that is a beautiful thing to do. Nor is it enough to put a sentence of thanksgiving into our daily prayers, although that, also, is proper. It is the grateful spirit which pleases God, the spirit that is always full of praise. There should be a note of thanksgiving running through all our life.

Too many of us go to God only with requests, with our burdens, our worries, our troubles; while we but rarely go to him with any word of thanks. We are not to be thankful only for the pleasant and agreeable things that come into our days--we are to be thankful, too, for the things that appear to us to be adversities. "Give thanks in everything." That means,--in the sad days as well as in the glad days, when clouds are in the sky, as well as when the sunshine is pouring everywhere. It is said here that this is the will of God for us. The Christliest life--is the one that is always keyed to the note of praise and thanksgiving.

"Do not put out the Spirit's fire." It is the glory of our Christian life, that God lives in it. Paul said, "Christ lives in me." A fire burns in our hearts--which is fed from heaven. We live at our best--only when we let this flame burn brightly in us. We are exhorted here not to quench the Spirit. Fire is quenched by pouring water upon it, or by covering it up so as to exclude the air. The Spirit may be quenched in us by sin, by worldliness, by evil thoughts, by bad passions, by resistance. To quench this heavenly flame--is to put out the light of life, leaving the darkness of death within us.

"Do not treat prophecies with contempt." Prophecyings, in a general way, are divine teachings, the messages of God to us. The Bible is a book of prophecyings. All heavenly instructions, counsels, warnings, from whatever source, may in a sense be called prophecyings. We should keep in our minds and hearts always wide open to receive the Words of God and to welcome all divine influences and impressions and inspirations, whether they are spoken by the Spirit of God in his Word, or by a human friend who shares the Word.

"Test everything. Hold on to the good." Not all voices, however, that speak are divine voices. Not all words that fall upon our ears, are words from heaven. We should test all things, to see whether they are of God or not. Then we should hold fast only "to the good." We are to judge carefully between the genuine and the counterfeit. Put to the test of Scripture truth--all counsels that are given to you. Not all such counsels are

from God. We should make sure that the voice which we hear--is our Master's own voice, is the voice of one who counsels us wisely, and not the voice of a stranger speaking to us in heavenly words to draw us away from the truth.

"Avoid every kind of evil." Some professors are accustomed to think of some things as 'only slightly evil', while other things are very vile in their sinfulness. They appear to think, that if they keep themselves from the worse kind of sins--then they need not be so watchful against the minor forms of evil. They will not lie, nor steal, nor swear, nor do other things which would brand them in the eyes of the community, as 'wicked'. But meanwhile they are ungentle, unkind, selfish, bad-tempered, loving the world, and selfish. But Paul's exhortation is, "Avoid every kind of evil." We are not to pick out certain things and condemn these alone as evil, abstaining from them; meanwhile indulging in pet vices and sinful habits of our own. Whatever is sinful in even the slightest way--is to be avoided!

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23. This prayer for consecration is very comprehensive. It is that we may be sanctified, that is, set apart wholly for God and God's use. We belong to God, for he has bought us with a price, and we should make ourselves altogether God's--by keeping ourselves separate from sin and from the world. It is a prayer that our whole being--body, soul, and spirit, shall be kept pure and holy, amid all the world's evil; preserved entire, without blame, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may seem impossible for anyone to realize this high ideal of living. But the words which follow tell us how it becomes possible. "God, who calls you, is faithful; who also will do it." We are safe in this world, therefore, when God keeps us--when his sheltering, protecting love enfolds us.

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