

Four Biblical Obligations to Others

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources; Part One)

Introduction:

- A. 1Thes. 5:14 - "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."
- B. Background: 1Thessalonians and the church at Thessalonica:
 - 1. Acts 17:1-6 - Paul's experience at Thessalonica: he had some success and much opposition.
 - 2. The church was strong in many respects - 1Thes. 1:5-8
 - 3. Paul had a good relationship with them - 1Thes. 3:6-7
 - 4. Paul taught in the book:
 - a. Second coming of Christ,
 - b. Future of those Christians who had already died,
 - c. Not to fall back to their former ways,
 - d. Encourages them in their persecution,
 - e. In chapter five, he continues his discussion about the second coming of Christ and closes with practical admonitions.
- C. 1Thes. 5:14 - Exhorts (urges) them to do this.
 - 1. Addressed to all Christians, not just to preachers, elders, and deacons.
 - 2. Occasionally, members feel no responsibility to do what is stated here; these are responsibilities given to every Christian.

I. "WARN THOSE WHO ARE UNRULY"

- A. Unruly - "Disorderly, out of the ranks, (often of soldiers); irregular, inordinate from the prescribed order of rule." (Thayer)
 - 1. Originally a military term expressing the idea of soldiers who would not keep their ranks, but would break out of line.
 - a. Disobeying orders of superior officers, charging against orders, retreating from battle, general insubordination.
 - 2. Same word was used later in 2Thes. 3:6, when they were told to withdraw from the disorderly.
 - 3. Used to refer to Christians who do not keep the ranks, are neglectful of duty, are disorderly, or break out of God's prescribed order.
- B. Difficult to have an effective army when soldiers get out of line, leave the ranks, or are in a state of confusion.
 - 1. Some churches are like this; they are disorderly toward authority, break ranks, generate confusion.
 - 2. The effectiveness of the local church is reduced internally and in their influence in the local community.
- C. Unruly members are to be warned.
 - 1. "Warn" comes from a word which is also found in verse 12 and is translated "admonish."
 - a. It is the duty of all members of the church to help one another in this matter.
 - b. When we see someone walking disorderly, we admonish them.

- c. A soul is involved and at risk of falling into habitual sin.
 - d. A man is traveling down a road on which a bridge is out; there are no warning signs about this danger. Who is the real friend? The one who warns him the bridge is out, or the one who says, "I don't want to offend him; he might become angry with me if I tell him that he is going the wrong way, so I'll just say nothing."
 - e. "Yes, but he could lose his life." Yes, but he could lose his soul.
 - f. Even if he does not agree with the assessment of the one who comes to warn him, he should still appreciate the interest in his soul. If he does not, then he truly merits the discipline that will ultimately come to him.
2. We are far too afraid of causing offense, and too little afraid of the consequences of allowing sin to run its course.
 - a. Which is the right action: to speak to one who has been disorderly, or say nothing at all and talk about him to everyone else who will listen, to say behind his back to say things that we wouldn't speak to his face?
 - b. Admonition is better than gossip, but it is not easier, it is more difficult, it is more Christ-like.
 3. Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20
 4. Pray continually for those in sin.
 - a. Prayer will stop sin or sin will stop prayer.
 5. It is too easy to lose a soul; warning the unruly can help keep that from happening; let us make sure that we stay faithful ourselves and while faithful, make sure that we help others do the same.

II. "COMFORT THE FAINTHEARTED"

A. Who are the fainthearted?

1. Does not refer to those who are intellectually disadvantaged.
 - a. ASV, NASB - "encourage the fainthearted"
 - b. Refers to the discouraged, downcast, despondent, disheartened, and dispirited."
2. Every saint, from the strongest elder to the newest convert, needs to be encouraged from time to time.
 - a. Dr. Leonard Crammer, a psychiatrist who has specialized for 30 years in treating depression wrote, "The human being is the only species that can't survive alone. The human needs another human being; otherwise he will die. A telephone call to a depressed person can save a life. An occasional word, a ten-minute visit, can be more effective than twenty-four hours of nursing care. You can buy nursing care. You can't buy love." (DSM 3185)
 - b. "He Knew He'd Come" - There were two young men in World War I who had friends their entire lives. As neighbors, they grew up playing together, gone to school together, engaged in same athletic programs; finally, they enlisted in the army together and

were eventually in the same battle together. After a particularly bitter skirmish, it was found that one of the boys was missing somewhere in what was known as “No Man’s Land.” The other boy who was safe and unhurt went to commanding officer and requested permission to go out and look for his friend. He was told it was no use, for no one could be alive out there after the withering fire; but after much insistence, he was finally given permission to go. Later, he returned with dead body of his friend over his shoulder; the commander said, “Didn’t I tell you it was no use to go?” to which the boy replied with radiance in his eyes, “but it was not too late; I got there in time to hear him say, ‘I knew you would come.’”

c. That’s what comfort the downhearted means, to get there in time to lift them up. NO, You are NOT too busy! Make time.

B. Exhort is a similar word meaning a sincere urging which encourages the right to continue in the right and admonishes those who need to improve.

1. Heb. 3:12-13; Luke 3:18; Acts 20:2; 1Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:25

C. Ways to encourage others:

1. By expressing our concern for them or our confidence in them; by calling, a card, a personal visit, a passing remark.
2. A small act or word we may not think amounts to much, but may end up helping some in more ways than we may ever know.
3. Encouragement put me in the pulpit, and some days, keeps me in the pulpit. If it did that for me, what will it do for the person sitting in the next pew who is struggling just to come once in a while?
4. There are times when we need to warn the unruly, but there are other times when we need to comfort the fainthearted.
5. Sometimes people need stern words; sometimes they need kind words.
6. Encourage new converts, young people who are trying to improve, weaker Christians, and any who feel like “giving up.”

D. Pointing to examples of faith.

1. Paul reminded Timothy of the faith of his grandmother and mother.

E. Reminding them of what God has given them.

1. James 1:17; Eph. 1:3; John 3:16; Gal. 6:9