

✚ We are pursuing answers to the question, "What do we do while we wait on what God has for us." We are at the place where Paul starts listing things to do one after another. It is important in this process that we realize that people are different, and their needs are different, so the way we handle each one has to be different as well. "We urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek what is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always," **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:14-16**. This isn't going to be a perfect process, but we need to strive for perfection, which includes how we deal with each other. Not everyone is at the same place or can be dealt with in the same way.

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## 1. Paul outlines our differences for us.

- 1) Admonish the unruly or undisciplined. This must have been an issue in this church because Paul refers to it again in **2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:6-7; 11-13**. Doing nothing isn't "nothing," it is a sin: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." **Ephesians 2:10**. What works, were you created to do? We should then do those things for the Lord and His church.
- 2) Encourage the fainthearted or timid. We don't deal with people in broad brush strokes, some aren't doing much, not because they are undisciplined but because they are fainthearted. Instead of a "kick in the seat of their pants," they need an arm around their shoulder and a word of encouragement, "You can do this", "I see this capability in you."
- 3) Help the weak, literally, it says, "hold onto" them. Notice the different ways we deal with the same problem. If some aren't working and serving as they should, then they need to be rebuked, or another needs a word of encouragement, and yet another person needs to just be held onto. They are weak for any number of reasons. Maybe there is just too much happening in their lives at this time, they may be experiencing tragedy, brokenness, or illness, or maybe they are just young in the faith. You don't need the title of shepherd to be one, watch out for each other. Look out for the weak, and don't let them slip through the cracks.
- 4) Be patient with everyone. What a great thing to have on your to-do list! "I'm going to go out there and be patient with every last person." Wow, what a way to wait! Patience tends to be the first thing that goes away when we are waiting, isn't it? I think I've emphasized the necessity of allowing a lot of time during the process of finding a new pastor. The process will take more time than most of us think. I've heard stories about churches that have been through problems in the past by not waiting, being patient, and giving time for the Lord to settle our hearts and focus us. This will take a lot of patience and will require us to be patient with each other.
- 5) Don't return anything bad. What's the use of commanding that we be patient if we aren't really going to need it? As long as things are going as they should and in our favor everybody acts well, but make us wait, and the worst can come out in us. People should do what is right, show kindness, and keep their mouths shut. We should all act in love and do what's best, I agree! What happens when we don't? This is such a critical part of waiting. What do we do when we don't wait very well? The worst-case scenario is here in **Luke 6:27-28; 35-36**.

**If God only returned evil for evil, there would be no one left alive! God is merciful, peace-loving, kind, gentle, and patient. It will take these exact things for us to make it through times of change.**

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