



# Morningside Church

## Sermon Discussion Guide

**Title: God's Family Rules**

**Date: November 17, 2024**

**Scripture Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28**

### **Notes:**

You've heard it said, "rules are made to be broken". But for God's people to enjoy His blessings, His rules are made to be obeyed. For a family to function properly (biological family or church family), formal and informal rules help set expectations and encourage harmony. As the Apostle Paul concludes his first letter to the Thessalonians, he lays out a list of *rules* for his readers to do, which have as their foundation the need for unity. Without unity, edification ceases and evangelism falters. Let us look at *God's family rules*...

#### **I. God's Rules for Family Leadership (1 Thess. 5:12-13)**

God established the church to be under His authority (theocracy). He established a leadership structure within the church to oversee the teaching of His word and caring for His people, beginning with the pastor. The pastor's job is to '*labor*' (among the people) and '*lead*' (charge over, give instruction), i.e. servant leadership. Jesus repeatedly demonstrated this. In response to the pastor, the people need to '*appreciate*' and '*esteem*' him. This can simply be recognizing the pastor's God-given position and authority and to love him. The key is to find a pastor you can follow!

- Why is it important to recognize God's structure of leadership in the church?
- Describe what a servant leader is.
- What are examples of when Jesus demonstrated servant leadership?
- When have you seen a pastor 'laboring among the people'?
- What are practical ways to show appreciation and esteem to your pastor?

#### **II. God's Rules for Family Fellowship (1 Thess. 5:14-15)**

As a church family, we need to look out for one another, care for one another and encourage one another. There are five types of people Paul mentions in this passage that need extra attention: the wayward, the worried, the weak, the wearisome, and the wicked.

- **The Wayward** (unruly, out of step). They are to be admonished (cautioned, warned, gently reproved). What is it about the wayward that needs to be admonished? How can that be done in love?
- **The Worried** (fainthearted). These never see opportunity, only obstacle. How can encouraging them help them have a better perspective?
- **The Weak** (spiritually weak). These are individuals with spiritual struggles (drugs, alcohol, etc.). We are to help the weak (put your arms around). What are ways to help the weak to be fruitful members of God's kingdom?



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- **The Wearisome** (impatient with others). These have little patience with others, especially if they are different. What are ways to recognize the value everyone brings with their diversity of gifts and abilities?
- **The Wicked** (repays evil for evil). We need to remember Jesus' example of returning good for evil. His love transcended evil acts. How did Jesus return love for evil? How can we be more loving to the unlovable?

### III. God's Rules for Family Worship (1 Thess. 5:16-22)

We transition from how we interact with one another to how we interact with God. To have effective fellowship with God's family, we must have an effective relationship with God. Paul provides six rules for valuable 'family worship'.

- **Rejoice Always (vs. 16)**. This is a heart posture of praise. Experiencing joy independent of circumstances. How can we allow our circumstances to take away our joy?
- **Pray Without Ceasing (vs. 17)**. This is constant communication with God. How can we practically do that?
- **In Everything Give Thanks (vs. 18)**. There is always something to thank God for. How can a thankful heart give us a better perspective of our circumstances?
- **Do Not Quench the Spirit (vs. 19)**. Quench means to stifle or put the fire out. What are examples of people quenching the Spirit? How can you avoid stifling the Spirit?
- **Do Not Despise Prophetic Utterances (vs. 20)**. i.e. don't treat the preaching of God's word with contempt. What are ways contempt is shown for the preaching of God's word? Why is it important to treasure God's word?
- **Cling to What is Good, Abstain from Evil (vss. 21-22)**. Only God is good ([Luke 18:19](#))! What does it look like to 'cling' to God?

### IV. Closing Comments (1 Thess. 5:23-28)

Paul concludes his letter with a benediction ([vss. 23-24](#)) and exhortation ([vss. 25-27](#)).

- How would you summarize Paul's closing comments?
- Imagine you were a member of the Thessalonian church; how would Paul's closing comments encourage you to follow what was written in this letter?
- What are ways you can be an encouragement to others?
- How can the church be impacted by us following *God's family rules*?