**1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28**

***Rapid -fire encouragement for Christian living***

 As we read this letter, one thing that stands out is how positively Paul speaks to and about the Thessalonians. He repeatedly gives them high praise. Also in this final section, his tone is remarkably positive. Note how he twice addresses them as brothers.

 His main encouragement is to do good rather than focusing on fighting off sin. In verses 12-22 there are no less than 17 commands. Of these, only 2 (v. 19-20) begin with “Do not”. (A couple of others deal with avoiding sinful behavior.) “It is a formidable list of commands which Paul has penned here by inspiration of the Spirit. One writer has called them the jewels which crown a Christian’s life.” (Kuske)

 As you strive to live a Christian life, do you focus more on avoiding sin or doing good? What difference does it make?

**Verses 12-13**

 Respect spiritual leaders. What are the reasons cited for doing that?

 Live in peace with each other. How does focusing on this, rather than focusing on fighting off holding grudges or other such sins change how we will react to each other?

**Verses 14-15**

 Note how all these commands are directed at how we are to treat others – not so much at our own activities.

 How do these commands tie in with living at peace with each other?

 How especially does warning each other help keep the peace?

 We are to be kind to all. Why do you think Paul talks about two groups: each other, everybody else? A kindness killer is assuming we know 1) the whole story; 2) people’s motives.

**Verses 16-18**

How do these three commands follow on the previous ones?

 What is the one thought in each command that ties all three together?

 Is joy an emotion or an attitude?

 These commands are especially striking considering the situation that the Thessalonians were in. Agree or disagree: If you neglect to do one of the three, it will be difficult to do the other two.

**Verses 19-20**

 How do these commands continue the thoughts of the previous verses? What is the most common way people put out the Spirit’s fire or treat the Word with contempt? People who quench the Spirit’s fire will experience what kind of fire? Who has the primary responsibility for a person staying in the faith?

**Verses 21-22**

 These verses serve as a good summary. Christians need to be discerning! And on their guard – test *everything*. Satan, the terrorist, is trying to attack us in every conceivable manner.

**Verses 23-24**

 How do these verses progress the thought? Is blameless different from sinless?