

LIVE IN PEACE

1 Thess.5:13-15 contains a list of seven characteristics of a healthy church congregation. They are listed by the following seven Greek present imperatives.

- **Live in Peace** (eireneuo/ p.a.impv.2pl) – 5:13a
- Admonish (noutheteo/ p.a.impv.2pl) – 5:14a
- Encourage (paramutheomai/ p.m.impv.2pl) – 5:14b
- Help (antechomai/ p.m.impv.2pl) – 5:14c
- Be patient (makrothumeo/ p.a.impv.2pl) – 5:14d
- See (horao/ p.a.impv.2pl) – 5:15a
- Seek (dioko/ p.a.impv.2pl) – 5:15b

During the next seven weeks, we will be studying each of them.

These commands are directed at common problems within the congregation hindering harmony and unity.

Four of these common problems are identified as unruly (ataktos), fainthearted (oligopsuchos), weak (astheneo), and repaying evil for evil (apodidomi kakos anti kakos).

These 7 commands offer solutions to these problems resulting in harmonious relationship within the congregation.

The first command is part of a transitional sentence shifting the attitude of the congregation away from the pastor-teacher towards their attitude towards one another – *“Live in peace with one another.”*

This lesson will study SIX aspects of LIVE IN PEACE. The Hebrew (shalom) and Greek (eirene) words both emphasize a reconciled relationship from spiritual hostility to spiritual peace.

1. God is the source of spiritual peace within mankind (Rom.1:7; 1 Cor.1:3; 14:33; 2 Thess.1:2; Rev.1:4-5).

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord.” (Heb.13:20)

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess.5:23)

“God of peace - a fitting reference to God in view of verses 12-15. But Paul often refers to God in this way at the end of his letters (Rom.15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor.14:33; 2 Cor.13:11; Phil.4:9; 2 Thess.3:16).” (NIV, 1 Thess.5:23)

2. God’s peace is offered to the human race on the basis of the propitious death of Jesus Christ in order to reconcile mankind from the 13 judicial charges of AOS [alienation, blind, condemned, curse of law, darkness, death, enmity, natural man, perishing, slavery, ungodly, unrighteous, and wrath].

This was declared in the Christmas hymn, “Gloria in Excelsis Deo (Luke 2:14). It was prophesied in Isa.53:5 – “punishment that brought us peace was upon Him.” (Acts 10:36)

Jesus Christ was God's final peace offering for the world's sin – "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom.5:1)

3. There is NO peace with God apart from faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom.1:16; 1 Cor.15:3-4).

Peace with God is given on the basis of grace salvation through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Eph.2:8-9, 13-17).

"And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of the cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds." (Col.1:20-22)

The gospel of Jesus Christ is referred to as the gospel of peace because it is the instrument of God's reconciliation (removal of the barrier of AOS) (Rom.10:15; Gal.6:14-16).

"And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." (Eph.6:15)

"Peace be to you all who are in Christ." (1 Per.5:14/ positional truth/ John 16:33)

4. The spiritual advancing believer operates in the CWL under the principle of the peace of God by means of the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit and the faith cycle.

FHS – (Gal.5:22-23; Rom.8:6-7; 14:17; 15:13).

FRT – (John 20:19,21; Isa.26:3; Phil.4:6-7; Col.3:14-15; James 3:17-18; 2 Pet.1:2; 3:14)

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." (John 14:27)

5. Living in harmonious peace within the local church is a sign of spiritual maturity (1 Thess.5:13) (Mark 9:50; Rom.14:17-19; Eph.4:2-3; Col.3:12-14; 2 Thess.3:16; 1 Pet.3:11/ Psa.34:13-14).

"If possible, so far it depends on you, be at peace with all men." (Rom.12:18)

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." (Col.3:15)

6. Satan attempts to counterfeit God's peace with cosmos peace.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Human freedom (DI#1) is the greater issue not world peace. Satan lies about peace apart from God. For example peace treaties between nations offer a short interlude from war (Matt.24:6; Luke 12:51; 1 Thess.5:3; James 4:1-4).

The Millennium will be a time of universal peace on earth after the Prince of Peace returns (Isa.9:6-7; Rom.16:20; Rev.20:1-3; Isa.2:1-4; Hos.2:18-20).