
OUR HOLY AND ETERNAL SERVICE

CHRISTIANS BUILDING CHRISTIANS:
SERVING GOD IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS
(1 THESSALONIANS 5:8-11)

I. Building *Guan Xi***II. “Therefore, Encourage and Build Up One Another” (1 Thess 5:8-11)**

- A. Summary of previous lessons:
1. Our holy and eternal service to God begins now (Rev 7:15).
 2. We become a one-God kind of people by remembering that God has saved us from slavery to belong to him (Ex 20:1-3).
 3. God requires his people to serve him in the Lord’s Day worship (Jn 20:19-23).
- B. The context of 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11:
1. Paul was writing to a newly-founded church in Thessalonica.
 - a. Thessalonica was the second-largest city of Greece.
 - b. Thessalonica was a commercial and religiously-pluralistic environment.
 2. The letter has two major sections:
 - a. Paul’s report on his interactions with the Thessalonians (2:1-3:13).
 - b. Paul’s exhortations to the Thessalonians (4:1-5:11).
 3. Paul’s exhortations comprise several elements:
 - a. He exhorts the Thessalonians to avoid sexual sin (4:1-8).
 - b. He exhorts the Thessalonians to live in brotherly love (4:9-10).
 - c. He exhorts the Thessalonians to live lives of quietness and diligence (4:11-12).
 - d. He teaches the Thessalonians about the how Christians dead and alive will respond to the return of the Lord (4:13-18).
- C. “Let us be sober” (5:8).
1. Paul has already made two facts clear:
 - a. The Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly (5:2).
 - b. Christians are “children of the day” (5:5)—they belong to the new order that God will bring at the return of Christ Jesus.
 2. In view of (1), Christians must choose sobriety.
 3. Christians have already put on God’s armor—faith, love, and the hope of salvation.

- D. Why we have the hope of salvation (5:9).
 1. God has not destined us for wrath.
 2. God has not destined us to obtain salvation.
 3. We obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- E. What our Lord Jesus Christ did for us (5:10)
 1. Christ died for us.
 2. Christ’s death guarantees our future resurrection.
- F. Therefore encourage and build up one another (5:11).
 1. The word “therefore” links v 11 back to vv 8-10.
 2. We must “encourage” (*parakaleite*).
—Encouraging speech is strength-giving speech.
 3. We must “build up” (*oikodomeite*), “strengthen,” or “edify.”
 - a. Up-building/edification is a central idea in Paul’s understanding of the church.
 - b. Ephesians 2:22: We “are being built together” into God’s house.
 - c. Ephesians 4:11-13: God equips his holy ones for the work of ministry, “for building up the body of Christ.”
 - d. Ephesians 4:15-16: The body “builds itself up in love.”
 - e. The ministry of encouragement-edification is the most basic intra-church ministry.

IV. Redeeming *Guan Xi*—for the Building of God’s Church

God wants to redeem our relationships with one another. He wants to use our relationships to build up our fellow Christians. In so doing, God builds up his temple in the world.

- A. Encouragement is not a ministry only for old ladies and homemakers.
1. It is the central, internal ministry of the church.
 2. A church that does not have a positive, active, and vibrant ministry of encouragement amongst its members will over time become a cold and abrasive church.
- B. Building up is primarily word-based ministry—you actually need to talk!
1. You need to talk because our God is a talking God.
 2. Yes, we must love in deed (1 Jn 3:18).
 3. But we must love in speech too (Eph 4:15).
- C. What do we talk about? We must reinforce in one another the following truths of God’s word.
1. God has destined the present evil age for destruction.
 2. God has destined us for salvation.
 3. God has destined us to obtain salvation through Christ.
 4. Christ has died for us to ensure our salvation.

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- D. *Who* needs to hear those up-building words?
1. Struggling Christians
 2. Hurting Christians
 3. Failing Christians
 4. Hurtful Christians
 5. "OK" Christians
- E. Imagine a Providence without a vibrant culture of encouragement.
1. It will be a casual and "administrative" Providence.
 2. It will be an "academic" Providence.
 3. It will be a critical and censorious Providence.
 4. It will be an unhelpful Providence.
 5. It will be a cold Providence—"The Chosen (but Frozen) Ones."
- F. We build a vibrant culture of encouragement only when we recognize...
1. The pervasiveness of our own sinfulness
 2. The abundant grace of God in Jesus Christ

Will you

*—with full recognition of God's persistent patience toward you,
and with full reliance on God's abundant grace toward you*

—take active steps to begin to be an encourager to your brothers and sisters in Christ?

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