

I. NOW WE EXHORT YOU, BRETHREN

A. Paul addresses believers as ones who will minister to one another.

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) [NKJV]

B. **Exhort:** Urge, admonish

1. In v. 12-13, Paul addresses the role of those who have been given a charge over them in the Lord. Paul calls upon the brethren to recognize these leaders, esteem these highly in love.
2. In vs. 14, Paul exhorts brothers and sisters in the Lord, the brethren.
 - a. In the past, some have used the term “Body-life” to refer to the ministry of each Christian to each other. This is analogous to the various members of the human body ministering to one another to maintain health and life.
 - b. i.e. it is not the job of the mouth or the hand to do the work of the rest of the human body. The mouth and the hand cannot do what the other organs and members of the body are meant to do. The members are all connected and depend on each other.
3. Ministry is not something that the leaders or paid-staff of a church are called to. We must move away from the model that someone is paid to do the work. Yes, they have a unique leadership role, but their work is to equip the believers to minister to one another, so that the church will be built up and grow.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11-12)

4. It is the saints who do the work of ministry. We are all ministers and have a ministry, whether we have discovered it yet or not. This ministry is for the edifying, building up of the body of Christ.
- C. How are we exhorted to minister to one another? Ministry must be matched to the particular needs of the people. A “one-size-fits-all” approach does not work in ministering to one another.
1. Warning, encouragement, or care? Each is appropriate in different situations.
 2. This is also important when we receive ministry from others. What do I need to get to the place God wants me to be at in my walk? Sometimes we need to be warned.

At other times, we need comfort and encouragement. We should not expect the same type of ministry at all times.

II. WARN THOSE WHO ARE UNRULY

- A. **Unruly**: lit: out of order. Disorderly, slack (in performance of duty). Idle and disruptive, lazy. It is a term used to describe military term signifying the marching soldier who does not keep in proper step. Thus, it refers to those who are out of line. It could also refer to those who were able to work but refused to do so (1 Thes. 4:11; 2 Thes. 3:10).

The lazy man says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!" (Proverbs 26:13)

1. Those who neglect their daily duties need to be stirred up to action.

⁶ But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. (2 Thes 3:6, 7, 11)

2. Busybodies: to bustle about uselessly, to busy one's self about trifling, needless, useless matters.
3. Our lives can become "out-of-order." Life doesn't work properly when we step out of God's order. Our lives can become "unruly" and we lose control of the rule of our lives and we become controlled dominantly by our impulses and immediate needs. God has an order to lives, not to limit us but to allow us to come to the fullness, to live life to its limits.

- B. **Warn**: admonish, counsel, exhort. One commentator (A.T. Robertson) translates it as: "put sense into."

1. The person in this situation either does not know what God's order is, or more seriously, does not want to be under God's order.
2. We must come alongside them and warn them. This does come not from the spirit of judgmentalism or superiority. We warn people by showing them the consequences of their conduct.

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness [lit: gentleness, meekness], *considering yourself lest you also be tempted.* (Galatians 6:1)*

3. It's not a harsh: "Mr., you are out of line!" Rather, questions can be helpful: "How are you doing with...? Where do you think that is going to lead? How do you feel

about that? I'm concerned for you and where you are headed. He has a better way for you, a way that life will "work."

4. We should not warn someone unless we have prayed for them and we can say it with gentleness and respect. Unless tears or prayers have preceded our warning. I don't have an agenda in it. It needs to flow out of God's love in us.
5. The person who is unruly does not need someone to comfort them and say: "grace, grace." Which we mean, that we will not judge them. In doing this, sometimes we can hinder our participation with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can be seeking to bring godly conviction to the person and we can be speaking false grace over them.
 - a. Grace is God's goodness, favor, and power which He bestows on people. Grace actually imparts God's enabling power (to our inner man to walk in righteousness and to function in ministry). This is counter to the way grace is understood by some.

III. COMFORT THE FAINTHEARTED

- A. **Fainthearted:** timid. It comes from two Greek words "small" and "soul." "small-soul" or "short of soul" or "little-heart" or "small courage", especially to those who were self-denigrating, who had a low opinion of themselves.
 1. "Feeble-minded" is not the best translation because that implies a mental deficiency. Paul is saying that we should encourage those who have no courage.

Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you." (Isaiah 35:4)
 2. The fainthearted become discouraged easily and can lose heart, drop out, quit, run away, or isolate themselves. They need cheering up, encouragement to press on and not quit in the Christian life.
 3. The fainthearted often hate change. Challenges discourage them rather than causing them to arise to the occasion. They prefer tradition, the way things have always been done. They fear the unknown. They worry about everything. They only love what is safe. They may seek for a risk-free life of security. They fear opposition. There is no spirit of adventure. They cannot get above the problems of life.
- B. **Comfort:** encourage, (Message: gently encourage), console, exhort. This means to come alongside them and to console, comfort, strengthen, reassure, cheer up, refresh.

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

1. We are not just in a relationship with God to get our needs met. We are called to be in God's army. The Bible uses the metaphor of a soldier to describe our role in God's order.

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:3; c.f. Phil. 2:25; Philemon 1:2)

2. Those who are fainthearted are not in need of a warning like the unruly. The fainthearted know where they need to head, but they do not have the courage to get there. They need to be reminded that all that they need has already been given to them in Christ Jesus. The All Sufficient One dwells in you!

Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:6)

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

IV. UPHOLD THE WEAK

A. **Weak**: Lit: without adequate strength, without vigor.

1. Weak in faith in the New Testament can refer to those who do not experience the freedom that belongs to them in Christ. They are hyper-sensitive to sin. They think it is sin to do certain things, even if it is not (e.g. eating meat sacrificed to idols). (c.f. Rom 14:1f; 1 Cor 8:7ff).
2. It can also refer to those who have no strength to stand on their own.

¹ Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

B. **Uphold**: Help, take tender care, "support", hold fast, hold to.

1. Those who are young in their faith need to be supported until they can walk on their own. The weak have not yet learned how to rely on the Lord on their own. Until they do, they need extra support from other believers. We must come alongside them and stand with them.

V. BE PATIENT WITH ALL

- A. **Patient:** be longsuffering, have patience, patiently endure. Lit: Long-of anger, long-suffering (sometimes translated: slow-to-anger)

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, (Ephesians 4:1-2)

1. Everyone needs patience shown toward them. There is no one who it ought not to be shown to. Sometimes it's easier to show patience to strangers than to our family members! But we are to show patience to all.
2. How patient should we be? As God is patient with us, we ought to be patient. We must not get discouraged. You sow and sow and sow, and you see so little result. Don't give up. Be patient.
3. Paul says that he does not judge even himself.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself...⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Corinthians 4:3-5)

- B. You are all ministers. You do not need an official title, business cards or an office to minister to one another.

1. A small group is a great place to build relationships for this to take place. 1 Thes. 5:14 is Difficult to do on just Sunday once a week.
2. You don't necessarily need a program or a structured meeting to minister. There are people in this room that need ministry. Who is going to do it? Not the paid staff, or some elite Christian. We are the ones to minister in God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Be released to minister to one another. This is what being a church is about. Programs, events, trainings, etc. are all secondary to provide a context in which true ministry takes place.