

Human Relations 101

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[0:00] It's needful and truthful, no doubt, that we can apply it in our lives. 1 Thessalonians 5!

1 Thessalonians 5!

From verse 14 to 15. Paul's writing to the Thessalonians, he says, Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men.

Amen. Please be seated. How to treat other people. Paul sets out here some duties for God's people in dealing with other people. Human Relations 101, really, isn't it? It's how to deal with other people.

[1:24] And firstly, we see the first group of people mentioned here, the unruly. The unruly. It tells us here, warn them that are unruly.

Warn them. Now the sense here is, be warning. Be warning or carry this out continually. Warn and keep on warning, is the sense of it here.

Warn them who? That are unruly. Be warning them. In other words, give new heart to them. Instruct them. Caution them.

Reprove them. Exhort them. There's a sense where some people need to be warned and brought into accord. Warn them. The unruly.

Who are the unruly? The unruly, we could describe it as the disorderly. The grumbling fault finder. The disobedient.

[2:20] The lazy. The rebellious. Those who are not living right. The unruly. Literally, it's out of order. Like a soldier out of step.

You know, when the sergeant's saying left, they go right. Left, right, left, right. They're out of step and they're out of sync with the rest of the company of soldiers altogether.

They're unruly. They're out of accord. They're out of line. Out of step. Out of order. The grumbling fault finder. Unruly.

You know, sometimes churches have such a one or two or three and they come and they grumble and complain and sow discord and cause angst and disruption and disorder.

The Bible says, warn them. Warn them that are unruly. Strong words. If someone's out of line, we have a duty to warn them. Now, this is written to the Thessalonians.

[3:18] There's an instruction from Paul. For all of us, when there's someone that's unruly, there's a sense where we need to urge them to get back into line.

To get back in sync with the saints, with the church of God. Helpful criticism can be called for.

Helpful criticism. You know, there's constructive criticism, isn't there? Where we want to urge one another. Warn one another. Exhort one another. When people get off into error.

We know that that can happen. We've had that in our church. Some people have come and they brought contrary teachings. They're quite unorthodox teachings.

Teachings that are not in accordance with sound biblical doctrine. Teachings that are not in line with our stand as a church but come from some other persuasion.

[4:15] Teachings that are extra biblical where they're adding to the word of God or trying to twist and turn things in a disorderly way.

And so when people get off into error, they can cause much harm and disruption. And we know as our Lord is the shepherd, the great shepherd, the good shepherd. And we as shepherds, as sheep, we need to be cautious and warned of wolves.

The Lord says through Paul that there were some that will come amongst them as wolves amongst the sheep. And so we need to be warned of the danger of wolves.

You know, for those that live in the rural areas, wolves, foxes are a very real danger to the sheep. And so they need to be dealt with.

And likewise too, when someone is unruly, out of accord, there's a danger there. Now if we have a child at home, we warn them of hazards, don't we?

[5:25] When there's a hot stove, when there's trip hazards, when there's different dangers in the home place, it's incumbent on us as older people, as parents, grandparents, to warn the child of the hazards.

Because children can so easily stray into danger. And I was talking to someone of late of where there's a steep piece of ground and a child could easily stray there and fall down and hurt themselves.

And so there's need to warn of hazards. It's for people's safety. And so likewise with the unruly.

When someone's out of accord, they need to be constructively brought back into accord.

Now the Bible talks very much about the sowing of discord as a very serious matter and something that we should be very much against. And so when we think of the hazards in the home, how much more the dangers of sin, how much more the dangers of false doctrine.

Now we see the word tells us of sound doctrine. And when it's not sound, when it's not wholesome, it's doctrine that's in error.

[6:37] It's false doctrine. So where does false doctrine come from? It comes from Satan. You know if it doesn't accord with the word of God, if it's out of accord with sound doctrine, it's of the enemy.

So it's a very serious thing. How much more the danger of sin, of false teaching. What does it say in Isaiah? Cry aloud. Lift up thy voice like a trumpet.

Show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins. Isaiah 58 verse 1. We need to take this word seriously, the word of God, and apply it and get ourselves in alignment with God's word.

And we can exhort one another. Exhort one another we're called to do that. So there's a time where you might exhort me and help me keep on track.

We're helping one another, exhorting one another. And so much the more as we see the day approaching, the day of the Lord. God says in Ezekiel 3 verse 18, The prophet Ezekiel was given a very straight word there from the Lord, that we are to warn the wicked.

[8:12] There's a responsibility and accountability that we all have. Needful warning needs to be sounded. In Ephesians 5.11 it says, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Rebuke them. Reprove them. Warn. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Speak against them. There's time to stand up and be counted and stand against some things.

You know, there's one preacher of old that I heard say, I'm against some things. And there's need to be against some things too. Of course we preach for the truth, but we preach against error.

We preach against sin. We preach against falsehood. Because we've got an enemy that's on the attack. We need to stand fast. So it tells us here, Warn them that are unruly.

One of the kinds of people we deal with in life are the unruly. Secondly, we see the feeble-minded. It says we are to comfort the feeble-minded. Now, this word comfort, it's got the sense of encouragement.

[9:24] Cheer up people. Encourage people. The feeble-minded. Who are they? It could be they're easily discouraged. We see such people, don't we?

All around us. People that are downcast. It's like they've got the weight of the world on their shoulders. The fragile. You know, I was talking to a brother just before about the epidemic of alcoholism.

Where we're seeing youngsters not long out of school, or maybe still at school, getting drunk, and hanging around the railway stations. They're fragile.

They're easily discouraged. And some people turn to the bottle to cheer themselves up. But it just leaves them with a hangover. It just leaves them empty.

The feeble-minded. People are fragile. Fretful. Worried. The faint-hearted. Easily discouraged. We see people like that.

[10:27] Where it's like the slightest thing will upset them and unsettle them. And make them unsteady. The timid.

Many are like this. The Bible says to encourage such the feeble-minded. Encourage those that are feeble, that are weak and faint-hearted. Maybe struggling in their faith.

We need to come alongside them. And that's the sense of it here, of the comforting, of that praying for one another. Perhaps there's people in your circle of influence. People that you know that are in this category, if you like, of the feeble-minded.

People that need some encouragement. Life's dealt them some pretty hard things. They're under the pump. They're struggling. There's people like that that you know.

Pray for them. Pray for one another. Love one another. Be kind and comforting. Encourage one another. All the more as you see the day approaching.

[11:31] Build each other up. We're all called to that. We're all going to have those times when we're feeling a bit feeble, a bit frail, a bit fragile. Give courage. Give hope.

Share a scripture. Share a word of encouragement. Come alongside. Encourage. It means to give courage. Courage, says Webster's Dictionary, is that quality of mind which enables one to encounter danger and difficulties with firmness or without fear or fainting of heart.

Valor. Boldness. Resolution. Courage. And this word encourage, it means to give courage to. Give courage to.

Inspire with courage. Inspire with hope. Raise up. Lift up. That quality of mind that enables one to encounter danger or difficulties.

We're to give courage. We're to comfort those that are discouraged. Those that lack hope. We're to give hope. Build each other up.

[12:43] It's got that sense of increase the confidence of. Now there's some that just need that gentle encouragement. Those words of friendship. Of care. Of giving time.

To enhearten people. To help. Encourage. Is the opposite of discourage, isn't it? How easy it is to say a discouraging word.

When rather. Let's choose to use encouraging words. I know there's a brother here that encourages me with the scripture. To speak evil of no man.

Now find something positive. Find something uplifting to say. Rather than to speak evil of people.

Now that's the devil's work, isn't it? The accuser of the brethren. Let's not speak evil of one another. But speak life. Speak encouraging words. Encourage one another. How often are we to be encouraging? Hebrews 3.13 tells us how often.

[13:44] Hebrews 3.13. You might want to just turn there. To that scripture. How often. Are we to encourage one another? Hebrews 3.13.

Hebrews 3.13. Verse 13. I was looking at Hebrews 13.3.

Then I got a bit dyslexic there. Hebrews 3.13. It says. Take heed therefore. Brethren. Take heed. Brethren. Lest there be in any of you. An evil heart.

Of unbelief. In departing from the living God. Verse 13. But. Exhort one another daily. Exhort one another daily. While it is called today.

Lest any of you be hardened. Through the deceitfulness of sin. So find an encouraging word.

Today. Day by day by day. Whichever day is called today.

[14:40] Today. Encourage. Exhort one another. Daily. How can we do that? Give a word of praise. You might think of something positive to say to somebody.

Who needs that uplifting word. Express your thanks. Give appreciation. These are ways that we can comfort the feeble minded.

We can encourage. There was a man who quoted a legend. Where at one time God decided to reduce the weapons in the devil's armory to one.

And Satan could choose which one it would be. Which of those fiery darts he would keep. And he chose this one weapon. The power of discouragement.

He chose discouragement. He said if only I can persuade Christians to be thoroughly discouraged. He reasoned. They will make no further effort.

[15:42] And I shall be enthroned in their lives. Discouragement. Doesn't the devil use discouragement? He's discouraged me in the past. I think we can all think of times when we've got discouraged.

We've felt downhearted. We've felt like it's too hard. We've felt like it's hard going. Everyone discouraged. And the devil just loves to use discouragement.

It's a powerful thing. Now some people get so discouraged. We know people ourselves. Christians that we've known. That have got discouraged. Something upset their apple cart. Somebody offended them.

Someone looked at them sideways in church. And they've given up on church. How strong is their faith? If something such as that would discourage them. And yet how we can help by encouraging. Encouraging. Encouraging the discouraged. Because the devil loves that tool of discouragement. That weapon. That fiery dart. It's a powerful thing. Discouragement. Rather overcome it with encouragement.

[16:42] With encouragement. There's a story here of a preacher. A teacher who told the story of a gorky 14 year old boy.

He lacked confidence in himself. 14. Gorky. Whatever that means. One memorable day his Sunday school teacher said to him.

I believe you have significance. Your life is going to amount to something. It's just an encouraging word. You know we have that opportunity. Those that minister to the children.

And the young people in this church. Your life is going to amount to something. They took time to give an encouragement. And later as a 30 something. He became a pastor of a church of about 300 people.

And the staff was one and one third. And he was the one. And his part time secretary was the third. Within five years. There were 25 salaried staff. Including seven pastors.

[17:38] And the attendance about 1,000. And this preacher says. I was that boy. And that privileged pastor. When I'm asked how this Baptist church got to be like that.

I usually name one key factor. That this church was a church of encouragers. There was rarely heard a discouraging word. No Sunday would pass in the last few years of our ministry. There were without my pockets bulging. With affirming notes from people. Sometimes we'd incorporate an encouragement segment into a service. And write encouraging notes to others. What a blessing. Someone could have given up on that 14 year old boy. And just written him off. That he wouldn't amount to anything. But the teacher took time to give him an encouraging word. And he's carried that through. Through his ministry. And so when we think of encouragement. We think of coaches. What coaches do. Down at the sports field. When a coach gives personal encouragement.

[18:41] And positive words. He can lift a whole team. To a higher level. Of performance. And that's just in a worldly scheme of things. Encouragement can do wonders.

Even in that natural world. World that we all live in. There was a man who was involved in a terrible car accident.

And they got this man out of the car wreck. They freed his mangled body from the mangled car. And there was so little life left.

That he was almost given up for dead. And when the surgeons had finished their work. There remained only a wreck of a man. Both his legs were gone. The left arm was missing together with part of the collarbone.

Only a finger and a thumb remained on the right hand. There was only enough left of this man. That had been. To suffer. And remember.

[19:38] Who he was. But he still possessed a brilliant mind. Enriched with good education. And broadened with travel. And it was all wasted.

There was nothing he could do. But remain a helpless sufferer. Bed bound. Suffering. But a thought came to him. A thought came to this man.

It was always nice to receive letters. But why not write them? He could still use his right hand. With some difficulty. But who could he write to? Was there anyone.

Shut in and incapacitated. Like he was. Who could be encouraged by his letters. He thought of men in prison. They did have some hope of release.

Whereas he had none. But it was worth a try. So he wrote to a Christian organisation. Involved in prison ministry. And he was told that his letters could not be answered.

[20:38] It was against prison rules. But he commenced this one sided correspondence. So he would get his pen and write a letter. He wrote twice a week.

It taxed his strength to the limit. To write this letter twice a week to the prison. But into those letters he poured his whole soul. His experience.

His faith. All his wit. All his Christian optimism. His hope. And it must have been hard writing those letters. Often in pain. And particularly when there was no reply.

Frequently he felt discouraged. And he was tempted to give up. But it was his one remaining activity that he could resolve to do. And he did resolve to do it.

To continue to do it. As long as he could. At last he got a letter. It was very short. Written on prison stationery by the officer.

[21:36] Whose duty it was to censor the mail. This one who checked the mail. Took the time to write this disabled man a letter. And all the letter said was this.

Please write on the best paper you can afford. Your letters are passed from cell to cell. Till they literally fall to pieces. So those letters of encouragement.

That he never got the feedback. He never got replies from the prisoners that he wrote to. Those letters of encouragement meant the world to the people who received them. Brothers and sisters we should comfort or encourage the feeble minded.

Encourage people. Encourage people. Take time. Take those moments of time to encourage people. Write a letter. Write a note of encouragement. And lift up one another.

So we are to comfort the feeble minded. Thirdly we see another group. The last group. Specifically here. The weak. Support the weak.

[22:43] Be supporting the weak. Care for them. Lift them up. Strengthen the weak. Sustain them. Hold them up. Bear the burdens of the weak.

Those who are weaker than us. You know I think of some that attend our fellowship that are in wheelchairs. Brothers for example. We cannot. They cannot come to us.

We have to go to them. We have to have that heart. That thinking. That mind. He cannot come to me and say hello. I've got to go to him. And put myself out.

I've got to support the weak. I've got to support those who are weaker than me. Bear their burdens. You know there's people that as we fellowship sometimes you see one sat on their lonesome.

And it's about us to have that Christ like attitude and spirit. That heart. To reach out to those around about us. To take the time to care.

[23:43] To support the weak. To support one another. We can all be weak. I can be weak. The weak. That can include those who are sick. Those who are without strength.

The powerless. There could be some struggling in their Christian walk. Some going through burdens. Some going through heartaches and troubles. Difficulties.

Hardships. Support people. Support people. It's about us having that mindset to think who is it amongst us.

Or as we leave this place and as we go about our day by day activities. And the people in our workplace. Our home place. Our school place. Wherever we go. The people all around us.

Let's have the, as it were, the vision of Jesus, as it were. To put on, as it were, his, to see things through the lens of Christ. And see people as he sees them.

[24:42] As ever living, never dying, immortal souls. Who'll spend a time in eternity somewhere. And what an opportunity we have to support.

To find those people around us. Those people that need Christ. Those people that need the saviour. Those people who need relationship with God. How will they know unless we introduce them to our Lord?

People who need relationship with God. And we can do our part to introduce them to Christ.

Possibly the hardest of all in this scripture of 1 Thessalonians 5, 14 through 15.

Is the latter part of 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 14. Be patient toward all men. Be patient toward all men.

Now some people try your patience, don't they? You had people like that. People that try your patience. They just, oh, you just, they just drain you.

[25:52] And you just think, oh, I just find it hard to help some people. But yet we are to be patient toward all men.

That's a big call, isn't it? And when we think about the people that we rub shoulders with, you know, sometimes I can get a bit short-tempered. A bit impatient. And when you're in the queue, wherever it be, down at the shop or wherever you go.

And there's a queue. Or there's, you know, a shop assistant that may not be very helpful or whatever it be. It's easy to get a bit curt, a bit snappy, a bit fleshly, isn't it?

We can not consider putting ourselves in their shoes. Maybe they've had a bit of a hard day. And you're the straw that breaks the camel's back, so to speak. You're the last one that is going to...

And they're giving you a hard time because they've had a hard time. And so sometimes we've got to have that patience, that perseverance with all men. And how can we exercise that?

[26:58] It's where the rubber hits the road, isn't it? With those people that we've got to deal with. Some people that rub up against us and just make us a bit... They sort of get us annoyed and irritated.

It's possibly the hardest of all, isn't it? Be patient toward all men. Without exception. Without exception.

Be patient with everybody. In other words, don't get upset or angry when people bug you. You know, when people treat you unfairly. You know, we all have had those moments where some people that just attack or hurt us or misunderstand.

People that get riled up and hateful. Be patient toward all men. You know, it says, render not evil for evil.

But to follow that which is good. And the word tells us to overcome evil with good. Overcome evil with good.

[28:03] Don't fight fire with fire. When you've got those people that treat you unjustly and do your injury. Do good to them that despitefully use you.

It's counter-cultural, isn't it? What the word of God says. In other words, do what your flesh doesn't want to do. Do what your flesh doesn't want to do. Do what the spirit of God wants you to do.

Don't lose your temper. Don't lose your cool. Don't blow your witness. Don't give in to the natural fleshly inclination to get aggro and angry and frustrated with people.

But be patient toward all men. You know, I think just to capture these four truths and to put them into action. It just tests every bit of us, I think.

At times if we're really honest here. To treat people fairly. How should we treat people? Just to recap again. Simple truths, yet practical.

[29:03] These are tips and truths that we can put into our practical lives. With those people that we rub shoulders with through this week ahead. Now we exhort you, brethren.

Warn them that are unruly. Comfort the feeble-minded. Support the weak. Be patient toward all men.

See that none render evil for evil unto any man. But ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men.

Praise God. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that your word gives us practical truths for everyday life. And for the everyday people. We know that we all have different people in our lives.

And some test us more than others. Lord, we pray. Help us to have that hard attitude. To see people as you would see them. As those that you shed your blood.

[30:07] Those that you took our place. Lord, we thank you that we can have an eye to people of great value. That one soul is worth, outweighs the whole world.

That one soul, the value of one soul is more precious than anything this world can afford. Lord, we pray. If there's any here tonight that might be uncertain of their salvation.

They're not certain that they've trusted you, Lord, for eternity. To know for sure that they're saved. And that you have taken their sin and paid their penalty.

And that they've received that gift. That they might settle that tonight and trust you even now. And for each believer, Lord, we pray. As we live the practical life where, as it were, the rubber hits the road.

And we've got to put our feet into action in these days ahead. That each day you give us, we've got to rub shoulders with people.

[31:15] And deal with people. And we know some people are weakly. And some are feeble and frail. Some people are hurting.

Some people are out of line. And, Lord, help us to have the word that accords with each one. To warn and instruct people in truth.

To bring correction. Help us to bring comfort and care. Help us to have that heart that sees the weak and brings support.

And help us, Lord, to have that patience towards all men. So that our testimony will be strong. And there'll be a Christ-like patience in us.

In how we deal with other people. That they'll see you in us, Lord. Guide us, Lord. Help us to be responsive to your Holy Spirit.

[32:20] And, Lord, when the flesh wants to act one way, help us, Lord, to do the reverse of that. To do that which is spiritual. To do that which is godly. And we'll bring you praise.

And we thank you for these things. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.