

Called Up Last Things- Session #6 Small Group Notes

Introduction:

What was the best team that you have ever been a part of? What was the worst team? What did you learn from those experiences about needing others?

Are you the kind of person who accepts the help of others well, or the kind of person who finds it very difficult to accept help from others? Give an example.

Do you find it easier or more difficult to help others who are in dire need? Explain. Why can it be easier for us to give help than to receive it?

Discuss:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

Church members have an ongoing responsibility to respond properly to the spiritual leaders in their midst. According to Paul, we are to follow good leadership, receive admonition, and express high regard for godly leaders. Here is a great prescription for a healthy church. When the leaders and the people are in right relationship, how much easier it is for all the members of the congregation to be at peace with each other. Ultimately peace is part of the fruit that the Spirit works in our lives (Gal. 5:22).

Thus, Paul challenged the people in the church at Thessalonica to correct those who are out of step (the “unruly”); uplift those who are discouraged and fearful (the “fainthearted”); hold on to the fragile (the “weak”); and go the long haul with those who struggle (“be patient with everyone”). To know if the people around us fit into any of these categories, we have to do life with them; we have to be in genuine, deep relationships. These types of struggles are not evident on the surface.

Who would you say are spiritual leaders in your life? What commonalities do they share among each other? What are reasons and ways that we can place false expectations on spiritual leaders when it comes to our personal spiritual growth?

What must be true about your relationships in order for you to know if the people around you fit in any of these categories mentioned in these verses: unruly, fainthearted, weak?

What are the commands that Paul gives in these verses? What do these commands teach you about your responsibility that you have to each other as a part of the church?

2. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Once we understand the relationships that we share with each other as followers of Christ, we can then begin to understand the will of God in our lives and how it applies to the life that we live among the church. This requires steps of living in joy, praying often, and always giving thanks. Furthermore, we see as well that in order to express these patterns of living among one another, we also need to ensure that our perspective regarding our relationship with God and one another is not stifled by either quenching the Spirit or look down on each other.

Do you think about rejoicing, praying and giving thanks as something an individual does more on his or her own, or as something that he or she does in relationship with others?

How does practicing these things alone impact the way we practice them with others, and vice versa? How do they help us encourage and build each other up?

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

When we come to close of the letter, we see, not as much commands, as it is words of encouragement. It's when we surrender that God will do His work of sanctifying us (verse 23) and prepared for His second coming (verse 23). Then, just as the Lord is faithful to call us to salvation, we can know that He is faithful to see us through (verse 24)! Therefore, we have a bond that we share with one another that goes beyond any temporary

inconveniences or our opinions. We are held together by the grace of God and we will keep pursuing the Lord's will for His glory and not our own! (verses 25-28).

Which of the behaviors we've studied today represents a strength in your interaction with others? Which is an area of weakness? How can you improve the weak area(s)?

What examples of genuine love have you observed in our group or church? How does diligent service through genuine love affect a community of believers?

What do you think are the main obstacles to a deeper sense of authentic community at church? What can you do as a church member and group member this week to demonstrate love for the body of Christ?