

Tate Brown's teaching on2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

What kind of woman must we be?

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits[a] to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings[b] we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, **17** encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

In these 5 verses we have Paul's encouragement for the Thessalonian church, but it is also an encouragement for us today.

I do not need to tell you or read news headlines about the world around us for you to know that it is full of sin, destruction, pain, grief, and evil. In the verses before this at the beginning of chapter two, Paul talks about a man of lawlessness, and really he is talking about a rebellion, a great rebellion but I don't want us to get caught up in the different theological beliefs about the rebellion or this man

of lawlessness, but I want you to realize that we have been in a great rebellion since Adam and Eve ate from the tree of evil in the garden in Genesis 3. And if the world is the way that it is now and there is a day approaching that we believe will bring about an even greater rebellion the question is, **what kind of women must we be in this world?**

What kind of woman must you be to make it in this harsh and evil world? What is God expecting of us? What is He requiring of us? In these 5 verses, I see the scripture is showing us 5 things we must do as women of God. 5 things we get to do as women of God in a world of great rebellion.

And when I say **must** I really mean **must**, after studying these verses I don't think these are just cute suggestions that will help us be women of faith. I think they are absolutely necessary for us to stay women of belief, women of hope, women of courage, and of joy. The world needs more light, and rather than hoping and wishing the world would get better I believe God is calling us to take him more seriously, to take Him at His Word and be these immovable anchors in the storms surrounding us.

I believe that God chose **YOU** as his firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. I believe He called **you** to this through our gospel, that **you** might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **I believe he has asked YOU to stand firm and hold fast to the teachings passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. And I believe we can pray for our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave**

us eternal encouragement and good hope, to encourage our hearts and strengthen us in every good deed and word.

And I hope after our time together this is your conclusion too, so let's pray and look at this together.

So, Paul warns the church about the rebellion that is coming and then he takes a breath to encourage them. After he talks about the power of Satan, of death, destruction, and deception he says "We ought always to give thanks to God for you." It is such a sharp contrast to the previous verses that it causes a bit of whiplash and demands our attention: **What kind of women must we be in the world today?**

1. **We must be women who regularly practice giving thanks. (v.13)**
 - a. This thanksgiving is for God and because of God. It's Because He chose us.
 - b. He doesn't just want us to give thanks but to give thanks for YOU. For people, for our brothers and sisters in the faith. We need to thank the Lord for people who were chosen by God because yes they chose God but He chose them first.
 - c. Paul wrote "God chose you as the firstfruits or (from the beginning) to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth." Sanctification happens by the spirit AND by belief in the truth

- d. Sanctification by definition is to be set apart or declared holy- it is an ongoing process, for us to become more and more holy, more and more like Christ.
- e. **How do we get to this kind of thanks----** **Philippians 4:8** “**Whatever is true**, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.” For me, when these are the forefront thoughts of our mind, thankfulness will flow naturally and abundantly.
- f. **Application:** Everytime you get in your car, thank God for someone or something. If you never drive, do it every time you drink water.

2. We must be women who remember our calling. (v14)

- a. As women we fit into many categories and labels, mom, daughter, wife, sister and those can quickly distract us from our true calling, which is to become more like Christ, that sanctification we just talked about.
- b. “Had it been possible for you to have had salvation without sanctification, it would have been a curse to you instead of a blessing. If such a thing were possible, I cannot conceive of a more lamentable condition than for a man to have the happiness of salvation without the holiness of it; happily, it is not possible. If you could be saved from the consequences of sin, but not from the sin itself, and its power and pollution, it would be no blessing to you.” (Spurgeon)
- c. **It’s hard when we as women are simple in the daily mundane things, I wake up, I cook, I work, I come home cook again, clean, dishes, laundry, dishes, laundy, feed the baby, burp the baby, put**

change the diaper, put the baby to sleep, change the diaper, feed the baby, burp the baby... it's a lot of small things for us but Jesus' great work was a ministry of small things... it was conversations, it was small touches, it was listening, it was sleeping, it was praying, it was fasting, it was walking, it was feeding, it was clothing and he did those things again and again many small things strung together in a scarlet thread of hope and love. And my ministry – *your ministry* – draws that thread into our homes, our jobs, and our world in the same, small way.

- d. **Application:** Your calling isn't this unknown thing, you are waiting to discover. It's the season you are in now-- to bring you from glory to glory "And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." **2 Corinthians 3:18** How do we not forget our calling? We just keep being faithful in the small things.

3. We must be women who know and hold on to the Word. (v.15)

- a. Verse 15 says, "Stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by spoken word or by letter"
- b. Coming to church matters. Bringing your kids to church matters. You are creating habits, creating tradition.
- c. Listening to the Word of God, reading it for yourself, studying it.
There's really no way around this point? What kind of women must we be? We must be women who know and hold on to the Word of God.

- d. You can be a theologian. We don't just need to read old dead men to know the Bible. God wants YOU to be a theologian, to know His word.
- e. **Application:** We can't know it, if we don't read it. Stop making excuses, read your Bible everyday. There all these things to do every day, drink half your body weight in water, move your body for 30 mins, take vitamins, meditate-- etc. but above all of, our first priority everyday should be the Word of God.

4. We must be women who received His comfort, hope, and grace. (v.16)

- a. This is the most beautiful verse in this section to me. Paul is asking God to encourage the church here. And this is the prayer I will be adopting over myself and other women.
- b. Have you forgotten the God, our Father, the God of the universe loves YOU. He loves you. He is in love with you and by His grace he has given us Himself, not a ghost, not an imaginary friend, but the full person of the Spirit who came to stay, to indwell, to transfigure from the inside. Luke tell us that when Jesus Himself was baptized, the Spirit descended on Him in bodily form" (Luke 3:22) This was a full blooded, manifest Spirit who came to inhabit the believer with all the effects of full-orbed, bodily possession and it is this person that can physically comfort us. Eternal comfort-- this is our gift to receive.
- c. **Application:** Become best friends with the Spirit. How do you do that? I've done it like this..

5. We must be women who get to work. (v.17)

"Comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

- a. How do we comfort our own hearts? A women we look for comfort in a lot of places.
- b. How are we established? In our work and in our words. So this begs the question: does it really matter how we work, how we live, how we speak? Remember we talked about sanctification-- our living does matter and it shouldn't look like the way everyone else lives.
- c. I can't tell you how to live I can only share this with you:
Since holiness is God's goal, and it should be ours, too.
Loving God & Loving people is our main thing but we can't use that to hide or excuse the way we are living, "it doesn't matter if we love the Lord" because remember living, every work and word is how God is establishing us.
- d. Many Christians ignore disciplines of holiness because 'loving Jesus' is more comfortable and acceptable. But let's remember that the best examples of those who 'loved Jesus' were the apostles, almost all of whom were martyred for their faith.

All of whom boldly spoke the gospel – didn't make up excuses to use swear words.
All of whom rebuked evil and pushed back against darkness – didn't look for ways to justify it. All of whom let their love for Jesus so affect them it changed quick tempers, fearful doubting and disloyal fleeing into the very names carved in the city of Heaven.

So: we do love Jesus.

But because we love Him, we discipline ourselves to holiness so we represent Him as best we can in these fallible, human bodies.

- e. This culture makes Christianity all about US and how well WE love Jesus. **They say they reject ‘works’ but in reality, all their efforts to ‘love Jesus’ with pomp and circumstance is just that – a work.** It is man proving to God how well he can love Him, clinging to his mortal individuality just to be different from the ‘fundamental church’. Those who attempt to follow Christ without being changed by Him subscribe to a hit-and-run gospel that does not exist. It is not the gospel, because the gospel changes you. We don’t get drive-by salvation and continue life as before.
- f. Don’t believe this culture that says loving Jesus is easy. Loving Jesus is hard, but He already carried the heavy part of the burden (Matt. 11:30). We don’t live rightly to earn His love; but by loving Him, we choose to live to rightly out of gratitude for His grace.

There is work that needs to be done. Making disciples.

- a. This isn't a work we strive for. We do not have to strive for these things, these are to-do's to check off. There are “get-tos” not have tos and it will all be done by and through God. It is Him who give us breath and it is Him who chose us. It is Him who sustains us. It says that he establishes us in the work.
- b. This is work we do strengthened by God.
- c. **Application: Remember you are on the clock, your work matters, it matters how you live your life. So it’s important to ask God HOW you live, does it really matter what I wear? Does it matter what you think?**

I am in this with you. These verses have challenged my priorities, my desires, and I feel refocused. You can't break a woman who gets her strength from God.

If you are a believer, the Holy Spirit lives in you. We can't keep walking around feeling powerless, like life is happening to us and we are victims. The Spirit of God lives inside us, empowering us every single day no matter what the world throws at us.

And no matter what lies the world throws at you, the truth is that you are worthy of salvation because He saved you. You are worthy of love because Jesus loves you. You are worthy of more in this world because He empowers you.

Being a woman of God isn't about what you can do on your own. It's about standing strong in who you are in Christ and what He does in and through you.

We can partner with God and press into the future He has for us, no matter what that looks like, no matter what adversity comes our way, no matter what obstacles we face, no matter what.

You are a daughter of the King, filled with the Holy Spirit, standing strong on the promise that God created you and called you to live life abundantly in Him.

what kind of women must we be in this world?

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- 2. We must be women who remember our calling. (v14)**
- 3. We must be women who know and hold on to the Word. (v.15)**
- 4. We must be women who received His comfort, hope, and grace. (v.16)**
- 5. We must be women who get to work. (v.17)**

This outstanding Tate. What time are you teaching it? Would you mind if I sneak into the back and eavesdrop?

Questions:

1. Out of the 5 ways these verses pointed who we must be as women, which one do you need to focus on the most?
 1. We must be women who regularly practice giving thanks. (v.13)
 2. We must be women who remember our calling. (v.14)
 3. We must be women who know and hold on to the Word. (v.15)
 4. We must be women who received His comfort, hope, and grace. (v.16)
 5. We must be women who get to work. (v.17)

2. What area of your life do you want to reevaluate with the Lord for holier living? What area looks too much like the world that you could change to set yourself apart?

3. Do you read the word everyday? (No shame! Just be honest) If so, how did you create that habit? What tools do you use to help you? If not, how will you create that habit?

4. We talked about the full body person of the Holy Spirit, and how there is this special eternal comfort in Him and with Him (v.16) Is it hard for you to grasp the Spirit in this way? Does he seem like a person to you or has He been your friend? Can you recall a time in your life when you had this comfort?