

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.
And be at peace among yourselves.

Analysis

And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves—kai hēgeisthai autous hyperekperissou en agapē dia to ergon autōn. eirēneuete en heautois (καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν. εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς). Hēgeisthai autous hyperekperissou en agapē (ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, 'esteem them beyond measure in love')—hyperekperissou (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ) is superlative: 'exceedingly abundantly.' Leaders deserve extraordinary honor, not grudging acknowledgment. En agapē (ἐν ἀγάπῃ, 'in love')—honor flows from love, not mere duty. Dia to ergon autōn (διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν, 'for their work's sake')—honor is based on ministry, not personality or status.

And be at peace among yourselves (eirēneuete en heautois, εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς)—church unity requires both honoring leaders and maintaining mutual peace. Apparently some Thessalonians resisted pastoral authority, creating conflict. Paul addresses both sides: members must honor leaders; the community must maintain peace. Leadership without honor breeds contempt; honor without peace breeds factions. Biblical church life requires both vertical respect (toward leaders) and horizontal harmony (among members). Peace flows from gospel truth rightly applied (Jas 3:17-18).

Historical Context

Early churches faced leadership challenges—converts from paganism lacked models for church polity, resistance to authority was common, and young churches had immature members. The Thessalonians needed instruction on honoring leaders and maintaining peace. Paul's counsel balanced extremes: not despising leaders (treating them as equals) nor idolizing them (treating them as infallible). Leaders deserved honor 'for their work's sake'—based on faithful ministry, not inherent superiority. This prevented both rebellion and clericalism, fostering healthy church life where leaders served and members followed willingly.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you demonstrate 'exceedingly abundant' esteem in love for faithful spiritual leaders?
2. What specific actions honor leaders 'for their work's sake' rather than personality preferences?
3. How do you contribute to peace among believers versus feeding conflict through criticism or factionalism?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἡγεῖσθαι	αὐτῶν	ὑπὲρ	ἐκπερισσοῦ	ἐν	ἀγάπῃ	διὰ
And	to esteem	their	very	G4057	among	love	for
G2532	G2233	G846	G5228		G1722	G26	G1223
τὸ	ἔργον	αὐτῶν	εἰρηνεύετε	ἐν	ἑαυτοῖς		
G3588	work's sake	their	And be at peace	among	yourselves		
	G2041	G846	G1514	G1722	G1438		

Additional Cross-References

Mark 9:50 (Peace): Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Hebrews 12:14 (Peace): Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

James 3:18 (Peace): And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Psalms 133:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Ephesians 4:3 (Peace): Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

John 15:17 (Love): These things I command you, that ye love one another.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Love): Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Galatians 5:22 (Love): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Colossians 3:15 (Peace): And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Matthew 10:40 (Parallel theme): He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.