

TITLE: THE ULTIMATE “HOW TO” LIST

TEXT: 1 THESS 5:14-24

INTRO: There are how-to books for everything (get rich, master your computer, double your bowling average overnight, lose weight, etc.). Many of these authors make guarantees as well. Which of these ought to interest us the most? Paul offers the most important “how to” list in our text this morning. These instructions teach the Christian how to go to Heaven, and conclude with a guarantee!

I. ACTIONS INVOLVING OTHERS (v. 14-15):

- A. **(v. 14) Warn them that are unruly.** Warn (caution, admonish, reprove); unruly (insubordinate, out of ranks, deviating from the prescribed order). This is a military usage. If a member of the church is out of line (spiritually), not acting like (living like) a Christian, the brethren (not just elders or preacher) are to warn this brother. The idea is to help correct one another and keep each other on the right path.
- B. **Comfort the feebleminded.** Comfort (encourage, calm, console); feebleminded (lit., “little-spirited”) [fainthearted]. Again this is the job of all Christians – to comfort those who are down & weak (they need us)!
- C. **Support the weak.** Support (hold up, help, sustain) the weak (“without strength,” sick). God’s intention is that His people will always be there for one another. When you’re weak, I help you, and when I’m weak, you help me. This applies to spiritual or physical weakness.
- D. **Be patient toward all.** Be patient (lit., “long-spirited”) toward all of these (unruly, fainthearted, weak/sick).
- E. **(v. 15) Don’t render evil for evil;** but follow that which is good. Never repay evil with evil (something bad, harmful). Turn the other cheek (**Mt. 5:39**). Always follow (pursue) the good (in general sense – that which is good for others – Christians and non-Christians).

II. ACTIONS INVOLVING GOD (v. 16-22):

- F. **(v. 16) Rejoice evermore.** Rejoice (be glad, be happy) always! He even says this in the midst of persecution! Christianity is not about sadness. Only a Christian can be happy & rejoice in *every* situation this life presents, because only Christianity provides a view beyond this life and its troubles.
- G. **(v. 17) Pray without ceasing.** Of course, this doesn’t mean that every moment of our life is spent in prayer. It means don’t stop praying. We should be talking to God daily! This is part of our communication with Him. Relationships fail when communication ends. Never stop praying! God wants to hear from you!
 - 1. **Eph 6:18** – *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”*
 - 2. **1 Tim 2:1** – *“I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.”*
 - 3. **Eph 5:20** – *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- H. **(v. 18) Give thanks in all things.** Be grateful/express gratitude in all things (not just when things are going well). This cannot happen if we don’t recognize someone other than ourselves as the source of our blessings! **Jam 1:17** – *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights”*
- I. **(v. 19) Quench not the Spirit.** Do not quench (extinguish, put out, suppress the effects of) the Spirit.
 - 1. At this time, the Holy Spirit provided miraculous abilities in order to confirm the word. They were not to suppress this.
 - 2. Today, the Holy Spirit has provided the Word, which has been confirmed.
 - a. We should not suppress this in our own lives by **1)** not reading/studying it, or by **2)** failing to apply its teachings.
 - b. We should not suppress this in the life of others by **1)** not evangelizing, or by **2)** not encouraging those members whose lives are being effected by the Spirit.
- J. **(v. 20) Despise not prophesyings.** Don’t despise (account or esteem as nothing) prophesyings (messages from God through His messengers). This is related to quenching the Spirit. These messages from God are all written for us now. Despise not Scripture.
- K. **(v. 21) Prove all things; hold to the good.** In context, this can refer to proving (examine, test, scrutinize, approve) the prophet’s message by his signs, and by the OT scripture. Today, we test/prove all things by the complete, perfect Word of God. Then we hold (have, hold fast, possess, retain) the good.
- L. **(v. 22) Abstain from every form of evil.** Avoid (hold oneself from) every form of evil, plain & simple! Don’t allow it into your life. Evil can present itself in many different forms. Be aware of them (especially the ones that tempt you most) & avoid them.

III. PROMISE FROM GOD (v. 23-24):

- A. If you do these things, you are **guaranteed** this promise of victory!
- B. **(v. 23)** God will sanctify (purify; make clean, whole, separate) you wholly (whole/complete to the end); and your whole spirit, soul, & body be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ. This is the ultimate goal of the Christian!
- C. **(v. 24)** Trust God on this! He is faithful! He **will** do it!

CONCLUSION: He concludes with, “Pray for us, greet one another, and read this letter to all! So in these verses, Paul closes this wonderful letter with some short but great instructions for the Christian on how to get to Heaven. There are many more scriptures that expound on them (as we’ve seen), but these are basic & clear. Each one of these is an imperative (command). In other words, do these and I guarantee you’ll have eternal life with God in Heaven!