Don't Treat Everyone the Same

Say what? Don't treat everyone the same? I thought we were not to show partiality! You are correct. To be clear, I am not endorsing partiality. Deut. 1:17, "You shall no show partiality in judgement…." Prov. 18:21, "To show partiality is not good…." Acts 10:34, "God is not one to show partiality." 1 Timothy 5:21, "maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality." James 2:9, "But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." Yes, partiality is, indeed a sin.

But it is also a sin to ignore God's clear commands on how to handle daily challenges in a church family. Let's examine 1 Thessalonians 5. In verse 13 God calls us to, "Live in peace with one another." Then in verse 14 we are given a four-part plan to help accomplish that peace among brethren, "We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone." Let's dive deeper.

1. **"Admonish the unruly."** The Greek word *noutheteite* *means* to warn, reprimand, advise or urge. That's what should happen to those who are disorderly and ignore God's rules.
2. **"Encourage the fainthearted."** Encourage is the Greek word, *paramutheisthe*, literally "to be close beside for comforting." The words here are beautifully descriptive of close, encouraging comfort.
3. **"Help the weak."** Here, "help" is the Greek, *antechesthe*, literally "to be holding up someone who is lacking in strength." The imagery here would apply to helping someone who is infirm or having trouble standing by his own strength.
4. **"Be patient with everyone."** "Be patient" is the Greek, *makrothumeite*, literally the word for "be far feeling." Our patience is to be far reaching and deeply sincere in feeling. The length of our patience is to be long and strong.

Please carefully note that none of these commands should be applied with partiality. We must never treat one unruly person differently from another. We simply must not ignore unruliness in a friend and attack it in someone we don't care for. That would be sinful partiality! Also, consider the chaos it would foster in a church family if we encouraged the unruly or reprimanded the fainthearted.

Perhaps the most challenging command here is to, "be patient with everyone." To let our patience be far-reaching in scope and long in time is one of the main ways we stay *family!* Since there is "none righteous, no not one," and since "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:10; 3:23) patience is overwhelmingly essential for us to continue is close fellowship that God expects from each and every one of us.

So, do nothing from partiality, but be gravely careful to follow the commands of 1 Thessalonians 5: 13, 14. God's plan works so very beautifully, but only when we follow it.

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