

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.

This section, when taught, appears to be self-serving; but what needs to be observed is that this instruction is for the benefit of the body. We are all part of the body of Christ. Therefore, we must function together, not separate. Notice that reason for the action of the body is “because of their work,” not because of their feelings or because of their emotional well-being.

The verse begins with “we request.” This is “**ἔρωτάω** *erōtaō* (*eh-roh-tah'-oh*)” and means to ask or request. The function of this word is not a request that can or cannot be carried out but an appeal to volition. But it's not as strong as a command. Paul is appealing to their good, godly nature by means of expressing desire, he's not simply giving them something to do by means of authority. Paul could have commanded through use of an imperative, instead this is a desire from Paul. Paul uses this word four times in his letters (Philippians 4:3; 1st Thessalonians 4:1; 2nd Thessalonians 2:1). In Paul's uses, the language does not convey the strength of a command, although the important nature of the themes surrounding the use of the phrase creates a stronger tone.

What is it that Paul desires for the body to do? The answer is found in two infinitives: to appreciate, to esteem. The word appreciate is not a translation but an interpretation. “**οἶδα** *oida* (*oy'-dah*)” means to know, to know fully or perfectly, it can indicate knowledge of a skill (know how). But the interpretation of appreciate is not a definition. This means to know, to know perfectly or completely.

What is it that the body is supposed to know? This is answered in a tri-compound object of the sentence. All the accusatives (direct objects) are participles; Accusative Present Active Participle. The function of these participles is “the **who**” being identified by what they do.

Diligently labor is “**κοπιᾶω** *kopiaō* (*kah-pih-ah'-oh*)” and means to be tired, to work yourself to the point of fatigue. This word does not automatically refer to ministerial service, although it often does (Luke 5:5; 1st Corinthians 4:12; 16:15-16). Having charge is “**προΐστημι** *proistēmi* (*pro-ih's'-tay-me*).” This word means to stand before an army in order to lead, support, help, care, and protect. It does not mean boss it means lead. Give you instruction is “**νουθετέω** *noutheteō*.” This is literally to put in the mind. As an accusative participle, it identifies the ones who put information in you mind, cause you to think. This is often translated warn and is a bad understanding; even if the content is negative behavior (verse 14 admonish the unruly), the leaders are to provide the information, not create an emotional response.

The function of this phrase is usually interpreted to know perfectly what your leaders do, or, as it is written, “appreciate your leaders.” Appreciation indicates that one is looking at the function. But here it states to know the people who work hard and lead and teach. This is encouraging, begging the body to have a personal relationship with the ones who serve. When you know completely the people who labor and lead, you will inevitably appreciate. This speaks to the flock as well as the shepherd-lings (1st Timothy 3:2).

Next the urging is “to esteem them.” The “them” is a pronoun that is in the same grammatical form as the three participles so we know that this refers to the leaders. To esteem is “ἡγέομαι *hēgeomai* (*hay-geh'-ah-my*),” this word means to judge, to consider. If there is no object to the word, the word indicates a ruler or judge. If there is an object the word means to think about. Here Paul is urging the body to think about them in a particular way—“very highly in love.”

This phrase needs to be looked at in the whole. The phrase is literally translated “very above in love.” Very above indicates a high standard of thinking. In love is the way that this is demonstrated. It is not enough to think highly about the leaders, it is imperative to demonstrate that thought in love. This phrase very above is used in 1st Thessalonians 3:10 and also in Ephesians 3:20. Both demonstrate well that the action in the sentence is being described as beyond the norm.

Again being in this group, teachers must be careful not to use this self-servingly. Every teacher needs to realize that not only are they part of the leadership but they are also part of the body that benefits from others. All of the Accusative Participles are in the plural; it is not a singularity that is the object of affection but a plurality. Also, every teacher should also have another teacher.

The final phrase of this sentence is “because of their work.” The preposition is “διὰ *dia*,” which in this structure (with an accusative) means on account of. Work is “ἔργον *ergon* (*ehr'-gone*),” which indicates the energy spent on the labors. The primary observation is that it does not say because of their smile, hair, success, or personality. Rather this is on account of their work.

1. As a flock there needs to be an evaluation of the message.
 - a. Matthew 7:15-20; 12:33-37
 - b. Romans 16:17-18
 - c. Colossians 2:8
2. There is a godly principle of taking care of those who provide spiritual nourishment.
 - a. 1st Timothy 5:17-18
 - b. 1st Corinthians 9:7-11