

A Practical Study of 1 Thessalonians

Delighting The Heart of God “Learning to Bring Pleasure to God”

Question Number Eight – Is Your Life A Witness? – 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Now we’re making a spiritual check-up and we’ve come to study #8 and I’m asking the question of you:

Is Your Life a Witness?

Last time we talked about:

Have You Gotten Dirty?

And you know, one of the things that you might want to do along that line is look at Psalm 32 and Psalm 51. Those two passages are so crucial to dealing with that whole subject today.

In Psalm 32 David tells the tragic story of keeping this thing hidden and all of the things that happened to him because he didn’t deal with it.

But Psalm 51 is the process of him dealing with it.

And remember there he says “Create in me a clean heart, O

God, and renew a right spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of my salvation.” (Psa. 51:10, 12)

And then of course, part of Psalm 32 is also the expression of “blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered” and the joy of being free. (Psa. 32:1)

Now as we come to these verses, Charles Ryrie in his little commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians says:

Christianity should always be distinguished by purity and love. This latter is the next thing in which Paul asks the Thessalonians to abound.
(source unknown)

Last time we talked about PURITY—sexual purity—walking in holiness.

Today we talk about LOVE.

Do you remember the three things he prayed for? He prayed for DIRECTION, he prayed for LOVE and he prayed for HOLINESS.

Now look at verse 9.

v. 9 Now concerning brotherly love, you are not having need that I should be writing to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

That little word “Now,” whenever you see that in the text, that’s Paul transitioning. It’s one of the easiest words to use to trace an argument as to how he’s going.

For instance, if you just look on your sheets you’d see there’s a word “now” at verse 9. They’ll be another “now” at verse 13. Then they’ll be another “now” at chapter 5 verse 1. “Now” at 5:12 and a “now” at 5:23.

And that’s one of the key words that helps you understand the progression of a man’s argument in the book. And you look at it that way.

The first thing he says is “I want to talk to you about love.”

Now let me remind you of the prayer that he prayed in our study last time. Chapter 3 verse 12, the second part of his request—the second petition was this:

1 Thessalonians 3:12

and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you;

And so having talked about holiness, he moves into the second realm and that is the realm of BROTHERLY LOVE—the love that we have for one another. It’s the opportunity for our greatest witness. It’s what Jesus commanded in the upper room, that we love one another.

Now a number of times he's spoken of this. But there is no other place in the whole of the New Testament that that little phrase "taught of God" is used. Isn't that interesting?

He says "I really don't have to say a whole lot to you because when it comes to love, you've already been taught by God how to do it."

Now that almost tells me that we're born with the equipment to love when we have normal new birth.

Have you ever been around new Christians? I mean it's just so refreshing to sense the purity of their love and the genuineness and the enthusiasm and the excitement that is there. And so he says "I don't have to say a lot to you about this because on this one thing, you've been taught of God."

Now in John 6:45 we read these words from Jesus:

John 6:45

It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught of God." Every one who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

Now here in the epistles he says "you yourselves are taught by God, taught by Him to love one another."

Now when it comes to that, who is the one who is responsible for the teaching ministry in the life of the believer? How could

they be “taught of God”?

I think if you’ll remember in the upper room, Jesus makes reference to it twice.

In John 14:26 he says:

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

And then John 16:13, it’s like at the end of that time, he repeats it:

John 16:13

But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; and He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you things which are to come.

Now what’s the problem if you aren’t being “taught of God”?

Well evidently the Spirit of God does not have free reign in your life.

It is possible to be sitting here, grieving the Holy Spirit who is your teacher, by sin not experiencing that function of the

Spirit in teaching you.

And it could be that the Spirit of God is quenched, as we're going to see in one of the studies in chapter 5. And if He's quenched, He can't function in that teaching ministry. And when you read 1 Corinthians 2:14 you see: "The natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to him. Neither can he know them because they're spiritually discerned."

But we have the mind of Christ. And so if the Spirit of God is not functioning in your life and He's there and you know that you're a Christian, then there are some deeper problem that have to be dealt with. And he says to these young Thessalonian believers "I don't really have to talk to you a whole lot about that because you are taught of God to love one another."

Hannah Hurnard again says:

There is one law by which we live.

Love loves to give and give and give,

And on this royal law so named
the universe itself is framed.

No lasting joy is anywhere

Save in the hearts of those who share.

(source unknown)

It was Augustine who rephrased Jesus' words when he said:

(*The Christian Salt & Light Company* by Haddon W. Robinson)

"To love those who love you is human; to hate those who love you is demonic; but to love those who hate you is divine." When we love our enemies as well as our friends, we reflect the character of God.

p. 176

Now, there might be another reason why you feel kind of destitute in love.

Now think about it and the ramifications of it as I give it to you.

True love flows from the streams of humility.

You know, when you're proud and when you're selfish, you don't reach out and you're self-contained entity unto yourself. But love exudes and flows naturally from the life of someone who is humble and broken.

Love just flows from them.

And then Sammy Tippit comes along with his little book *Fire in Your Heart* and he says:

(*Fire in Your Heart* by Sammy Tippit)

True humility is derived from a knowledge of God. The more

we get to know Him, the more we are broken of pride and self-centeredness.

p. 69

And the more we get to know Him the greater our capacity for love.

So we might be also saying, if we're not lovin' a whole lot that probably we're selfish and proud and we haven't learned too much about the Lord. And I don't know if we want to say that about ourselves.

So ask yourself the question:

Am I really a lover? And do I really care about people or am I just interested in myself and my own things?

Now, the central focus of this passage is going to be on love. But there's also going to be two other things here.

This passage is going to teach you:

LOVE,

LIFE, and

LIP.

And that, to my way of thinking, is a full-blown description of a witness for Jesus Christ. Now I've put it all together.

Earlier in the study I said “live before lip.” You LIVE it before you LIP it. Now I’m going to add one more “L” and we’ve got the full-blown picture of what the Lord expects from His witness.

Love exuding from your life and your life demonstrates the Christ living in you, you’ve earned the right with your lip to speak the witness of Christ.

So we can say LOVE, which is produced by the Holy Spirit that dwells within us, LIFE which demonstrates Christ living in me with my attitudes and actions, then the LIP is last. We earn the right to use the lip by the love and the life.

Then we can say “Yes, I am a witness of Jesus Christ.”

So the focus of verse 9 is on LOVE. And the focus of verse 12 is upon the LIFE.

Now look at verse 10.

v. 10 for indeed, you are doing the same for all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia. But we are exhorting you, brethren, to excel more and more [in this love],

You see, evidently because they lived in a city that was a recreational area, many people probably passed through. And they had many opportunities for hospitality. And these people were known as real lovers.

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Now probably the greatest illustration in scripture of their love is 2 Corinthians 8 when it comes to giving.

They gave of themselves first to the Lord and then they gave more than they could have, Paul could have ever dreamed, out of their poverty. They were genuine lovers these Thessalonians. And Paul says “you’ve not only been taught of God but you’re doing the same for all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia, the place where you live.” The people in Berea, the people in Philippi, you are people who are demonstrating and becoming famous for the fact that you are indeed lovers.

Now, 2 Corinthians 8 reads like this—verses 1-5.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

He’s saying to them “Look, you guys are famous for your love

but I'm not satisfied. I want you loving more and more. I want you to abound in that love.”

And that reminded me of the way The Living Bible paraphrases:

1 John 4:17

As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete.

We just keep on growing in this love.

Look at verse 11.

v. 11 and to make it your ambition to live quietly and to busy yourselves with your own affairs and to work with your hands, even as we commanded you;

Ok now we're going to see this love flow out in a WORTHY WALK. And there's three parts to this worthy walk and I want to land here for a little while.

There's going to be some good things that are going to come out of these verses.

Paul is expecting that their love will manifest itself in three wonderful qualities that are mentioned in this verse.

Now listen, this is the KEY VERSE to the study.

Okay, what are you supposed to do if your life's a witness? Make it your ambition. That means to strive restlessly after this.

You know some teaching on the Christian life is a teaching of just waiting for it to happen. It's like read your Bible, pray and wait for it all to happen. And anything you would do, but be done in the flesh.

I don't see that in the Apostle Paul. I see him forgetting those things which are behind. I press toward those things which are in front. I see him treating his body roughly, making it serve him. And here I see him telling them to strive restlessly after these things.

Make this your passionate desire.

Because of your love for Christ, you want to do these things.

I was reading *Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses* and he told this story:

(Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses by James W. Moore)

When a minister friend was talking to a man about joining the church, the man said, "I want to join the church because I want to be fed."

The minister answered, "Well, that's fine, but we all

would be better off if you would take off your bib and put on an apron!"

p. 51

Yes! Get in there! Get involved. Roll up your sleeves and do something. We've got people running around saying "Oh I just can't go back to that church because I'm just not being fed."

Oh that's a spiritual statement. I mean, it just blesses my socks every time I hear it. And yet, you hear it so much among people.

What is it you ought to be doing? Here you are a part of a group of believers and you want your life to be a witness for Christ. Alright, Paul tells you, three things. This is what you're going to look like when you're really walking with the Lord. Three ingredients to a worthy walk:

1. You're going to "live quietly,"

Now I'll define that for you, especially for some of you that had a little problem with talking too much.

2. "to busy yourselves with your own affairs," and

3. "to work with your hands, even as we commanded you.

Now there's a reason for that third one and I'll talk about it in just a second when we get there. But let's break these apart.

My first “ambition” is:

1. “to live quietly.”

Now, what that means is “to live quietly” not to be restraining or speaking quietly. It has nothing to do with the tongue. It has to do with the life.

It means living a quiet, restful, less-frantic life.

1 Timothy 2:2

for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

In other words, you’ve learned how to live comfortably in authority so you’re at peace.

It’s:

Hebrews 4:1

Let us therefore, enter into His rest, lest anyone should come short of it.

It’s:

Matthew 11:28 [and 29]

Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart...

Now Charles Ryrie does the best job in his little paragraph on this. He says:

It means tranquility of mind, and this comes only when one's whole desire in life [get this] is to let Christ be magnified in his life. When selfish ambitions are the governing principles of life there can only be unrest, but when Christ completely controls there will be rest and the fulfillment of this admonition to be ambitious [is] to have no ambition of one's own!

(pp. 59-60, source unknown)

But only to do what the Lord would want you to do.

Now why are you so stressed out? Why have you come to the mountain and it's taken you three days to unwind? You know, just stop and ask yourself, is it work it to be that stressed out? And to be that involved? What are you really accomplishing by all that? All that kind of stuff? Where you're just pouring yourself sacrificially into this and into that and into the other thing. Is that really worth it?

And I also know there are a lot of them like Solomon who said "Meaningless, meaningless, utterly meaningless. The whole thing is utterly meaningless."

So what is the stuff that's stressing you? And worrying you? You know, Swindoll said American's are really busy:

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Do we have a lot of irons in the fire? Have we turned what was once a simple, quiet existence into a complicated maze of activity, a Rubic's cube of complex dilemmas? You tell me.

[And then he says this. This is fantastic. Get a load of this.]

Every day in America...

- *108,000 of us move to a different home, and 18,000 move to another state.
- *the United States government issues 50 more pages of regulations.
- *40 Americans turn 100, about 5,800 become 65, and 8,000 try to forget their 40th birthdays.

Every day in America...

- *167 businesses go bankrupt while 689 new ones start up—and 105 Americans become millionaires.
- *the Smithsonian adds 2,500 things to its collections.
- *Americans purchase 45,000 new automobiles and trucks, and smash up 87,000.
- *20,000 people write letters to the president.
- *more than 6,300 get divorced, while 13,000 get married.

*dogs bite 11,000 citizens, including 20 mail carriers.

Every day in America...

*we eat 75 acres of pizza, 53 million hot dogs, 167 million eggs, 3 million gallons of ice cream, and 3,000 tons of candy. We also jog 17 million miles and burn 1.7 billion calories while we're at it.

pp. 221-22

Is America busy? Yeah. We're stressed out.

Barbara Johnson said:

(Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life by Barbara Johnson)

WORRY IS WASTING TODAY'S TIME
TO CLUTTER UP TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITIES
WITH YESTERDAY'S TROUBLES.

[She says:]

THERE WILL BE NO CRISIS NEXT WEEK.
MY SCHEDULE IS ALREADY FULL.

p. 101

I was reading Henry Brandt's new book. It's called *When You're Tired of Treating the Symptoms and You're Ready for a Cure, Give Me a Call* or *18 Lessons for Making Changes That*

Last. He tells a transparent story when he says:

(When You're Tired of Treating the Symptoms and You're Ready for a Cure, Give Me a Call: 18 Lessons for Making Changes That Last by Henry R. Brandt)

A young pastor, Dick Wilkenson, took an interest in us. He encouraged us to get a concordance and learn to use it. It would help us get biblical answers to our many questions, he said. We took his advice, which proved to be one of the most helpful moves we made to get to know what "pleasing God" meant.

It was he who introduced us to a biblical principle that disturbed us:

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33, NKJV)

Up to this point in my life, my main preoccupation was in acquiring a home and the means to assure a comfortable, secure life. We had a new car, a new house, membership in a sailing club, a sailboat, access to a golf and tennis club. Even thinking about God was not a serious consideration. My pastor kept bringing up this verse and urging us to review our priorities.

Sunday was the best time for sailing and doing homework. (I was taking some engineering courses at night.) Golf or tennis took two or three evenings. Looking after the lawn, playing with the children, visiting our families took up time. It seemed our world consisted of pleasing ourselves.

TRAINING REQUIRES DILIGENCE

He kept asking us pesky questions in relation to that verse, such as: What are you doing with your time? What are you doing with your money? What are you studying in the Bible? Why weren't you in church on Sunday?

I had mixed feelings about him and his questions because I was embarrassed by the answers I had to give him.

Once, in exasperation, I told him to mind his own business. He said he was. As long as I came to his church, I was his business. He was my "coach."

Gradually, our focus changed from things to people. [Get that. Gradually, our focus changed from things to people.] People appeared from nowhere asking for help with their problems, and we would invite them to come for dinner. We discovered that these dinner invitations were very expensive.

Besides, we had very little background for helping people.

We started going to church regularly on Sundays. Our sailboat, golf clubs, and tennis racquet got less and less use. pp. 211-212

And that guy today is a gentleman (I received his newsletter the other day) who is traveling all over the world helping people get along with people. He is a man characterized as pouring himself into people. He is on call by more mission organizations to deal with interpersonal relational problems than almost any other single person that I know. What an incredible testimony and witness that man is.

John Stott said:

(Topical Memory System: Life Issues. The Navigators)

Contentment is the secret of inward peace. It remembers the stark truth that we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. Life, in fact, is a pilgrimage from one moment of nakedness to another. So we should travel light and live simply. Our enemy is not possessions, but excess. Our battle cry is not "Nothing!" but "Enough!" We've got enough. Simplicity says, if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

p. 74

You know I have a wonderful verse inscribed in my wedding ring. And the longer I live the more I love the verse.

Isaiah 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on Thee,
because he trust in Thee.

That's the peace we're talking about. That's living "quietly."

It's:

Isaiah 30:15

This is what the Sovereign Lord says, the Holy One of

Israel,

In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it.

Isaiah 32:17

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the
effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

Quiet people run deep.

You know that's Hudson Taylor. Many times he would sing his
favorite hymn:

Jesus, I am resting, resting
 In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
 Of Thy loving heart.
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
 And Thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power,
 Thou has made me whole.

(From *The New Church Hymnal*, 1976, #373)

That's what it means with your first "ambition to live quietly."

It's to be at peace with your Lord and peace with each other

and content with what the Lord has provided.

Now the second one is, is to:

2. “busy yourselves with your own affairs.”

There’s no time for meddling. There’s no time for running around and checking everybody else. There are so many people in the body of Christ who feel they have the gift of fruit inspection. They just want to check everybody else. And the problem is, usually that person is also the number one gossiper.

So you know, you get those kind of volatile things together and you’ve got a real problem.

So he’s basically saying:

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

Do the task that’s been assigned to you.

Now, “ambition” number 3 in your worthy walk is:

3. “to work with your hands, even as we commanded you;”

Now, one of the problems that happened in Thessalonica—because Paul’s just there for 3 weeks. And he talks more about this in 2 Thessalonians and I’m in the process of writing that

series of studies for the fall tour—the apostle discovered that these people believed that Christ was coming so soon they quit work.

And a lot of them just sat down and waited. In fact, tomorrow morning's study is going to get into that when we look at the imminent return of Christ in the rapture of the church. And so he's got to address those things because they got fouled up on their prophecy. They were so excited about the Lord coming that many of them just said "You know He's going to come so quick that there's no...we don't need to be wasting time working! So we're waiting!"

But you know, this teaches me something. This teaches me there is no room for laziness in the Christian life.

I've been bold enough to make one statement and I will make it again until the day I die because there's truth in it. And I have yet to meet an undisciplined godly person. I have yet to meet an undisciplined godly person. It takes intensity. It takes discipline. It takes staying by the stuff to become what the Lord wants you to become!

And so "work with your hands, even as we have commanded you."

Needy idlers are not good Christians.

Each one has a responsibility to do his job. And part of the problems in Thessalonica was that they violated his

principles.

Now what I did here at this point is I decided that I'd stop and meditate for a while because I wanted these three ingredients in my life and I wanted to be sure they were there. But then, if they're there, how can you tell? How can you feel somebody's pulse? How can you tell a person, when you're around them very long, whether or not they're really walking in intimate fellowship with the Lord? What do you use as your signals?

Well can I give you my three?

1. URGENCY

John 9:4

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; the night is coming, when no man can work.

John 4:35, 36

Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

There is a sense of URGENCY in a person who is walking worthy before the Lord.

Have you been around people like that? Who just light your fire? And just turn you on?

You know there is that sense of urgency there. And if you've gone cold and dead in the water, then get your act together man! You're part of the lukewarm Laodicean church and you don't want to be in that mess.

You know there's an urgency! Your life is slipping away and you don't have much time.

There's an urgency there!

Secondly:

2. They want to RUN WELL.

They want to run well. They really want to please the Lord.

And that's:

1 Corinthians 9:24

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

There is an intensity to want to finish well and to please their Lord.

Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

And third:

3. There's always a **RESTLESS LONGING** to do a little bit more.

There's always a restless longing to do a little bit more.

Philippians 2:17

If my life is poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I share my joy and rejoice with you all.

There's a longing always to do just a little bit more in our service for the Lord.

Now in essence Paul's saying three things. In a worthy life:

1. sit down and shut up,
2. mind your own business, and
3. do your job.

You know, that's basically what he's saying.

“Whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;” (Colossians 3:23).

Ok, you take those three things. Is your life a witness? Are you doing those things? Is there a real witness or are you tentative in these things? And you've kind of lost your fervor and your zeal? And maybe this is an occasion for you to really get excited and move ahead.

Are you a believer?

Now maybe you're not a believer. Maybe you've never come to know Christ and that explains your lack of fervor and excitement. And we've got to go back to question #1: Did you make a right start? Because that's a very real possibility.

I loved what Howie Stevenson, who is Swindoll's music director—he has a sign on his wall that says:

Never try to teach a pig to sing.

It wastes your time and it annoys the pig.

(p. 67, *Simple Faith* by Charles R. Swindoll)

You know, and if we're not here as those who've been born again by the Spirit, it's only annoying and it only wastes your time.

John Stott said:

I sometimes think how splendid it would be if non-Christians, curious to discover the secret and source of our light, [and I could say our love and our life] were to come up to us and enquire:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

(p. 54, source unknown)

You know, that's demonstrating real genuine Christianity. People wanting to see that light shine.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

And want that for themselves.

Verse 12.

v. 12 in order that you may behave decently toward those who are outside and you may not be having need of anything.

Now there's the PURPOSE behind your life being a witness.

Why do you want to live like that, with those ingredients that we looked at before—PURPOSE--so that you can:

“behave decently toward those who are outside.”

Do you see the focus on a witness? The focus is on LOVE—they’ve already been “taught of God” to do that. But their LIFE is to be one that bears credibility and you “behave decently toward those who are on the outside.”

Now listen, I’ve been around businessmen and enough corporate studies in my years of teaching that I have heard many, many times from businessmen this statement and it just makes my flesh creep:

“If that guy is a Christian, I don’t want to be one.”

Now I’ve got to tell you, I have heard that a lot from men in business ethics and in relationships and they will mention a specific name of someone with whom they have done business or with whom they’ve been associated, and you’d be surprised the number of times that statement comes out.

Now the word “behave decently” can be translated “according to good fashion” or “in good form.”

You’ve heard the statement “you’re in good form.” Well that’s what this means. You are behaving in good form “toward those who are outside.” And as a result, “you are not having need of anything.”

Now, let's reflect a minute.

In view of what we've just looked at in these verses:

1. Are you living quietly? or are you stressed out?

Philippians 4:6, 7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ...

2. Are you busying yourself with your own affairs? or are you spluttering a lot of shot around a lot of different directions?
3. Are you working with your own hands? Are you staying by the stuff and you're living it one day at a time?

G. Allen Fleece said this very insightful thing:

"We are not in the world bearing witness to Christ. We are in Christ bearing witness to the world."

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

Now get this. Why did Mark Twain die without becoming a Christian. Mark Twain said:

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

"Having spent considerable time with good people, I can understand why Jesus liked to be with tax collectors and sinners." [Wow] Righteousness sometimes turns us off.
p. 59

It was C. T. Studd who said it so well:

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Some wish to live within the sound
Of church or Chapel bell;
I want to run a Rescue Shop
Within a yard of hell.

p. 53

I want to be a person who is rescuing those by the quality of my life and demonstrating my love to them that I know Jesus Christ as my Savior.

Are you “behaving decently toward those who are outside”?

And “you may not be having need of anything.” God is indeed blessing you.

You know there are a lot of people that are looking at your life and a lot of people who would find it easy, would they? To walk in your steps because they see you walking with Jesus. They see you truly as men and women of the Word of God and

they find great joy and comfort in your friendship and the fact that they indeed are walking in your steps.

1 Peter 3:15

set apart Christ as Lord and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason, of the hope that's in you, with meekness and in fear.

So that you may not be having need of everything, of anything, He will meet your needs.

Now I got 12 lessons tonight, just out of these three verses, so meditate on them. They're here on the sheets for you.

Lesson #1: If the Lord were to examine your level of love, what kind of rating would you get?

If the Lord were to examine your level of love tonight, what kind of rating would you get? Are you happy that you've been taught of God and you are a lover.

Lesson #2: What are some of the areas in your life where you are presently being "taught by God"?

The Holy Spirit is guiding you into truth.

Lesson #3: An effective witness focuses on our love, our life, and lastly, our lip.

Lesson #4: As we live with Christ, our love grows more

perfect and complete.

Lesson #5: Are you growing in your capacity for love by your intimacy with Jesus Christ?

Do you get that? Are you growing in your capacity by your increasing intimacy with Jesus Christ?

Lesson #6: Have you entered into His rest and are you living quietly?

If not, why not? And is it worth it?

Lesson #7: Will you forsake the stuff that is stressing and worrying you at this time?

Why don't you just dump it off the rail here tonight? You know, and just go to bed at peace knowing that God is indeed at work and He's sovereignly leading you in your life.

Lesson #8: Do with all your might what your hand finds to do.

Lesson #9: Stay by the stuff and live life one day at a time.

Lesson #10: There is no room for laziness in the Christian life.

Lesson #11: Needy idlers are not good Christians.

Lesson #12: Are you behaving decently toward those who are not Christians?

A Practical Study of 1 THESSALONIANS: Your Spiritual Checkup

“Victory in Areas of Vulnerability”

Key verse 3:10 — *“night and day praying as earnestly as possible that we might see your face and complete what is lacking in your faith”*

QUESTION NUMBER EIGHT – IS YOUR LIFE A WITNESS? – 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12

KEY VERSE 4:11

v. 9 Now concerning brotherly love, you are not having need that I should be writing to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

v. 10 for indeed, you are doing the same for all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia. But we are exhorting you, brethren, to excel more and more [in this love],

v. 11 and to make it your ambition to live quietly and to busy yourselves with your own affairs and to work with your hands, even as we commanded you;

v. 12 in order that you may behave decently toward those who are outside and you may not be having need of anything.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. According to verse 9, who has taught them to love one another?

3. What is Paul telling them to do in verse 10?

4. What should be their “ambition,” according to verse 11?

5. Why is Paul asking them to conduct themselves in this way, according to verse 12?

6. Do you feel that as a Christian we have the responsibility to be a witness by our life? If so, how can we do this? See also 1 Peter 3:15.

7. What is the content of a good witness, according to 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4?

8. What is the promise in Psalms 126:5, 6 and Galatians 6:9 to those who are faithful in witnessing?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: If the Lord were to examine your level of love, what kind of rating would you get?

LESSON #2: What are some of the areas in your life where you are presently being “taught by God”?

LESSON #3: An effective witness focuses on our love, our life, and lastly, our lip.

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