

1Thessalonians, Chapter Four, Lesson Two

PROPER BEHAVIOR 1Thessalonians 4:9-12

STIMULATE

** Even though the Thessalonians wanted to please God with their daily walk, what could they do to improve their "**Sanctified Behavior**" according to Paul?

"...abstain from sexual immorality..." by "possessing [their] own vessels in sanctification and honor." cf. 1Thessalonians 4:3

** What verse did we memorize together last week which would help us with our own "**Sanctified Behavior**"?

Romans 13:14 - "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

** Did you find that to be helpful in your daily walk with the Lord this past week?

God's word is always sufficient to guide us into a righteous lifestyle. cf. 2Timothy 3:16-17

MOTIVATE

** If our "**Sanctified Behavior**" is for the Lord, sense it is His will for us to so live, what is our behavior towards the lost called?

In today's passage, Paul is going to give us some fundamental instruction on how we are to live each day with "**Proper Behavior**" towards unbelievers so that the word of God may not be dishonored. Let's read our passage together.

Read passage (V.9-12)

Opening Prayer

Proper Behavior

INVESTIGATE

V. 9 ** After addressing our "**Sanctified Behavior**" last week, what subject does Paul now re-introduce?

The subject of "love of the brethren".

** When was the first time Paul mentioned the love these Thessalonians had for him?

Back in 1Thessalonians 1:3 he said that he was, "constantly bearing in mind [their] work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father..."

** Did Paul bring this subject up again because the Thessalonians needed instruction on how to love the brethren?

NO! - "...you have no need for anyone to write..."

** This is actually the third time he has mentioned the Thessalonians' tendency to love. Do you recall what Timothy had told Paul upon his return to the apostle?

1Thessalonians 3:6 - "But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you..."

** Two weeks ago we took a close look at Biblical love from 1Corinthians 13:4-7 (known as the love chapter), but we can appreciate this love even more when we see it in action in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 12, verses 9-13. All see: Twelve more characteristics of truly Biblical love - Read Passage

1. Love is not hypocritical
2. Love abhors what is evil (1Corinthians 13:6) (to hate)
3. Love clings to what is good
4. Love is devoted to others
5. Love prefers others over self
6. Love is diligent
7. Love is fervent (Revelation 3:14-16)
8. Love serves the Lord
9. Love rejoices in hope
10. Love perseveres in trials
11. Love is devoted to prayer
12. Love meets the needs of others (hospitality)

** With that wonderful understanding, let's go back to our passage in 1Thessalonians 4:9. Why didn't the Thessalonians require instruction to show this kind of Biblical love?

Because they had been "...taught by God to love one another..."
cf. 1John 3:10, 4:19, Romans 5:5

V.10 ** What was the outcome of God teaching them to love?

"...indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren..."

** Bible study for these Thessalonians became lifestyle, they lived what they learned. Was their love just for those who lived there in Thessalonica?

No - It had gone out to all "...who are in all Macedonia." We are talking about 52,000 square miles of love! To God be the glory!

** With such a tremendous victory record in this area of loving other Christians, do you think Paul should just tell them to kick-back and relax, because they had arrived?

No - As with every area of our life which is for the glory of God, they were to "excel still more". Even though they were famous for their love, they were to grow up in their ability to show it.

V.11 ** According to verse eleven, what will be the three fold manifestation of that love?

1. Lead a quiet life.
2. Attend to your own business.
3. Work with your hands.

** We are going to look closely at those three elements of love in action; but first, why is Paul giving this instruction, what was wrong there in Thessalonica?

Some of the Christians were restless fanatics in regard to the Second Coming of Christ! Paul will specifically address that problem next week in verses 13-18, as a result they had become busybodies and lazy!

** Well, before he lays out the three manifestations of love found here in verse eleven, Paul tells them what their attitude should be in all three cases. What is that?

They were to be ambitious. Lit. To strive earnestly for, they needed to set these goals!

** Alright then, with that motive driving them, what was to be their first goal?

1. To lead a quiet life. Paul is saying their life was to be balanced. They were not to become so bothered by or preoccupied with Christ's coming again so as to distract them from the daily responsibilities of life. cf. 2Thessalonians 3:6-10

** And their second goal?

2. Attend to their own business. Do not spend their days in gossip or meddling in the affairs of others. cf. 1Timothy 5:13, 1Peter 4:15-16

** And what about their third goal?

3. They were to work! Specifically with their own hands. They needed to be involved themselves, so that their love, and faith in Christ would be made manifest by a very high work ethic. This was quite abnormal for the Greek culture of the day.
cf. 1Thessalonians 2:9 and Mark 6:3

** Is this the first time that these Thessalonians were hearing this instruction?

No - "...just as we commanded you..." Paul had been telling them when he was with them in person!

** Given their great tract record, do you suppose that all of the Christians there in Thessalonica took Paul's words to heart and obeyed his command?

No - Unfortunately, we see him repeating this same line of thought one year later.
cf. 2Thessalonians 3:11-12

V.12 ** Alright, let's get to the purpose for this entire passage. If Christians love one another as they have been taught by God to do, and manifest that love by living a quiet, balanced life, attending to their own business and working with their own hands - what kind of behavior will they manifest toward the unsaved?

"Proper Behavior"! "...so that you may behave properly toward outsiders..." Our corporate lifestyle speaks volumes to the lost world around us. When a church or Christian organization displays a lazy or poor work ethic, or it even goes bankrupt, it is the Lord Himself who takes the blame. The world's response is always, "and they were Christians."

** What does Paul add to the end of this verse which might be confusing?

"...and not be in any need".

** Is it wrong to help a brother or sister in need?

No, we are commanded to help others in the body of Christ.
cf. 1John 3:16-17, James 2:15-16, Luke 3:10-11

** Is it a sin to have a need?

Absolutely not - That is part of the working of the body of Christ, to meet one another's need.

** So, given the context, what is Paul trying to say?

Do not get so preoccupied with the Second Coming that you become a busybody that sponges off your hard working Christian brother or sister while you just lay around waiting!

** Why not - what is at stake?

The glory of God! In Paul's day, there in Thessalonica, restless busybodies who were lazy and not providing for their own basic needs were becoming a burden to their Christian brothers and sisters, and to non-Christians as well, destroying their testimony for Christ in the process.
cf. Colossians 4:5, Titus.2:3-5, 1Timothy 6:1

EXTRICATE

** Our "**Proper Behavior**" begins with our Biblical love being made manifest to one another before a watching world. How did we learn to love like this?

God Himself taught us. It is supernatural, which is why it draws the attention of the lost world around us. Remember - Romans 5:5

DELINEATE

** Even if we are very good at showing this kind of love to others, according to verse 10, what should we strive to do?

"...excel still more..."

** What were the three practical manifestations for a Christian's love toward his brother or sister?

1. Lead a quiet life.(Balanced, without fanaticism)
2. Attend to your own business.
3. Work with your hands.

EVALUATE

** If we were to so live, what kind of behavior would we be showing toward the unsaved world around us?

"**Proper Behavior**" - This is simply what is right. What God expects of us, for His glory sake.

ACTIVATE

** Paul has given us some very practical instruction on how we are to live and on how our behavior can have a positive impact upon the lost. Let's ask the Lord to help us show the impact of His word on our daily lives by demonstrating its life changing power to the unsaved individuals around us through our "**Proper Behavior**".

Closing prayer