

BROTHERLY LOVE

Friday, October 24

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

1 Thessalonians 4:9 *Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.*

After having discussed the abuse of physical love, Paul now turns to brotherly love. He warns believers of two dangers related to loving one another.

The first danger is that of not showing love (4:9-10). Believers need to continue to look for opportunities to show Christ's love. These believers had understood the importance of Christian love. The Thessalonians had received God's Word and the Holy Spirit had applied it to their hearts. This was evident in the love they showed not only to those in their own community but throughout the province of Macedonia. As their spiritual growth continued to mature, Paul knew that their love would continue to grow.

The second danger is to show too much love (4:11-12). Believers may have so much concern for others that they excuse their bad behavior or support them to the point where they become idle and live off the church. There was a segment in this church that had become lazy and idle, depending on others in the church to take care of them. Confusion over Christ's second coming (4:13-18) may have caused them to quit their jobs and wait for His return. They were selfishly depending on the wealthier people in the church to take care of their needs. Paul gives several commands to combat this abuse of brotherly love.

1. **STRIVE FOR PEACE** – This command could literally be translated “strive hard to live quietly.” Paul is instructing believers to live lives that do not intrude into other people's lives and become a burden to them. It takes a lot of effort to live a humble and quiet life in the middle of a chaotic culture. The Christian's goal is to draw attention to Christ, not to themselves. The Scriptures are full of instructions to live in peace (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11; 2 Corinthians 13:11).
2. **STOP MEDDLING** – The idle people had nothing better to do then interfere in other people's business. They were not really concerned about the welfare of others. They just wanted to seem like it! They were busybodies, sticking their noses in areas where they had no business!
3. **START WORKING** – Paul's solution for these busybodies was to get to work. Paul knew the worth and honor of a good day's work. Working faithfully can be a strong testimony.

Paul mentions two reasons that believers should live and work to please God (4:12).

1. **TO BE A WITNESS** – The believer's daily walk should be a testimony to a watching world. They will be drawn to Christ through our faithful lives.
2. **TO NOT WORRY** – God has promised to supply the needs of those who live and work for Him (Philippians 4:19), whether this be through the support of God's people or the blessings of God on their work. An added benefit of working to please the Lord is the ability to help others (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:17-9).

The church should be known as a place of care and help for those in need but also as a place that encourages people to live to please God. We should not be known as freeloaders or busybodies, but as compassionate and hardworking saints who do so for God's honor and glory.