

PURSUIING THE QUIET LIFE

I THESSALONIANS 4:11-12

Read I Th. 4:11-12.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Christians not only have the obligation to love one another but also to be good testimonies to the people of the world. Paul's great concern was that the Thessalonican believers earn their own wages and not become freeloaders depending on the support of unbelievers. "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life" (1 Thes. 4:11, NIV) seems like a paradox; if you are ambitious, your life will probably not be quiet. But the emphasis is on quietness of mind and heart, the inner peace that enables a man to be sufficient through faith in Christ. Paul did not want the saints running around creating problems as they earned their daily bread. 1

Waiting quietly on the Lord like Jesus did! Mark 1:29-39; 3:20

Jesus had a full and very pressured life. His days were always long, His nights were often short. His time was constantly punctuated by the cries of enemies and friends. He was sought out by individuals, hunted by friends, invaded by crowds. He had hurried or no meals at times, and collapsed in fatigue to the point of sleeping through a storm.

Yet in the midst of constant pressures all about Him, He lived in an aura of constant peace. He lived and breathed the fragrance of a world of heavenly tranquility. To His dying hour He was brave, bold and confidently aware of God's plan. If He was just like us apart from our sin, which of His habits should we imitate? Just two for tonight.

Jesus was a man of prayer. He waited on the Lord – so should we.

Jesus was a man of the Scriptures. He waited in the Word – so should we.

The keys to the quiet life are found in Christ. Join me as we look at what He found as He searched and fed upon the Scriptures.

Listen to what God intended life to be like from the very beginning. The prophet Isaiah has a profound description of life God's way. Isaiah and the Psalms are more on Christ's lips than any other portions of God's Word. This is the life Jesus lived perfectly. This is

1Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

Word Count = 2200

C:\DOCUMENTS AND SETTINGS\JBARNETT.TBCN\MY DOCUMENTS\7-2007 SERMONS\SERMS 70 80 90\1997\970921PM 57.26 QUIET LIFE.DOC
March 29, 2007 Page 1A

the internal quality we should seek. The quiet like is the fullness of the Spirit's fruit of peace!

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Isaiah 26:12 Lord, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us.

Isaiah 32:17 The work of righteousness will be peace,
And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

Isaiah 48:18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!
Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee. LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light. (KJV)

Now, what has happened?

- Often our lives are anything but peaceful, quiet or assured.
- We worry for our safety, our future, our jobs, our health...on and on it can go.

Why?

- There is a deadly yet invisible killer on the loose in our town.
- He first steals our joy, then our time, later our strength and finally he even robs and gives a fatal blow to purpose in life.

His name? OVERLOAD!

His method? STRESS!

What happens to a christian who has been gloriously liberated from sins shackles? After soaring with wings as an eagle it's earthbound so soon. Why?

One very gifted writer² has expressed modern society's problem as OVERLOAD. Let me explain what he meant.

Think with me where you show up on a diagnostic test that detects this deadly condition called overload. Do you have any of these symptoms?

1. **ACTIVITY OVERLOAD** - we book our lives weeks into the future and often in the desire to be more efficient we book several things into the same time period. "Activity overload takes away the pleasure of anticipation and the delight of reminiscence." God says be still and know Me...Psalm 46: 10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

2. **CHANGE OVERLOAD** - "nothing defines our age more than the furious and relentless increase in the rate of change," summarizes historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. For thousands of years of recorded history change came in a slow, controlled and understandable rate, now we are brutally jerked forward at warp speed whether we like it or not.

God says seek out the old paths where you find rest for your soul ...

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

3. **COMMITMENT OVERLOAD** - Most of us make more commitments than we have time to give them. In his great book **Balancing Life's Demands** Dr. J. Grant Howard says, "Some people can't say no. They take on too many relationships and too many responsibilities. They enroll in too many courses, hold down too many jobs, volunteer for too many tasks, make too many appointments, serve on too many committees, have too many friends. They are trying to be **all** things too **all** men **all** at once **all** by themselves!"³

- One thing have I desired of the Lord...Ps 27:4

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple.

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

COMPETITION OVERLOAD - it's part of the American dream. To compete is American and it's constantly emphasized in school, business and athletics...but is it spiritually healthy?

² This section adapted and quotations taken from *Margin* by Richard Swenson, pp. 83-87.

³ (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1983), p.144.

Word Count = 2200

Jesus taught a non-aggressive, non-self asserting, non-self promoting lifestyle for His children in the Sermon on the Mount...

Matthew 5

CHOICE OVERLOAD - "In 1978, there were 11,767 items in the average supermarket; today [1992] the number is 24,531." This includes over 186 different choices of breakfast cereal you can find at your grocery store. A satellite dish can serve you up 1,500 movie choices per month. Futurist Allan Toffler warns, "We are, in fact, racing toward 'overchoice' ". God says seek Me first and most Matthew 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

COMPETITION OVERLOAD - it's part of the American dream. To compete is American and it's constantly emphasized in school, business and athletics...but is it spiritually healthy? Jesus taught a non-aggressive, non-self asserting, non-self promoting lifestyle for His children in the Sermon on the Mount... check out Matthew 5

DEBT OVERLOAD - from the White House to the bungalow on your street most of America is awash in red ink. It is debilitating and unbiblical! Owe no man anything...Rom 13:18

DECISION OVERLOAD - "every day we have more tough decisions to make and less time to do it in. The trivial ones are objectionable just because of how many there are [what flavor, which topping, mint or tartar control, low fat, low sodium, diet or regular...] But we also are facing new choices generations past never dreamed of: whether or not to wait to have children; whether to move and change jobs; whether both dad and mom should work outside the home; whether we should put grandma in the home or not. Too many decisions trivial or not in too short a time is vintage overload." If thine eye be single...Mt 6:22

EDUCATION OVERLOAD - each decade the education level of the general populace rises. While agreeing education is important, we must ask the heretical question: how much is enough? Solomon said Ecclesiastes 12:12

FATIGUE OVERLOAD - we are a tired society. Even leisure is often exhausting. With our generator indicator flashing discharge it's little wonder our batteries are drained. Our weary, withered state is not God's plan. It's not the fault of activities or friends, it's the result of overload. Jesus said rest for our souls...

HURRY OVERLOAD - "haste is a modern ailment. It is also fashionably American. Our lives are nonstop, lived at a breathless pace. We walk fast, talk fast, eat fast and then excuse our selves by saying, 'I must run.'" Alexander Solzhenitsyn accusingly said, "Hastiness and superficiality - these are the psychic diseases of the 20th century". Wait patiently for the Lord...Psalm 25:5; 27:14; 37:7,9,34; 62:5; 123:2

INFORMATION OVERLOAD - a single edition of the NY Times has more information than a seventeenth century Britisher would have encountered in a lifetime...

MEDIA OVERLOAD - 98% of Americans have TV; the average US home has 2 and both are on 7 hours a day...

POSSESSION OVERLOAD - We have more 'things per person ' than any other nation in history. Closets are full, storage space is used up, and cars can't fit into garages. Having first imprisoned us with debt, possessions then take over our houses and occupy our time. This begins to sound like an invasion. Everything I own owns me. Why would I want more? Jesus said care of things makes your heart grow cold...

Do you have the peace of God? Are you are peace without God?

Old Testament promised peace: Jesus Christ had Perfect Peace, Jesus Christ Came With Gospel of Peace: He Sent His Disciples Out With His Peace: Apostle Paul Taught Gosel = Peace:

I. What is peace?

- A. Authored by God 1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (KJV)
- B. Produced by the Holy Spirit Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (NKJV)
- C. Located in the Person of Christ Ephesians 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, (NKJV)
- D. Guarded by God Philippians 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (NKJV)
- E. Based on Christ's Sacrifice Colossians 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (NKJV)
- F. Referred by God Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (NKJV)
- G. Reserved by God 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)
- H. Part of the Pursued Life 2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NKJV)
- I. Imperative to Salvation Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all [people,] and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: (NKJV)
- J. Multiplied 1 Peter 1:2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied. (NKJV)
- K. Supreme Goal 2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; (NKJV)

How?

1. An hour a week with no TV just alone with God.
2. Take a 15 minute walk daily and pray.