

BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
THE LABOR OF LOVE
1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10

Introduction

We began looking at this chapter last week and saw how the Apostle Paul remembered the Thessalonian Church for some good things.

READ SCRIPTURE

We saw first of all how Paul remembered **THEIR WORK OF FAITH!**

Or, the work that was produced by their faith!

THEIR WORK OF FAITH INVOLVED

- I. A PROPER ACTION TOWARD THE WORD!*
- II. A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD!*
- III. A PROPER ACCEPTANCE OF THE WORD!*
- IV. A PROPER ACCOMPLISHMENT BY THE WORD!*

Next, we want to see how Paul remembered **THEIR LABOR OF LOVE!**

Or we could say, **their labor which was prompted by their love!**

The word that Paul uses in verse 3 that is translated “*labor*” means “*fatiguing work*,” and differs from the word “*work*” in the phrase “*work of faith*” in that it includes the cost associated with the labor!

The definition of the “*love*” that is spoken of here is the same word “*love*” that God has for us! **It means that we seek the highest good for the one loved**, and since the greatest good one can do for the unredeemed is to share the Gospel of Christ with them, a “*labor of love*” would mean the **sounding out of the word of the Lord!**

By the way it is worded here in the Scripture, we can understand that the Thessalonian believers did this to the point of fatigue in Macedonia, Achaia, and every place! (Vs 8)

I. THEY DID NOT SERVE GOD BECAUSE IT WAS EASY!

(Vs 9)

Listen, it has never been “easy” to serve the LORD!

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Remember that the religious background of these believers was that of idolatry! We have said and shown before that idol worship appealed to the flesh and often it even involved immorality!

A. The Desire Of The Flesh Was Still Just As Real As It Was Before They Became Believers! (Paul speaks of his struggle with the flesh both before and after salvation in Romans 7)

B. The Draw Of The World Was Still Just As Real As It Was Before They Became Believers!

C. The Deception Of The Devil Was Still Just As Real As It Was Before They Became Believers!

1) Before They Believed They Were Tempted In Areas To Keep Them Blinded To The Truth!

2) After They Believed They Were Tempted In Areas To Distract Them Away From The Truth!

II. THEY DID NOT SERVE GOD BECAUSE IT WAS POPULAR!
(Vs 6; 2:14-15)

A. Often They Were The Objects Of Verbal Attacks!

1. The Remnant In The Book Of Ezra That Returned To Rebuild The Temple Had To Fight Criticism!

2. The Remnant In The Book Of Nehemiah That Returned To Rebuild The Walls Had To Fight Criticism!

3. All Through The Book Of Acts We See It!

B. Sometimes They Were Objects Of Discrimination!

C. And Some Of Them Were Objects Of Physical Attack!

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D. What Does The Bible Say About Attacks For Christ's Sake?

1. Take It Patiently! (1 Peter 2:19-24)

Christ patiently endured what He endured because of His love for us!

We should be willing to patiently endure similar things because of our love for Him and love for others!

2. Rejoice! (1 Peter 4:12-14)

*Matthew 5:10-12 – "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:** for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*

THEY DID NOT SERVE GOD BECAUSE IT WAS EASY...POPULAR
III. THEY DID NOT SERVE GOD BECAUSE IT WAS PROFITABLE!

Think about this...these believers faced the loss of their jobs, their families, and their possessions! Talk about religious discrimination.

They knew nothing of the prosperity theology that is so popular with many of the so-called preachers on TV. (Charlatans!)

There are some folks that the only reason they have anything to do with God or His Church is because they think there is some money to be made! A lot of big names are more about selling their books and their merchandise than they are about *ministry*!

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Some call some of what they do a "*ministry*" and then they charge for it! They call it a donation, but if you don't make the donation... oh, it is a charge alright!

IV. THEY SERVED GOD BECAUSE OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THEM AND THEIR CORRESPONDING LOVE FOR CHRIST!

That's the only proper motive!

The Apostle Paul shed light on this motive in 2 Corinthians 5:

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 – "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

And he further shed light on it in Romans 12.

Romans 12:1 – "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Paul also told the Galatian Church in:

*Galatians 5:6 – "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; **but faith which worketh by love.**"*

He was talking about faith which works by the love of God that is in our hearts!

Jesus said in *John 14:15 – "If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

John 14:21 – "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

John 14:23-24 – "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

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24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

Do you love Jesus? If so, then shouldn't you be doing what He said!
What commandments? All He has commanded us!
That's why it is so important to read and study your Bible!

Commandments About The Lost

Matthew 28:19-20 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8)

Commandments About The Brethren

John 13:34-35 34—"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 15:12—"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

What does this love look like? There are 16 Characteristics given in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

- 1. It Suffereth Long (Or Is Longsuffering!) (Vs 4)**
i.e. It is forbearing or patient.
- 2. It Is Kind! (Vs 4)**
i.e. To show oneself useful; to act benevolently.
- 3. It Envieth Not! (Vs 4)**
i.e. It is not upset at someone else's superior station in life, wanting to see them hurt.

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- 4. It Vaunteth Not Itself! (Vs 4)**
i.e. It doesn't boast or brag about self.
- 5. It Is Not Puffed Up! (Vs 4)**
i.e. It isn't proud or haughty.
- 6. Doth Not Behave Itself Unseemly! (Vs 5)**
i.e. To be or act unbecoming, that is, unsuitable or improper for the person or character; indecent.
- 7. Seeketh Not Her Own! (Vs 5)**
i.e. Looking out for your own welfare, not another's.
- 8. Is Not Easily Provoked! (Vs 5)**
i.e. Easily angered, wearing the feelings on the shoulder.
- 9. Thinketh No Evil! (Vs 5)**
i.e. It doesn't hold a grudge. It doesn't think the worst.
- 10. Rejoiceth Not In Iniquity! (Vs 6)**
i.e. Doesn't delight in evil or injustice.
- 11. Rejoiceth In Truth! (Vs 6)**
i.e. Loves and rejoices in truth. Love desires to go God's way. God's way is truth!
- 12. Beareth All Things! (Vs 7)**
i.e. "To cover with silence" or endure patiently.
- 13. Believeth All Things! (Vs 7)**
i.e. Give the benefit of the doubt. Love believes without suspicion. Eager to believe the best.

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- 14. Hopeth All Things! (Vs 7)**
i.e. Love hopes without pessimism. It refuses to take failure as final.

- 15. Endureth All Things! (Vs 7)**
i.e. Endures all trials with a loving spirit.

- 16. Never Faileth! (Vs 8)**
i.e. Doesn't drop away or stop or collapse.

Conclusion

Paul remembered without ceasing this Church's **Work Of Faith and Labor Of Love**. So, how is your faith? What is your faith producing in your life? If it is not producing anything could it be that you have a dead faith?

And, how is your love? What kind of labor is being prompted in your life by your love? Are you good at saying you love Christ, but it doesn't move you to do anything for Him?

Maybe you are doing something for the Lord, but your motive is all wrong! If what you are doing for the Lord is not flowing out of your faith in Him and your love for Him, then you have the **wrong basis** and the **wrong motive!**

Why not trade what your basis and your motive are for God's way!
Things will surely be better for you if you do!