

# How to Please the Lord

## I Thess 4:1-2, 9-12

<sup>1</sup> Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; <sup>2</sup> for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup> and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; <sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

### **Introduction:**

We have a shoe leather faith or a faith where the rubber meets the road. Our Faith is not just a religion for those who have a desire to set themselves apart from the community and live in a monastery in some far away place. The Christian faith is extremely practical. It is not just a body of knowledge or a statement of faith. It is a Faith that transforms the live. It affects every area of life.

## Review

This whole doctrine of Sanctification affects all of life. If it does not, it is likely that you are not Sanctified, hence not justified,

quote from MacArthur

james 2:14

Lesson:

## General Overview

1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; <sup>2</sup> for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

v. 10 But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

Paul now introduces the practical hortatory (exhortational) section (refer to chart above), much like he does in other epistles...

I **urge** (**parakaleo**) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (see **note Romans 12:1**)

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, **entreat** (**parakaleo**) you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called (see **note Ephesians 4:1**)

**Received** (3880)(**paralambano** [word study] from **para** = beside + **lambano** = appropriate, receive) means to receive from another, to receive alongside or to take to oneself (into close association). There are two basic ideas - to take or to receive. **Paralambano** lays stress not so much on the manner of the Thessalonians' receiving, as on the contents of what they received.

Here **paralambano** is used for the reception of something transmitted, specifically spiritual instruction or truth. The **orist tense** looks back to the time when the Thessalonians heard the missionaries' proclaim the gospel and records their active response to that message - they **took hold** of the divine message. They received it alongside. They took it to themselves.

**Ought** (it is necessary) (1163) (**dei** from **deo** = to bind, tie objects together, put in prison, deo is also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. **Dei** refers to inward constraint which is why it is often translated **must**. **Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place, often with the implication of inevitability.

**Walk** (4043) (**peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to go here and there in walking, to tread all around. Most NT uses are figurative and refer to one's manner of life, one's moral conduct or one's life-style. Life is often represented as a journey.

As the **Apostle John** states...

the one who says he abides in Him (Christ) ought (present tense = is continually indebted) himself to **walk** in the same manner as He **walked**. (present tense = as Jesus habitually walked) ([1John 2:6](#))

**Ray Stedman** illustrates the Christian's walk noting that walking... merely consists of two simple steps, repeated over and over again. It is not a complicated thing. In the same way, the Christian life is a matter of taking two steps, one step after another. Then you are beginning to walk. Those two steps (are seen in Colossians 3). Paul describes them as, "Put off the old man" (see [Colossians 3:5-10](#)) and "put on the new." (see specific attitudes and actions in [Colossians 3:12-Colossians 4:6](#)) Then repeat them. That is all. Keep walking through every day like that. That is how Scripture exhorts us to live." (Click for full text of [True Human Potential](#))

**Please** (700) (**aresko** from **airo** = through the idea of raising up, elevating or exciting emotion - not everyone agrees ) originally meant to make peace, to reconcile someone, to be well disposed to someone. It came to mean to be satisfied with, to take pleasure in and then to take a pleasant attitude toward someone. In short it means to cause someone to be pleased with someone or something or to be pleasing to or acceptable to. **Aresko** can sometimes mean to strive to please to accommodate one's self to the opinions desires and interests of others.

To **please** means to give or be the source of satisfaction, pleasure or contentment to another.

The **present tense** of **aresko** in [1 Thes 4:1](#) calls for this to be one's continual practice or lifestyle. Earlier Paul reminded the converts that they spoke forth the gospel

**That (hina)** expresses the purpose of the call of a pleasing walk.

**Excel** (4052) (**perisseuo** from **perissós** = abundant, exceeding some number, measure, rank or need, over and above, more than sufficient from **peri** = in sense of beyond) means to exceed a fixed number or measure and so to exist in superfluity, to cause to superabound, to be superfluous, to be in excess, to overflow, to be in affluence, to excel or to be in abundance. The implication is that there is considerably more than what would be expected. The idea is to overflow like a river out of its banks!

This verb is well illustrated in **Matthew 14** where we read that... they all ate, and were satisfied. And they picked up what **was left over (perisseuo)** of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. ([Mt 14:20](#))

- 1 Love each other More
2. Lead a Quiet life
3. Mind your own Business
4. Work with your own hands

These issues seemed to be a problem in the church.

### **2 Thess 3:10**

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. <sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

<sup>13</sup> But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good. <sup>14</sup> And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. <sup>15</sup> Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

The reason for this becoming a issue is really amazing. Its not like we may think, in our culture, that people are lazy and want to live on welfare.

It was a Doctrinal one. Or a miss application of a doctrine.

### **Look at I Thess 1:9-10**

v. 9

you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

### **2 Thess 2: 1**

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

This was a big issue in this church. They were so ready and eager for the return of Christ, many had just concluded that it was not worth the effort to do anything as far as work or improvements or anything else. They just said, forget this place, we will just wait on Christ to come back.

So they had quit everything else except the bare essentials and had too much time on their hands.

The commands that Paul gives, seem to contradict the reality of the Return of Christ.

After all if He is coming shouldn't we see commands like

1. Evangelize
2. Pass out literature
3. Pour more money into the church
4. Give more of your time to the Lord

All good but in this context Paul understands that the plan of God will be complete, The wonderful truth of The Doctrines of Grace is that we don't have to live in a panic all the time. We know God is in control and all we need to do is remain faithful, share the gospel, live the truth and He will accomplish his Plan.

The Thessalonians were so eager to see Christ, that they had stopped working and gave up on the world and just sat down and became busy bodies.

So Paul says until Jesus does com

Love one another  
 Be quiet  
 Mind your own business  
 Work

- 1 Love each other More
2. Lead a Quiet life
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## 1. Love each other More

<sup>9</sup> But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup> and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

**Love of the brethren** (5360) (**philadelphia** from **phílos** = beloved, dear, friendly + **adelphós** = brother) means "fraternal love", brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren. Brotherly love normally referred to the love members of a family held for each other (this was the way it was used in secular Greek) and would not normally be used to describe the love between members of different families.

**Paul** frequently mentions **love** in the Thessalonian epistles... constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and **labor of love**... (see note [1Thes 1:3](#))

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, (see note [1Thes 3:6](#))

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 (see note [1Thes 3:12](#))

But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and **love**, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. (see note [1Thes 5:8](#))

and that you esteem them very highly in **love** because of their work. Live in peace with one another. (see note [1Thes 5:13](#))

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the **love of each one of you toward one another** grows ever greater ([2Thes 1:3](#))

And may the Lord direct your hearts into the **love** of God and into the steadfastness of Christ. ([2Thes 3:5](#))

**Taught by God** (2312)([theodidaktos](#) from **Theós** = God + [didasko](#) [word study] = to teach from **dáo** = to learn) (only Scriptural use of this Greek word) means divinely instructed or taught of God and conveys the sense that the Thessalonians should innately know that their Father expects them to love all of His children.

There is a famous quote by **Tertullian** (ca AD 192) who says the pagans remark in amazement...

"Behold how these Christians love one another."

**To love** (25) (**agapao** - see related study of noun **agape**) means to love unconditionally and sacrificially as God Himself loves sinful men ([John 3:16](#)), the way He loves the Son ([John 3:35](#), [15:9](#), [17:23](#), [24](#)).

Note that **agapao** is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice.

**MacArthur** writes that **agapao**...

expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. (MacArthur, [John: 1 & 2 Thessalonians](#). Moody Press or Logos)

**First**, Christian **love** is evidence of genuine new birth.

Conversely, not loving is evidence that one abides in spiritual death and is not born again.

**1John 3:10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. **11** For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; **12** not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. **13** Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. **15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

**Secondly**, Christian love is shown by its sacrificial nature, laying down of one's life.

**1John 3:16** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

**Third**, Christian love is shown not just by words but by action. Agape love is not so much a feeling as it is an action.

**1John 3:17** But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

**Fourth**, manifesting genuine Christian love in deeds not just words will give assurance regarding their salvation and confidence in prayer.

**1John 3:19** (NLT) It is by our actions (of meeting other's needs) that we know we are living in the truth (that we are "children of God" {1John 3:10} and not "of the evil one" {1John 3:12}, so we will be confident when we stand before the Lord, **20** even if our hearts condemn us (our tangible evidences of demonstration of love for the brethren provide comfort to us when we feel guilty that we have not loved enough or we have doubts. We can come to Him now in confidence and look forward with confidence to standing before Him some day in the future - see 1John 3:21). For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.

**Fifth**, belief in Jesus is intimately related to love of the brethren and we are to show Christian love because God commanded us. If we obey we experience a greater sense of His abiding presence in us.

**1John 3:23** And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one

another, just as He commanded us. **24** And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**Sixth**, Christian love should continue as it reflects God Who is love and the source of love.

**1John 4:7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (In simple terms, John explains that if we don't love, we are not believers because the essence of God is love and to fail to demonstrate His love shows we do not belong to His family.)

**Seventh**, God manifested His love by giving us what we need (propitiation for sins), not what we want and His love is the basis for our life in and through union with Christ...

**1John 4:9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**Eighth**, because of God's love for us we are to love one another.

**1John 4:11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

**Ninth**, loving others prove God abides in us.

**1John 4:12** No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

**Tenth**, living a love filled life will result in a God filled life.

**1John 4:16** And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and

the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ("all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them", NLT)

**Eleventh**, practicing love gives us confidence that we can stand before the judgment seat of Christ and not fear.

**1John 4:17** By this (by abiding in love - e.g., as shown by sacrificial laying down of our life, by meeting our neighbor's need with actions not just words, by keeping God's commandments as in 1John 2:5), love is perfected (as we practice love and manifest God's love, His love is brought to maturity) with us, that we may have confidence (boldness in speech) in the day of judgment (see bema - judgment of believers); because as He is (as Christ is - as we practice a life of love it shows we are like His Son, that we belong to His family, that we can have confidence at the judgment, cp 1John 2:28, 29 which says the same thing in slightly different words, cp 1John 3:1, 2, 3 "we are children of God...we shall be like Him {Jesus}"), so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear (the context is still the day of judgment - that there is no fear because we demonstrate a "perfected" love, a maturing love) in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

**Comment:** John Piper explains *"In other words the reason there is no fear in love is that there is no threat of punishment for being a loving person. When you love someone with real practical deeds, you never hear a warning signal that says, "You're going to get punished for this." Fear is what you feel when you have done something that ought to be punished. But love is never threatened with punishment. So there is no fear in love."* see Piper's full sermon [Perfect Love Casts Out Fear](#)

**Twelfth**, love of the brethren shows we genuinely love God and is made possible only because He first loved us.

**1John 4:19** We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

**Thirteenth**, love of God is shown by keeping His commandments and this shows we love the brethren.

**1John 5:1** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome (because we now have His Spirit to enable us to keep them).

## 2. Lead a Quiet life

<sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life,

**Make it your ambition** (5389)(**philotimeomai** from **philos** = friend, loved + **time** = honor) means literally to be fond of honour, to be actuated by love of honor and hence to strive or seek for honour and hence to be ambitious. In later Greek it came to denote restless eagerness in any pursuit, hence, "to strive eagerly, to be zealous."

There are only 3 NT uses all by Paul...

**Romans 15:20** (note) And thus I **aspired** to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation

**2 Corinthians 5:9** Therefore also we **have as our ambition**, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

**To lead a quiet life** - **Hiebert** comments that this exhortation... implies that there was a spirit of restlessness in the young church. It was due, apparently, not to political influences, but rather to the new religious experiences and hopes that had gripped their minds. Although there is nothing to prove that this restlessness was caused by their excited anticipation of the impending return of Christ, such a connection, nevertheless, seems probable. The inspiring expectation of Christ's return, whereby earthly interests were reduced in importance in their eyes, had become the center of their excited interest. This connection seems justified from the fact that Paul immediately follows this exhortation with his treatment of the second advent, thereupon to return to further practical exhortations concerning daily living. Paul urges that this "eschatological restlessness" be turned into the proper channel. Instead of allowing their excited expectation to lead them to neglect their daily duties, let them use this enthusiasm faithfully to fulfill those duties. (Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996)

**To lead a quiet life** (2270)(**hesuchazo** from **hesuchos** = quiet, still) means to be still or to be silent, with different connotations suggested by the context (see the 5 NT uses below).

**Hiebert** notes that **hesuchazo**...

basically means "to be at rest" and was used of silence after speech, rest after labor, peace after war, and the like; it was also used of tranquility or peace of mind; here

it is used to urge the living of a calm, restful life. The **present tense** ...stresses that they must constantly strive to lead such a life. They must eagerly endeavor to be eminent in the effort "to be quiet," live tranquilly and restfully. Instead of allowing them to succumb to fanatical excitement, Paul desires to recall them to restfulness of mind and a balanced outlook upon life. If they will develop a quiet, restful attitude, the outward manifestations of restlessness will cease. (*Ibid*)

The idea include to be quiet, inwardly calm, living quiet peaceable and orderly lives.

**MacArthur** explains that...

In anticipation of the Lord's return, believers are to lead peaceful lives, free of conflict and hostility toward others, which is a witness to the transforming power of the gospel. (*MacArthur, John: 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Moody Press or Logos*)

### 3. Mind your own Business

**Attend to your own business** - The idea is to "*mind your own business*". This duty and the one following explain how the Thessalonians are to go about leading **quiet lives**. **Your own** (Greek *idios*) places emphasis on one's own affairs, not those of others

**McGee** quips...

"Tend to your own knitting" is the way I used to hear it as a boy. Keep your nose out of the affairs of other people. This is good advice for Christians. (*Ibid*)

**MacArthur** notes that...

The admonition to **attend to your own business** was a common one in secular Greek writings but used only here in the New Testament. (Ibid)

**Attend to** (4238)(**prasso**) means to be occupied with, to accomplish or to practice. The **present tense** calls for them to be making this their daily practice or lifestyle to take care of their own business.

**Hiebert** says...

They are to serve God by a faithful performance of their own individual tasks. It is a warning against meddlesomeness in the affairs of others. While having a proper concern for the needs of the brethren, they must avoid the neglect of their personal affairs. Let them have the habit of attending to their own interests and responsibilities. (Ibid)

## 4. Work with your own hands

**And** (**kai**) introduces the second duty that will facilitate leading a quiet life.

**Work with your hands** - Note that the phrase **with your hands** indicates that Paul is referring to manual labor. It seems that the majority of the saints in the church at Thessalonica were "working class".

One must also keep the cultural context in mind for in Paul's day (not much different then our modern times) **manual labor** was regarded as degrading, befitting the status of slaves and free men should never "stoop" to this level. Thus mundane work was generally despised by aristocrats and those of higher social status.

The Greek writer **Plutarch** said that

while we delight in the work, we despise the workman, as, for instance, in the case of perfumes and dyes; we take a delight in them, but dyers and perfumers we regard as illiberal and vulgar folk.

On the other hand the Jews upheld the dignity of all forms of labor and regarded work as obligatory and every Jewish boy (even those in wealthy families) was taught a trade. The Jewish rabbis also worked at a trade to earn their livelihood (cf Jesus working as a carpenter)

1<sup>2</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

**James Denney** said it well writing that...

If we cannot be holy at our work, it is not worth taking any trouble to be holy at other times.

**John MacArthur** echoes this thought writing that...

When believers display diligent work attitudes and habits and live in a loving and tranquil manner that respects others' privacy and does not intrude or gossip, it constitutes a powerful testimony to unbelievers and makes the gospel credible... Believers who sacrificially love other people, exhibit tranquil lives, conscientiously focus on keeping their own lives in order, and faithfully carry out their daily responsibilities in the workplace (thus avoiding any welfare dependence)—all the while proclaiming the gospel in light of the return of Christ—are the most effective witnesses to their unsaved

neighbors and loved ones. (MacArthur, John: 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Moody Press or Logos)

**Martin** makes the point that it was never...

Paul's intent that the church disrupt society or overthrow governments. Rather, he encouraged Christians to be good citizens and exemplary members of their families and of their society but to do so in a manner consistent with the teachings of Christ. Only in this sense was the Pauline gospel intended to change society. It set out to change the individuals who made up society while awaiting that climactic event when the power of God would truly change the world forever. (Martin, D. Michael. 1, 2 Thessalonians. The New American Commentary Series: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995)

**Ray Stedman** feels like several other commentators have surmised that...

These Christians in Thessalonica were making fools of themselves by stressing the immediacy of the coming of the Lord to such a degree that they had stopped working. That is why the apostle bids them to keep busy. Here in the United States, in 1846, a group of followers of William Miller abandoned their work, sold their possessions, and went out on a hilltop to wait for the Lord to appear because this prophet had told them that Jesus was coming at a certain day and hour. There was tremendous expectancy on their part, but, of course, Jesus did not come. They became fools in the eyes of people because of their extreme action and turned many

against biblical prophecy by what they had done. The apostle corrects that kind of thinking in these words. "Keep busy" is his advice. "Keep from meddling in other people's affairs. Do not try to get them to follow some foolish idea that you may have about prophetic things. Keep busy, providing your own needs (that is a wonderful word) so you do not become a burden to others and you will win the respect of the outside world." These are very important words. (1 Thessalonians 4:9-18: Comfort at the Grave)