

The Character of a Christian

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Introduction: If I were to ask; do you have a Christian character, how would you answer? I am sure most if not all of us would answer yes. Well if I were to ask you to give the meaning of character what would come to mind? Character is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.” In other words it is who you are as a person from the inside out! In my message last week the Apostle Paul reminded the Thessalonians they were called to be Holy or set apart. As a brief reminder that also applies to you and I! Holiness is not something we put on and take off like a piece of clothing, it should reflect our standing as a child of God. Our holiness or lack of it is easily seen by everyone through our character. For example do we genuinely reflect the likeness of Christ? And; do our words and actions reflect Jesus Christ in our life? Being a Christian is being a new person that is why Jesus called it being born again. Living the Christian life is dynamic, full of adventure, challenge, frustration and even fear. This is not something new to our generation, the Bible tells us the church in Thessalonica was dealing with the very same situation. Paul had some words of encouragement, challenge and excitement to share with them. Let’s look at our Bible and let it remind us about “The Character of a Christian”.

I. The progress made V.v.9-10

We all love. Our love is plagued with a problem, it is conditional! Paul mentions “brotherly love” as being obvious! Next he challenges them to let God do more! You may say I can’t do that! You’re right, but God can do it through you; if you will make yourself available.

A. The evidence of greater love v.9

1. Is found in Bible doctrine

a) *God taught it*

Matthew 22:38-40 This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

b) *Jesus lived it*

c) *Holy Spirit guides it*

d) *The word explains it*

2. Is exhibited by our practice

a) *Not repetition*

b) *Regeneration*

B. The application of greater love v.10

1. To the neighbor

It’s easy to love those we know!

2. To the nation’s

It is a challenge to love those we don’t!

Have you ever wondered why God emphasizes love so much? Because love is foundation for everything God does; past, present or future. Even judgment is an act of love. It protects His children and kingdom from the assault of Satan and the influence of sin in eternity. Love also works to accomplish growth in our lives on this side of eternity. Notice with me...

II. The purpose explained V.11

A. Discipline; “aspire to be quiet”

The desire to lead a humble life that places God first, then family, then responsibilities, then self.

B. Decision; “mind your own business”

Our priorities are God centered not self-centered, as Christians our business should be God’s business and no other business!

C. Dependability; “work with your hands”

Don’t depend on God or anyone else to do for you what God has prepared you to do for yourself!

The progress love makes in our daily walk with God should prove beyond any doubt...

III. The proper claim V.12

We have this claim through Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; this claim...

A. Is a godly witness

Have you heard the phrase “You can talk the talk but can you walk the walk”? All of the Christian appearance on earth cannot undo a bad testimony!

B. Provides a content spirit

When our heart is right (godly loving relationship) and our life is right (discipline, decisions and dependability) we will be content (have lack of nothing).

Conclusion: When I began this message I ask; “do you have a Christian character”? Do you still feel as strongly about your answer as you did say an hour ago? We should never be content with our Christian character. We should always be willing to allow Gods word to lead us to a closer relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. A closer relationship with God should ultimately result in a deep godly love that desires fellowship with other Christians; love, that desires to live a witness of the work of God in you and; love, which desires to see others know Jesus as Lord and Savior. If we truly want to be the church of the Bible we must realize it can only happen if we do it Gods way as outlined in His word. If we refuse to be the church; how will the lost be reached? I want to ask you to join me in sincere prayer this morning, if you can? Join me in front if you can’t, join me where you are. In either case sincerely ask God to search your hearts, forgive your sin, develop in you deep brotherly love, examine your character and most of all give yourself to leading others to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.