

- C. Paul gives two reasons for how this is helpful.
- i. So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders...
 - a) 1 Peter 2:12.
 - b) When the church learns to be the church, working to give to those in need, loving neighbor as ourselves, we will gain an audience before a watching world.
 - ii. So that you will not be dependent on anybody. (4:12)
 - a) Some were taking advantage of generosity.
 - b) The purpose of your work is love of neighbor!

Love has to be worked out in the practical details of our daily lives, because we are a part of a new community in which walking out love is the proof of who we are!

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Why is it important to come to realize that we are a part of something which, as a whole, is much bigger than ourselves?
- In what ways do we see the Thessalonians already walking in love in this text? How does Paul call them to walk in love even more?
- Why must we come to see love not as a feeling toward others but a life of sacrificial actions for the good of another? Or to say that love has to be worked out in the practical details of our daily lives?
- What does (and doesn't) Paul mean when he says, "For you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other?" Why is it important to read this in light of OT promises?
- How does this text communicate grace to empower us to increase in our love for one another?

Dissident Disciples (Part 7)

Love as God's Family!

Jerry Cisar — August 12, 2018

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Introduction

You represent something much bigger than you and your life. What you have become is more than you. It's bigger than you!

In order for us to understand what we are to do, we too have to understand whom we have become.

I. Who you are determines what you must do. (4:9-10)

- A. You are God's family, so act like it!
 - i. 9a "your love for one another" is literally "brotherly love"
 - ii. *you do love all the brothers and sisters...*
 - iii. *yet we urge you brothers and sisters—*
- B. This rooted in the prayer of 3:1-13.
 - i. The prayer begins and ends with a reference to God as "our God and Father," and in the middle we have the call to increase in love and holiness.
 - ii. So the call to love one another as brothers and sisters *grows out of* the recognition of our common Father.
- C. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 assumes that the Thessalonians have become part of a unique family – God's end time people.
 - i. These are the people prophesied by Daniel . (For further study see Daniel 7:13-14, 26-27.)

- ii. The Kingdom that Jesus said is like a mustard bush.

“What you are a part of is far more important than the part you play. What you are a part of is the biggest thing in the history of the world. Therefore, what you are a part of demands something from you, for the sake of the King!”

- D. We need a better story.

II. Why you Do Love as God's Family (9-10a)

- A. “We do not need to write to you...”

- B. You yourselves have been taught by God.
 - i. What Paul doesn't mean
 - a) 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - b) 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2
 - ii. What Paul does mean
 - a) That the Thessalonians (and you!) are now the people in and through whom the fulfillment of all the promises of the Kingdom will happen.

 - b) *Taught by God* is a reference to Isaiah 54:11-13

- C. You do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia
 - i. The Thessalonians were providing for needy Christians within their region.
 - a) For further study: 2 Cor. 8: 1– 2.
 - b) Most of the Macedonian believers needed food and clothing. Those in Thessalonica may have been slightly better off because they were in the capitol of the province and a significant trade port.

 - ii. The Thessalonians were very generous!

III. How You are to Love Even More (10b-12)

- A. “But I will write to you anyway about this.”
 - i. The Thessalonians may have been tempted to ask, “When is enough, enough?”
 - ii. Paul is speaking to them as a unified whole.

- B. “How does Paul want them to increase in love?”
 - i. “Now, the King commands us to love as family, and that love as family needs to start looking *this way*.”
 - a) Leviticus 19:9-18 A whole string of instructions about what it looks like to love your neighbor.

 - b) Love your neighbor as yourself *this way*!

 - ii. Be ambitious for a quiet life.
 - a) “Therefore, we make it our ambition . . . to be pleasing to [the Lord]” (2 Cor. 5:9).
 - b) Worldly ambitions and Kingdom ambitions are very different.

 - iii. To mind your own business, as one in the family, is to mind the King's business!