

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study

### “CHRISTIAN LIVING, PART 2”

For individual study or group discussion

In 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12, Paul encourages a life that is quiet, loving, and faithful for all Christians. He outlines two key aims for Christian living: first, to strive increasingly to love one another (vv. 9–10), and second, to strive quietly for godly living before a watching world (vv. 11–12). In this way, the church displays the beauty of holiness and the transforming power of the Spirit in its everyday life.

**The Christian’s aim is to strive increasingly to love one another (vv. 9–10).**

Paul begins by affirming the Thessalonians’ love for one another, saying they have been “*taught by God to love one another*” (v. 9). This divine instruction is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises, such as Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 36:26, where God promises to write his law on his people’s hearts. Ligon Duncan adds that such love is not merely evidence of personal growth but also proof that the new covenant is at work among God’s people: “*So the way that the Thessalonians love one another is not only proof to Paul that God is working in their hearts but specifically proof that the Old Testament promise of a new covenant has been fulfilled.*”<sup>1</sup>

Paul not only praises their love but exhorts them to grow in it—“*to do this more and more*” (v. 10). The Christian life is not static; growth in sanctification happens over time. NT Theologian G. K. Beale reminds us that Paul is aware that “*perfect sanctification in any area of life is impossible on this side of heaven,*” yet believers must press on in their love, which strengthens their holiness (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:13).<sup>2</sup> Duncan summarizes Paul’s intent by saying, “*We need to love one another like family.*” Family-like love should define the church, as members commit to one another with genuine care and concern. Such ongoing, increasing love builds up the church and reflects God’s own heart for his people.

- Read Philippians 1:9. How can you personally pursue growing in love for your own church community?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 and Galatians 5:22–23. How do love and holiness relate in the Christian life?
- How do we reflect God’s heart by committing to one another in love within the church? Compare with John 13:34–35. How does our love for one another serve as a testimony to the world?

**The Christian’s aim is to strive quietly for godly living before a watching world (vv. 11–12).**

In verses 11–12, Paul shifts focus to personal conduct, urging believers to “*aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands.*” In contrast to the Greek disdain for manual labor, Paul affirms its dignity. Leon Morris writes, “*Greeks despised manual labor; they saw it as an occupation fit for slaves. But the Christians (like the Jews) did not hesitate to insist on the dignity of manual labor.*”<sup>3</sup> Morris also adds that while Christians live by God’s standards and not the world’s, they must not disregard public perception, “*He must not bring discredit on the faith by living careless of appearances.*”<sup>4</sup> Christian conduct, then, is both Godward and outward-facing.

- Read Proverbs 17:27–28 and 1 Peter 2:12. How can a quiet, faithful life speak peace in a chaotic world?
- Read Ephesians 4:28 and Colossians 3:23–24. How should Christians view their vocation as part of their witness?
- How do the two aims of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 help us fulfill Jesus’ command in Matthew 22:37–39?



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

DATE: September 21, 2025

SPEAKER: Chad/Frank

SERIES: 1 Thessalonians

PASSAGE: 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12

## Family Dinner Table

### Amish Economy by Wendell Berry

We live by mercy if we live.  
To that we have no fit reply  
But working well and giving thanks,  
Loving God, loving one another,  
To keep Creation’s neighborhood.

And my friend David Kline told me,  
“It falls strangely on Amish ears,  
This talk of how you find yourself.  
We Amish, after all, don’t try  
To find ourselves. We try to lose  
Ourselves”—and thus are lost within  
The found world of sunlight and rain  
Where fields are green and then are ripe,  
And the people eat together by  
The charity of God, who is kind  
Even to those who give no thanks.

In morning light, men in dark clothes  
Go out among the beasts and fields.  
Lest the community be lost,  
Each day they must work out the bond  
Between goods and their price: the garden  
Weeded by sweat is flowerbright;  
The wheat shocked in shorn fields, clover  
Is growing where wheat grew; the crib  
Is golden with the gathered corn,

While in the world of the found selves,  
Lost to the sunlit, rainy world,  
The motor-driven cannot stop.  
This is the world where value is  
Abstract, and preys on things, and things  
Are changed to thoughts that have a price.  
Cost + greed – fear = price:  
Maury Telleen thus laid it out.  
The need to balance greed and fear  
Affords no stopping place, no rest,  
And need increases as we fail.

But now, in summer dusk, a man  
Whose hair and beard curl like spring ferns  
Sits under the yard trees, at rest,  
His smallest daughter on his lap.  
This is because he rose at dawn,  
Cared for his own, helped his neighbors,  
Worked much, spent little, kept his peace.

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Highland Park Fellowship,  
supported church plant

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Argyris and Dina, supported  
international partner

<sup>1</sup> Duncan, Ligon. *1 & 2 Thessalonians For You*. 2003, The Good Book Company. 99

<sup>2</sup> Beale, G. K. *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. 2003, Downers Grove, IL. IVP Academic. 124

<sup>3-4</sup> Morris, Leon. *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. 1984, Grand Rapids, MI. Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 87–88