

## STUDY NUMBER EIGHT - 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

### Is Your Life a Witness?

Key Verse 4:11: "and to make it your ambition to live quietly and to busy yourselves with your own affairs and to work with your hands, even as we commanded you;"

#### TEXT:

v. 9 Now concerning brotherly love, you are not having need that I should be writing to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

v.10 for indeed, you are doing the same for all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia. But we are exhorting you, brethren, to excel more and more [in this love],

v.11 and to make it your ambition to live quietly and to busy yourselves with your own affairs and to work with your hands, even as we commanded you;

v.12 in order that you may behave decently toward those who are outside and you may not be having need of anything.

## INTRODUCTION:

(I Lost Everything in the Post-Natal Depression  
by Erma Bombeck)

### THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

I never understood why babies were created with all the component parts necessary for a rich, full life . . . with the unfinished plumbing left to amateurs.

If it was a matter of money, there isn't a mother in this world who wouldn't have chipped in a few extra bucks to have the kid completely assembled, trained, and ready to take on long trips.

As it is, mothers stumble along trying to toilet-train their babies by clumsily running water to create an atmosphere and holding sea shells to their ear to suggest rushing water. I used to turn on every faucet in the house and showed slides of Lake Erie while the kid sat there unrolling johnny paper.

I even used to threaten them. I had one kid whom I vowed I would send to the Army with diapers. I threatened him with other things too: a bed with a hole in it, a bicycle with portable plumbing, and an alarm system that rang when wet and lit up a sign on his back that read, LOOK FOR THE RAINBOW.

The whole affair was pretty ridiculous. But then aren't we all when the most important thing in our lives is succeeding vicariously through our children?

Now I note that a new "training kit" has come on the market guaranteed to cut toilet training time up to 90 per cent. (With some kids that adds up roughly to two weeks before football practice.)

It's a little throne with a built-in music box. When the baby has performed . . . and not until . . . the music box rewards him with a little tune.

I first saw it in the bathroom of my next-door neighbor, Gloria.

"Hey, that's terrific," I said. "What does it play?" "The Impossible Dream," she said dryly.

"Then, you're having some success with it?" I asked hopefully.

"Not really," she said. "Todd isn't too swift. The first time I put him on, he sat there frozen and scared like he had just been asked to fly the thing to Cuba. So I explained to him, 'Todd, if you do your thing you will hear music.'"

"Did he understand that?"

"Not a word. He sat there a couple of hours and finally I took him off, went to the kitchen, got a glass of water poured it into the bowl. The music came out and Todd clapped his hands and danced around like he was seeing the circus for the first time. Then I put him on it again and he sat there for another couple of hours."

"Then what did you do?"

"I took him off and got another glass of water and demonstrated for him again."

"And he finally got the point and now is on his way to being trained, right?"

"Wrong. Every couple of hours or so, he gets a glass of milk and pours it over the potty and dances to 'The Impossible Dream.'"

"Do you think he'll ever be trained?"

"I don't know," she said, sadly shaking her head. "I only know how disappointed he's going to be when he throws a pitcher of water over an Army latrine and there is nothing to dance to."  
pp. 93-95

(Better Homes and Jungles. Renamed Family Survival in the American Jungle by Steve Farrar)

Gary is a thirty-nine-year-old executive moving on the fast track. He has just entered his nearly barren apartment after another long day at the office . . . striding across the living room he flicks on the TV to catch what's left of the 11:00 o'clock news. He peels off his jacket and tie, grabs a cold bottle of Molson's from the near-empty refrigerator, and sprawls across the sofa, pushing aside some newspapers.

Relaxing now for the first time that day, Gary takes a look around the room and reminds himself again that he'd better get some more furniture and fix the place up. Divorced for almost a year, his apartment still has a warehouse flavor . . . Too much excitement at work right now. Just don't have the time. I've got the opportunity of a lifetime and I'm not about to get sidetracked and blow it.

A smirk comes over Gary's face. He's thinking about his successful put-down and humiliation of an office rival earlier that day at a meeting with top executives of his division. He can do it good, all right. And with finesse; like a knife through butter. Nothing crude about this guy.

They know him at the office as hard-working and very aggressive. Savvy about the ins and outs of the system, and always ready to lunge for the next project or opportunity that comes along. A real go-for-it man. But that's only part of the picture. He is playing a high-stakes game in an organization that has a destructively competitive environment at the top, where everyone is constantly maneuvering to do each other in as they try to climb higher and higher.

Soon the sound of the TV anchorman fades as Gary drifts off to sleep, where he encounters an old companion: a recurring dream of walking down a long, empty corridor in his office building. As he walks along he feels mounting tension, and each time he passes an office doorway he strikes a karate pose, anticipating some unseen attacker. Eventually he passes a door to the stairway. It springs open. Standing there is a person wearing a frogman's suit and mask. The figure points a speargun at Gary. Without saying a word, he fires it at Gary's heart. In slow motion, Gary watches it penetrate his chest and feels it tearing into his beating heart, which pours forth great torrents of blood. And then he wakes up screaming.

p. 36

J. B. Phillips, in his Letters to Young Churches, points out:

The great difference between present-day Christianity and that of which we read in these letters is that to us it is primarily a performance, to them it was a real experience. We are apt to reduce the Christian religion to a code, or at best, a rule of heart and life. To these men it was quite plainly the invasion of their lives by a new quality of life altogether. They do not hesitate to describe this as "Christ living in them." Mere moral reformation will hardly explain the transformation and the exuberant vitality of these men's lives. Even if we could prove a motive for such reformation, and certainly the world around offered little encouragement to the early Christians, we are practically drawn to accept their own explanation which is that their little human lives had through Christ been linked up to the very life of God.

Thomas Carlyle, one of England's greatest historians, once apologetically remarked about his own religious faith, that he was living on the after-shine of his father's religion.

We suspect that there are altogether too many these days whose religious faith is only the after-shine or perhaps the after-shine of the after-shine of the religion of their fathers. A 2nd or 3rd generation of religious influence rather than a 1st hand experience with God. How comforting to know that God is with us. How dreadful to realize that He is not with us. If He is not with us, it is because we have turned away from Him. Just turn around and He is there in all His wonderful presence ready to make us His own for time and eternity.

I am afraid that a lot of us have to admit that our lives are really not what they should be when it comes to being an effective witness for Christ. It is far easier to conform to the patterns of those around us rather than to stand and live a life for God the way He would want it to be.

In making a SPIRITUAL CHECKUP, we want to raise the question:

IS YOUR LIFE A WITNESS?

We have looked together at a number of things thus far in our study.

We have asked ourselves the questions:

1. Did you make the right start?
2. Are you a phony?
3. Has Satan hindered you?
4. Are you discouraged by the problems?
5. Are you an encouragement to others in your walk with the Lord?
6. How is your prayer life?

In our last study we talked about:

7. Have you gotten dirty?

Now the question for STUDY #8:

IS YOUR LIFE A WITNESS?

William Barclay says:

This passage begins with praise but it ends in warning. And with the warning we come to the immediate situation behind this letter. Paul urged the Thessalonians to keep calm, to mind their own business and to go on working with their hands. The preaching of the second coming had produced an odd and awkward situation in Thessalonica. The result of it had been that many of the Thessalonians had given up their daily work and were standing about in excited groups, upsetting themselves and everybody else while they waited for the second coming to arrive. Ordinary life had been disrupted. The problem of making a living had been abandoned and they waited excitedly for Christ to come.

Hendricksen says:

A new admonition is now added. Nevertheless, it is not entirely new. Love to the brothers is another illustration of sanctification, mentioned in verse 3. Moreover, in verse 6 defrauding a brother was prohibited. Hence it is not surprising that something is now said with reference to loving the brothers.

Ryrie says:

Christianity should always be distinguished by purity and love. This latter is the next thing in which Paul asks the Thessalonians to abound.

v. 9 Now concerning brotherly love, you are not having need that I should be writing to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

You can tell when Paul is shifting gears by the little word "NOW" which occurs in:

verse 9,

verse 13,

chapter 5:1,

5:12,

and also 5:23.

Here he is picking up on what he mentioned in his prayer in chapter 3:12:

1 Thessalonians 3:12

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;

Having talked to us about the love relationship between the husband and wife, now he is going to talk to us about the love relationship among us and our friends.

John 13:34, 35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

When it comes to the subject of BROTHERLY LOVE, Paul says:

"you are not having need that I should be writing to you,"

and the reason that he gives is:

"for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another."

A number of times previously in the letter we have noted that Paul has not had to give further instructions on some of these matters because he had told them about these things before, but now when he comes to this matter of brotherly love, he points out the fact that this is something they have learned from God by themselves.

John 6:45

It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught of God." Every one who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

Walvoord says:

In vv. 9 and 10, Christian love is introduced in contrast to lust. What a difference! He tells them, "But as touching brotherly love (which ought to characterize the Christian) you need not that I write unto you for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another, and, indeed, you do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia. But we beseech ye, brethren, that ye increase more and more." Love is a growing experience. We should increase more and more in our love.

Hogg and Vine say:

Love of the brethren is not expressed in words but in deeds (1 John 3:18), in mutual affection and respect (Rom. 12:10), in hospitality to the friendless and in sympathy with those who suffer (Heb. 13:1-3)--and that not in a bargaining or grudging spirit, nicely calculating less or more but with generous warmth (1 Pet. 1:22; Matt. 10:8); for love's strength stands in love's sacrifice. Where love is, love cannot be hid but will find a way to prove itself in service, whether of life (1 John 3:16) or possessions (v. 17).

#### 1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

#### James 2:8-10

If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.



(Cages of Pain by Gordon Aeschliman)

When was the last time your pastor grandstanded the blue-collar worker, the Central American alien laborer, or the grocery-bag stuffer as a wonderful Christian who is living wholesomely for Jesus? What TV preacher is bumping celebrities from the roster of guests in exchange for the "nobodies" who send in a large percentage of their social security check each month?

The majority of us are failures by both our culture's and our church's standards.  
p. 72

When last did your pastor or Robert Schuller or Pat Robertson or Fred Price put someone up front to tell the story of how he or she failed in business and now everything is gone--car, house, and company? No good ending of how the Lord came through, blessed me with much more than before, brought me through the fiery trial back to success. No, now I just work for the local school district as a janitor. In fact, how many janitors are on your church's governing board?

It is heartbreaking to meet Christians who have served with their best efforts but have not succeeded in fulfilling the expectations of those around them.  
pp. 72-73

"FOR YOU YOURSELVES ARE TAUGHT BY GOD."

This is the only place in the New Testament where this phrase occurs:

"TAUGHT BY GOD."

Barnes says:

They were so taught of God in regard to this duty that they did not need any special instruction.

Stedman observes:

Paul told the Thessalonians that he did not need to teach them how to love one another. His amazing claim was that God through His Holy Spirit would teach them. "God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us," said the apostle in Romans 5:5. If we welcome that love of the Spirit we will be able to manifest love toward others. If we choose to be bitter, of course, then love will not be manifested, but if we reject the caustic word, the sharp attitude, then we can show kindness, mercy and grace. The Holy Spirit gives believers a new capacity to love that the worldling does not possess.

J. Vernon McGee points out:

Notice that after Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit, brotherly love is the first thing that he mentions. He writes, "As touching brotherly love, you need not that I write unto you, for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another." I believe that love is the identifying mark of a child of God.

#### 1 Thessalonians 4:8

Therefore, the one who is rejecting [this] is not rejecting man but God who also is giving his Holy Spirit to us.

To be "TAUGHT BY GOD" is to be one who is the recipient of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

#### John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

#### John 16:13

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit who teaches us and produces this love that he is speaking about here in verse 9.

Romans 5:5

and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us truth, and the fruitage of His presence in our lives is love.

Isaiah 54:13

All your sons will be taught by the Lord,  
and great will be your children's peace.

Isaiah 30:21

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Psalms 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.

It pleases God when we love one another. To love one another is the way God wants it.

Isobel Kuhn has an interesting statement with regard to this matter of love between the brethren:

To live above with saints we love,  
Oh that will be grace and glory.  
To live below with saints we know,  
Oh that's a different story.

How often we fail in this regard in our Christian walk in that we are not a real witness to the outside world because of our lack of love for those who know Christ. On the other hand, there have been many who have been won to Christ simply by the love they have seen displayed between those who know our Savior.

Hannah Hurnard speaks with regard to this matter of love when she says:

There is one law by which we live.  
 Love loves to give and give and give,  
 And on this royal law so named  
 the universe itself is framed.  
 No lasting joy is anywhere  
 Save in the hearts of those who share.

Life yields a thousandfold more  
 To those who practice love's great law,  
 That love is far too weak and small  
 Which will love some but not love all.  
 If love to one it will decline,  
 'Tis human love and not divine.

Love cannot be content to rest  
 Till the beloved is fully blessed.  
 Love leaps to succor all who fall  
 And finds his joy in giving all.  
 Love will bear and will forgive,  
 Love will suffer long,  
 Die to self that she may live,  
 Triumph over wrong.

Nothing can true love destroy.  
 She will suffer all with joy.  
 From resentment love will turn,  
 When men hate, will bless.  
 She a lamb like grace will learn  
 To love more, not less.  
 Only bearing can beget strength  
 To pardon and forget.

Love must give and give and give.  
 Love must die or share,  
 Only so can true love live  
 Fruitful everywhere.  
 She will bear the cross of pain  
 And will rise and live and reign.

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

Augustine rephrased Jesus' words when he said, "To love those who love you is human; to hate those who love you is demonic; but to love those who hate you is divine." When we love our enemies as well as our friends, we reflect the character of God.  
p. 176

True love flows from the streams of humility.

(Fire in Your Heart by Sammy Tippit)

True humility is derived from a knowledge of God. The more we get to know Him, the more we are broken of pride and self-centeredness.  
p. 69

It is interesting when the searchlight of the scripture is put upon our lives and deals with the impact we should be making on the world around us. The focus is not on the lip and what we say but on the love which we display.

The central focus of this passage is going to be on:

LOVE,  
  
and LIFE,  
  
and not on the LIP.

If we were to try to describe an effective witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, we would see the following 3 THINGS in order of their priority:

1. LOVE - which is produced by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.
2. LIFE - which demonstrates Christ living in us by attitudes and actions.
3. The LIP - it is last. We earn the right to use the lip by the demonstration of our love and life.

Whereas the focus of verse 9 is upon the LOVE,

the focus of verse 12 is upon the LIFE.

v.10 for indeed, you are doing the same for all the brethren in the whole of Macedonia.  
But we are exhorting you, brethren, to excel more and more [in this love],

Here in verse 10 we have the 2nd reason that Paul does not need to be writing to them about "brotherly love."

The 1st was in verse 9:

"for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another."

Now here in verse 10 it says:

"INDEED, YOU ARE DOING THE SAME FOR ALL THE BRETHREN IN THE  
WHOLE OF MACEDONIA."

It not only includes those who are in Thessalonica but for those who are in "THE WHOLE OF MACEDONIA," which would include Philippi and Berea.

I would imagine because Thessalonica is such a strategic seacoast town that the saints there had many opportunities to play host to other believers who were either there on business, pleasure or just passing through.

The reason that he knows they have been "taught by God" is because of their love for all of the brethren in the area of Macedonia.

Paul, however, is not going to be content with the love which is presently manifested but he is going to encourage and exhort these Christians to progress more and more in this love.

In chapter 4:1 we saw him do the same thing with regard to their walk. They are walking to please God, but he also wants them to abound more and more in this walk; and so he is encouraging them to go on in their development and walk with the Lord.

Here he wants them to go on and abound in this love which God has given them.

Barnes says:

Here, as elsewhere, the apostle makes the fact that they deserved commendation for what they had done, a stimulus to arouse them to still higher attainments.  
p. 41

Hogg and Vine point out:

Early testimony to the presence of this fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) among believers is on record in the statement of Tertullian:

The heathen often exclaimed in wonder, "See how these Christians love one another!"

And Lucian, himself a heathen, wrote about the same time:

It is incredible to see the fervor with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator [i.e., the Lord Jesus] has put it into their heads that they are all brethren.

Horne observes:

While the apostle acknowledges that the Thessalonians had indeed been expressing such love even to all the brethren in Macedonia, he feels that there is room for a further abounding. They should go on to ever new heights of love. From this we learn that as believers we must never be satisfied with our present spiritual attainments.

Lenski observes:

Thessalonica was a great seaport which carried on much trade with the entire province. Believers from the other Macedonian cities thus had cause to come to Thessalonica and there found the Thessalonian brethren full of true love for them, willing to lend them any assistance they needed.

Lange says:

True love never satisfies itself and would willingly be urged to ever higher performances.

## LOVE'S MOTIVE AND REWARD

Christian philanthropist Fred Smith tells how his daughter Brenda and her husband Rick befriended an ex-convict and the woman with whom he was living. Rick gave the man a job. Brenda spent time with the woman, bought things for her, and witnessed to her about Christ. Together they convinced the couple that the right thing to do would be to get married. They even asked a minister to perform the ceremony and offered to open their home for the occasion. But a few days later, Rick found a note from the man saying that they were leaving town to get away from a hired assassin. Later, Mr. Smith asked his daughter how she felt about spending so much time, energy, and money on these people, only to have the relationship end so suddenly. Tears welled up in her eyes. "No matter where they are or how long they live," she said, "they'll always know that somebody cared." Brenda and Rick had loved unselfishly, and for them that was reward enough.

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

## THE HIGH COST OF LOVING

We become vulnerable when we love people and go out of our way to help them. That's what the wealthy industrialist Charles Schwab declared after going to court and winning a nuisance suit at age 70. Given permission by the judge to speak to the audience, he made the following statement: "I'd like to say here in a court of law, and speaking as an old man, that nine-tenths of my troubles are traceable to my being kind to others. Look, you young people, if you want to steer away from trouble, be hard-boiled. Be quick with a good loud no to anyone and everyone. If you follow this rule, you will seldom be bothered as you tread life's pathway. Except--you'll have no friends, you'll be lonely, and you won't have any fun!"

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Some instructions come through brethren, other lessons are taught by God to His children directly; and here the apostle says, when it comes to the matter of love, they are to be commended but he wants them to do it more and more.

He wants to see persistence and consistency in their love.



1 Thessalonians 4:1

Finally therefore, brethren, we are asking and exhorting you in the Lord Jesus, in order that, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God (just as also you are walking), in order that you may abound more and more.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

(Making the Most of Mistakes by James D. Berkley)

Many parishioners seem to wait for a reason to again affirm a pastor. Given that reason, they surprise their pastor with love and genuine forgiveness. Owens says, "When my people know I love them and am giving them the pastoral care they deserve, the mistakes I make don't mean as much. They say, 'Oh, he's a jackass, but he's our jackass!'" p. 126

Paul's challenge here is that they are to grow in this love.

I love the way the Living Bible paraphrases:

1 John 4:17

As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete.

The more we get to know the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater is the capacity for love flowing through our lives.

(Perils of Leadership: Overcoming Personal Battles  
by Kenneth Prior)

His answer brings to memory the thrilling "Chambered Nautilus" of Oliver Wendell Holmes:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

p. 87

Bobby Nichols explained it neatly in golf terms: "When you think you've got it in this game, that's when you've had it."

Sydney Harris wrote, "Education is not a mass of facts or inert ideas, as Whitehead called them, but an attitude and appetite and approach, a frame of mind, a function of the full personality, of the will, the spirit, and the imagination as much as of the intellectual force."

No one can let up and keep up. A healthy mind is a growing mind. A healthy human is a growing human--mind, spirit, and emotion.

p. 93

(Finding Them, Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church by Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin)

Between an airplane and every other form of locomotion and transportation there is one great contrast. The horse and wagon, the automobile, the bicycle, the locomotive, the speedboat, and the great battleship--all can come to a standstill without danger, and they can all reverse their engines, or their power, and go back.

But there is no reverse about the engine of an airplane. It cannot back up. It dare not stand still. If it loses its momentum and forward drive, then it crashes. The only safety for the airplane is in its forward and upward motion. The only safe direction for the Christian to take is forward and upward. If he stops, or if he begins to slip and go backward, that moment he is in danger.

p. 122

2 Peter 3:18

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Charnick puts it this way:

Christ's righteousness is not offered to us to be put on, that we may roll more warmly in our lusts. The doctrine of grace commands us to give up ourselves to Christ, to be accepted through Him, and to be ruled by him. Obedience is due to God, as a sovereign Lord in his law, and it is due out of gratitude, as he is a God of grace in the gospel.

Ogilvie says:

The Lord will continue to penetrate until all of life is under His guidance and power. A young actor who has been a Christian for a year caught the challenge of this. "I'm sure not what I was, nor am I what I will be," he exclaimed. Not a bad definition of sanctification. A loving Father has His hand on the clay. We are holy people, we belong to Him, we are growing in holiness, being made like Him; and the best is still to come. We are becoming distinctly different people. Now we can say, "And every virtue we possess, and every victory won, and every thought of holiness, are His alone."

v.11 and to make it your ambition to live quietly and to busy yourselves with your own affairs and to work with your hands, even as we commanded you;

In this verse we find Paul's recipe for a WORTHY WALK.

1 Thessalonians 2:12

exhorting you, and encouraging [you] and bearing witness to the end that you should be walking in a manner worthy of the God who is calling you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Finally therefore, brethren, we are asking and exhorting you in the Lord Jesus, in order that, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God (just as also you are walking), in order that you may abound more and more.

Now here in this 11th verse we are going to get what is involved in Paul's estimation of a worthy walk.

With regard to those who are in the Christian community there is to be a manifestation of love; and as far as their own personal responsibility goes, they are to do the things that are contained here in verse 11.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

Everyday habits of living manifest love of the brethren as do more special demonstrations of affections. It is these habits that Paul suggested the Thessalonians ponder in the light of brotherly love. He suggested these goals as worthy objectives for their maturing love.

Paul is expecting that these 3 qualities that are mentioned in this verse will be a part and parcel of every Christian's experience.

Colossians 1:9, 10

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

2 Thessalonians 3:11

For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

A. T. Robertson said:

It is amazing about how much wisdom people have about other people's affairs and so little interest in their own. There were pious idlers in the church in Thessalonica who were promoting trouble.

This is the KEY VERSE in our study:

Is Your Life a Witness?

It would be well for us to consider the 3-fold ambition that Paul has put down here for us and to weigh our own conduct and experience against what we see here. Then we can come to our own conclusions.

We will then be able to ascertain whether or not our lives are a real witness for Christ.

"AND TO MAKE IT YOUR AMBITION."

This Greek word is made up of 2 parts, meaning "love honor." It could be translated "to strive restlessly after."

The word occurs in 2 other PLACES in the New Testament:

#### 1. Romans 15:20

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. 2 Corinthians 5:9

Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

It is all right in the Christian life to strive for excellence, to love honor to the point of being motivated to make the necessary sacrifices to accomplish it.

Our passionate love for the Lord ought to fuel our purposes, resulting in a plan of action to achieve what He desires.

(Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses by James W. Moore)

When a minister friend was talking to a man about joining the church, the man said, "I want to join the church because I want to be fed."

The minister answered, "Well, that's fine, but we all would be better off if you would take off your bib and put on an apron!"

p. 51

Horne says:

It seems that some of the believers had become so strongly convinced in their minds of the nearness of the Lord's return that they had become inwardly restless and outwardly idle. This led to meddlesomeness in the affairs of others. The idlers, ere long, being in want, asked support of the church. They were refused aid on the ground that they were able to support themselves. This whole affair disturbed the peace of the brotherhood. Paul therefore addresses himself to this problem.

#### OF MEN AND CUCKOOS

The European cuckoo bird is a "freeloader" in its very unusual nesting habits. When spring comes, it does not construct a home for its yearly brood. Instead, the female searches out an unsuspecting "foster home" and lays an egg in the nest of another such as the hedge sparrow. The cuckoo's offspring is left to be hatched and cared for by its "foster parent." While still featherless and blind, the intruder soon dominates the nest by pushing the rightful occupants over the edge to their death. Then it monopolizes all the attention of its new "parents."

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

Let us come to a consideration now of these 3 INGREDIENTS OF A WORTHY WALK:

1. "TO LIVE QUIETLY"
2. "TO BUSY YOURSELVES WITH YOUR OWN AFFAIRS"
3. "TO WORK WITH YOUR HANDS, EVEN AS WE COMMANDED YOU"

Hendricksen points out:

Just the opposite of these characteristics would be fanatics, busybodies, and loafers. Nearly every church has them. Often one and the same person is all three. Hence, the three admonitions do not concern three separate classes of people but in a sense the entire congregation, for the seed of every sin is embedded in every heart.

The 1ST AMBITION is:

1. "TO LIVE QUIETLY."

"TO LIVE QUIETLY" has nothing to do with the tongue but as The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Quiet means restful, less frantic.

#### 1 Timothy 2:2

for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

#### Hebrews 4:1

Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

#### Matthew 11:28-30

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.

Ryrie says:

It means tranquility of mind, and this comes only when one's whole desire in life is to let Christ be magnified in his life. When selfish ambitions are the governing principles of life there can only be unrest, but when Christ completely controls there will be rest and the fulfillment of this admonition to be ambitious to have no ambition of one's own!  
pp. 59-60

Barnes, in commenting on this, says:

It is orderly, peaceful, living in the practice of the calm virtues of life. The duty to which he would exhort them was that of being subordinate to the laws, of avoiding all tumult and disorder, of calmly pursuing their regular avocations and of keeping themselves from all the assemblages of the idol, the restless and the dissatisfied.

Hendricksen says:

Some people had become restless. Paul now urges that this restlessness be turned into the proper channel. With that admirable ability to express himself paradoxically which again and again becomes evident in his epistles, Paul admonishes the Thessalonians to become all stirred up about being quiet, living calmly. Let the restless one be ambitious about attaining this goal.

Barnes says:

The Christian should live more inwardly than outwardly. The inner quietness will then show itself also in a quiet industrious life in which each man cares first for himself and those belonging to him before he will help others. This is not selfishness but fidelity in one's calling.

Ockenga says:

The teaching here is that we are to be content. This suggests peace, calm and happiness even in the midst of a throbbing, bustling and challenging day. Anyone who achieves such an existence knows that it must be sought, pursued and studied or it will never occur.

Stedman says:

In chapter 4:11 it says quite simply "to aspire to live quietly." That is to say, "You are not to live in a splurge. You are not to try to put on the dog. You are not to attempt to live out in the front of fashion, surpassing all your neighbors and friends."



Ellicott observes:

The very first publication of Christianity in Thessalonica seems to have been attended with some manifestations of restlessness and feverish expectation.

It would be good for us to stop and ask the question:

"What is the stuff that is stressing and worrying us?"

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Are Americans busy? Do we have a lot of irons in the fire? Have we turned what was once a simple, quiet existence into a complicated maze of activity, a Rubic's cube of complex dilemmas? You tell me.

Every day in America...

- \*108,000 of us move to a different home, and 18,000 move to another state.
- \*the United States government issues 50 more pages of regulations.
- \*40 Americans turn 100, about 5,800 become 65, and 8,000 try to forget their 40th birthdays.

Every day in America...

- \*167 businesses go bankrupt while 689 new ones start up-- and 105 Americans become millionaires.
- \*the Smithsonian adds 2,500 things to its collections.
- \*Americans purchase 45,000 new automobiles and trucks, and smash up 87,000.
- \*20,000 people write letters to the president.
- \*more than 6,300 get divorced, while 13,000 get married.
- \*dogs bite 11,000 citizens, including 20 mail carriers.

Every day in America...

- \*we eat 75 acres of pizza, 53 million hot dogs, 167 million eggs, 3 million gallons of ice cream, and 3,000 tons of candy. We also jog 17 million miles and burn 1.7 billion calories while we're at it.

pp. 221-22

(Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life  
by Barbara Johnson)

WORRY IS WASTING TODAY'S TIME  
TO CLUTTER UP TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITIES  
WITH YESTERDAY'S TROUBLES.

\* \* \* \* \*

THERE WILL BE NO CRISIS NEXT WEEK.  
MY SCHEDULE IS ALREADY FULL.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE PEOPLE WHO TELL YOU NEVER TO LET LITTLE THINGS WORRY  
YOU HAVE NEVER TRIED SLEEPING IN THE SAME ROOM WITH A  
MOSQUITO.

p. 101

(When You're Tired of Treating the Symptoms and You're Ready for a Cure, Give Me a  
Call: 18 Lessons for Making Changes That Last by Henry R. Brandt)

A young pastor, Dick Wilkenson, took an interest in us. He encouraged us to get a concordance and learn to use it. It would help us get biblical answers to our many questions, he said. We took his advice, which proved to be one of the most helpful moves we made to get to know what "pleasing God" meant.

It was he who introduced us to a biblical principle that disturbed us:

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33, NKJV)

Up to this point in my life, my main preoccupation was in acquiring a home and the means to assure a comfortable, secure life. We had a new car, a new house, membership in a sailing club, a sailboat, access to a golf and tennis club. Even thinking about God was not a serious consideration. My pastor kept bringing up this verse and urging us to review our priorities.

Sunday was the best time for sailing and doing homework. (I was taking some engineering courses at night.) Golf or tennis took two or three evenings. Looking after the lawn, playing with the children, visiting our families took up time. It seemed our world consisted of pleasing ourselves.

## TRAINING REQUIRES DILIGENCE

He kept asking us pesky questions in relation to that verse, such as: What are you doing with your time? What are you doing with your money? What are you studying in the Bible? Why weren't you in church on Sunday?

I had mixed feelings about him and his questions because I was embarrassed by the answers I had to give him.

Once, in exasperation, I told him to mind his own business. He said he was. As long as I came to his church, I was his business. He was my "coach."

Gradually, our focus changed from things to people. People appeared from nowhere asking for help with their problems, and we would invite them to come for dinner. We discovered that these dinner invitations were very expensive.

Besides, we had very little background for helping people.

We started going to church regularly on Sundays. Our sailboat, golf clubs, and tennis racquet got less and less use.  
pp. 211-212

(Topical Memory System: Life Issues. The Navigators)

Ponder the words of John Stott:

Contentment is the secret of inward peace. It remembers the stark truth that we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. Life, in fact, is a pilgrimage from one moment of nakedness to another. So we should travel light and live simply. Our enemy is not possessions, but excess. Our battle cry is not "Nothing!" but "Enough!" We've got enough. Simplicity says, if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

p. 74

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace  
him whose mind is steadfast,  
because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 30:15

This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says:

In repentance and rest is your salvation,  
in quietness and trust is your strength,  
but you would have none of it.

Isaiah 32:17

The fruit of righteousness will be peace;  
the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

Isaiah 57:20, 21

But the wicked are like the tossing sea,  
which cannot rest,  
whose waves cast up mire and mud.  
"There is no peace," says my God,  
"for the wicked."

QUIET PEOPLE RUN DEEP.

1 Peter 3:1-4

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

## "JESUS, I AM RESTING, RESTING"

Jesus, I am resting, resting  
 In the joy of what Thou art;  
 I am finding out the greatness  
 Of Thy loving heart.  
 Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,  
 And Thy beauty fills my soul,  
 For by Thy transforming power,  
 Thou has made me whole.

O, how great Thy loving kindness,  
 Vaster, broader than the sea!  
 O how marvelous Thy goodness,  
 Lavished all on me!  
 Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved,  
 Know what wealth of grace is Thine,  
 Know Thy certainty of promise,  
 And have made it mine.

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,  
 I behold Thee as Thou art,  
 And Thy love, so pure, so changeless,  
 Satisfies my heart;  
 Satisfies its deepest longings,  
 Meets, supplies its every need,  
 Compasseth me round with blessings:  
 Thine is love indeed!

Ever lift Thy face upon me  
 As I work and wait for Thee;  
 Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus,  
 Earth's dark shadows flee.  
 Brightness of my Father's glory,  
 Sunshine of my Father's face,  
 Keep me ever trusting, resting,  
 Fill me with Thy grace.

Jesus, I am resting, resting  
 In the joy of what Thou art;  
 I am finding out the greatness  
 Of Thy loving heart.

(From The New Church Hymnal, 1976, #373)

The 1ST AMBITION or INGREDIENT is:

1. "TO LIVE QUIETLY."

The 2ND AMBITION is:

2. "TO BUSY YOURSELVES WITH YOUR OWN AFFAIRS."

There is no time for meddling. It is time to get busy on the task that has been assigned to you.

What Paul is saying here very simply is for each one to mind his own business and not to be so concerned about what the other man is doing. There are those who are not content unless they know every single detail about what is going on in someone else's life.

It is usually this type of person who likewise is the #1 GOSSIPER.

Hogg and Vine say:

The life of the Christian cannot be divided as into secular and sacred (cf. Col. 3:23, 24). The whole is to be lived for God always. Moreover, idlers neglecting their own easily become meddlers in other men's matters, literally, overseers of other's concerns (1 Pet. 4:15), and, not infrequently, indolent dependance on other men's bounty as well.

We can make a demonstration of our love for others by minding our own business.

#### Proverbs 25:17

Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house--  
too much of you, and he will hate you.

The 3RD AMBITION or INGREDIENT for a worthy walk is:

3. "TO WORK WITH YOUR HANDS, EVEN AS WE COMMANDED YOU."

Paul in essence is saying, "Take it easy, no meddling and no idleness."

Needy idlers are not good Christians.

There is no room for laziness in the Christian life.

Each has a responsibility, each has a spiritual gift or gifts to make a contribution to the body of Christ.

Part of the problem in Thessalonica was that a number of the folks misunderstood the teaching with regard to the Lord's coming, and so, on the basis of his eminent return had refused to work while they waited for His coming.

Paul here clarifies this by making it clear to them that everyone is to work with his own hands and to be worthy of his hire.

When you find someone who is walking in intimate fellowship with the Lord, you usually find the following 3 THINGS:

### 1. URGENCY

John 9:4

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

John 4:35, 36

Do you not say, "There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

### 2. THEY WANT TO RUN WELL

1 Corinthians 9:24

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### 3. A RESTLESS LONGING TO DO MORE

Philippians 2:17

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.



1 Thessalonians 2:9

For you are remembering, brethren, our toil and hardship, night and day laboring that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

(Why America Doesn't Work by Chuck Colson and Jack Eckerd)

To put people behind walls and bars and do little or nothing to change them is to win a battle but lose a war. It is wrong. It is expensive. It is stupid.

Warren Burger

The U.S. Government has removed 6 million Americans--over 5 percent of the nation's work force--from society and isolated them in controlled colonies where they are fed, clothed, and housed. Tough laws are enforced to see that they don't work and to keep them in a state of vegetative dependency. The qualities of indolence and indifference are actively cultivated and rewarded. Most will remain in this colony forever. They are citizens of the state, but they have nothing to do.

If you were to read such a report in today's newspaper, you would dismiss it as absurd, or something taken from a futuristic novel. Yet this is precisely what is happening in America. Government policies have created a new society, mainly in the inner cities and prisons, of six million citizens with no place to go, nothing to do, doomed to a life of nothingness. And the numbers are increasing each year at a staggering cost.

Why are we stubbornly perpetuating this kind of welfare culture while just about everyone else in the world is rejecting it as counterproductive and inhumane?  
pp. 109-10

"Our welfare state was meant to provide a safety net, but it has turned into a hammock," said one Dutch industrialist.  
p. 110

The apostle concludes this verse with the words:

"EVEN AS WE COMMANDED YOU."

As part of the prescription for a worthy walk which he gave to them when he was in Thessalonica, these things were included. He is now just reminding them of it.

In essence, he says 3 THINGS:

1. sit down and shut up
2. mind your own business
3. do your job

#### Ecclesiastes 9:10

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

#### Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;

Barclay says:

Principal Rainy used to say, "Today I must lecture, tomorrow I must attend a committee meeting, on Sunday I must preach, someday I must die." Well then, let us do as well as we can each thing as it comes to us. The thought that Christ will someday come, that life as we know it will end is not a reason for stopping work. It is a reason for working all the harder and all the more faithfully. It is not hysterical and useless waiting but quiet and useful work which will be a man's passport to the kingdom.

## HAPPY AT WORK

God created us to work, and the physical and emotional benefits are enormous. Perhaps that's why nearly 80 percent of wealthy people who wouldn't have to work, do so anyway.

As Christians, our attitude toward work is doubly important because it can either enhance or hinder our witness for Christ. When we are happy on the job, the task is easier and God is glorified. In his book First Things First, Roger C. Palms gave a personal example. While in college he worked one summer remodeling a bookstore. The heat and humidity were at their highest when his employer asked for someone to clean the furnace ducts. Palms volunteered. As he worked in the dust and soot, he began whistling to himself. Someone asked him the name of the song, so Palms recited the words of the hymn. A worker nearby overheard him and later asked a question that allowed him to give a positive witness for Christ. Had he been disgruntled with his job, Roger Palms probably wouldn't have whistled--or witnessed!

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

Walvoord says:

This business of sanctification, this call to holiness, extends to every aspect of our life. May God challenge us. We have been sanctified by the blood of Christ, by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, by the purposes of God in our life in time and eternity. May we give ourselves to these things as the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts.

Now it behooves each of us after having considered this recipe for a worthy walk to ask ourselves a question:

"Is our life a real witness?"

If we are tentative on our answers in this regard, what are the areas that need to be developed?

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

Some time ago, a public relations firm in New York conducted a study of what outsiders thought about the church. The unchurched respondents had three major negative reactions. First, the church always asked for money; next, it was always sad; and finally, it always talked about death. That kind of salt doesn't have much flavor. pp. 97-98

Jesus didn't call us to be sugar; He called us to be salt. Salt irritates sometimes, but it also preserves. He called us to make a difference. And to do that is significant. The world will know we have chosen wisely when the real values of life are revealed.  
p. 102

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Howie Stevenson, my dear friend and minister of worship and music at our church, has this saying framed and hanging on his office wall:

Never try to teach a pig to sing.

It wastes your time and it annoys the pig.

p. 67

John R. W. Stott writes:

I sometimes think how splendid it would be if non-Christians, curious to discover the secret and source of our light, were to come up to us and enquire:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are!

p. 54

v.12 in order that you may behave decently toward those who are outside and you may not be having need of anything.

This is the purpose behind the 3-fold exhortation in verse 11:

"IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY BEHAVE DECENTLY TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE."

To "BEHAVE DECENTLY" means:

"according to good fashion,"

or "in good form."

This is letting your light shine by:

LIVING QUIETLY,  
BUSYING YOURSELF WITH YOUR OWN AFFAIRS,  
and WORKING WITH YOUR HANDS.

This is STAYING BY THE STUFF and living it one day at a time.

Ellicott says:

They were not by the neglect of their proper occupations to live dependent upon others, whether heathens, or more probably fellow Christians.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

They were to be self-supporting so they were not a burden.

Horne says:

The Christian must always keep in mind the impact which his behavior will have on those who are unsaved. When some did not work at all but lived on the charity of others, spending their time in idle gossip, what would outsiders think? This would be a sure way to bring the church into disrepute. The believer is to be careful to maintain a blameless testimony before the world in every area of his conduct, whether business, domestic, political, social, religious or private.

The point that the apostle is making is that the Christian must not become a parasite. Love of the brethren is not compatible with such irresponsible behavior.

## UNSPOTTED

G. Allen Fleece has said, "We are not in the world bearing witness to Christ. We are in Christ bearing witness to the world."

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

Barnes says:

It does not refer here to mere honesty in the transaction of business but to their general treatment of those who were not professing Christians. They were to conduct themselves toward them in all respects in a becoming manner, to be honest with them, to be faithful to their engagements, to be kind and courteous in their intercourse, to show respect where it was due and to endeavor in every way to do them good. There are few precepts of religion more important than those which enjoin upon Christians the duty of a proper treatment of those who are not connected with the church.

(The Christian Salt & Light Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

It was Mark Twain who said, "Having spent considerable time with good people, I can understand why Jesus liked to be with tax collectors and sinners." Righteousness sometimes turns us off.  
p. 59

(Simple Faith by Charles R. Swindoll)

Years ago I came to appreciate this verse by C. T. Studd:  
Some wish to live within the sound  
Of church or Chapel bell;  
I want to run a Rescue Shop  
Within a yard of hell.  
p. 53

(A Pretty Good Person: What It Takes to Live with Courage, Gratitude and Integrity by Lewis B. Smedes)

This fact takes me back to Aristotle's recipe for honesty with style: the right truth to the right person at the right time in the right way for the right reason.  
p. 80

(The Solid Rock Construction Company by Haddon W. Robinson)

Jesus began in Matthew 5 by giving us the Beatitudes, which are attitudes that characterize people who enter the kingdom of heaven. Those who are beatitude people will be salt and light in a rotten and dark world because their faith will be based on a relationship rather than rules. As they enter deeper into that relationship with God, they will come to understand the truth. To help them understand the truth, Jesus gave six case studies--murder and anger, adultery and lust, divorce and selfishness, oaths and deceit, retaliation and rights, hate and love. In all these cases, Jesus set forth principles that flow from inner righteousness.

p. 11

Now Paul is going to give us the PURPOSE for walking the way he has described in verse 11. It is "IN ORDER THAT":

1."YOU MAY BEHAVE DECENTLY TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE,"

The 2ND THING he is going to say in this verse is:

2."AND YOU MAY NOT BE HAVING NEED OF ANYTHING."

Let us first consider our responsibility toward the unsaved as far as our conduct is concerned.

A number of years ago when my son Bobby was just a little boy, we were at the ski chalet at Mount Baker. There had been a large snowfall, and while we were going through quite deep snow, Bobby was following me. I heard him say, "Look, Daddy, it's real easy! I'm just walking in your steps!"

A father and his son crossed  
 A rough street one stormy day.  
 "See Papa," cried the little one,  
 "I stepped in your steps all the way."

Ah, random, childish hands that deal quick thrust  
 No coat of proof could stay,  
 I touched him with a touch of steel.  
 "I stepped in your steps all the way."

If this man shirks his manhood's due  
 And heeds what lying voices say,  
 It is not one who fails, but two.  
 "I stepped in your steps all the way."

They that thrust oft greed and fear,  
 Who love and watch and toil and pray  
 How their hearts carol when they hear,  
 "I stepped in your steps all the way."

### 1 Peter 3:15

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

The 2ND PURPOSE that Paul gives for following his recipe for a worthy walk is so that:

2. "YOU MAY NOT BE HAVING NEED OF ANYTHING."

If you follow what Paul has set down in this 11th verse, the Lord is going to see to it that your needs are supplied. God is going to take care of you.



When the day is torn by trouble  
 And your heart is lone and sad,  
 Just remember all the blessings  
 And the good that you have had.

God's sure hand is ever leading.  
 Lift the curtain of despair,  
 For however deep life's shadows,  
 You will find your Father there.

There's a path His love is planning  
 Which must mean the best for you.  
 There are blessings, countless blessings  
 Which are hidden now from view.

Turn your anxious heart to patience.  
 Walk by faith where sight is dim.  
 Loving God, be calm and trustful  
 And leave everything to Him.

Has not yesterday a lesson  
 Bearing on a present need?  
 Daily bread for daily hunger  
 Is the message we read.

Thus our heart gains full assurance  
 That His love will be our stay,  
 Giving strength and help and blessing  
 As we need them for today.

When we experience needs in our life, it means one of  
 2 THINGS:

- 1.It can be pointing up areas where our life might be out of whack with the divine plan.
- 2.It could be a providential dealing in order to direct us.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: If the Lord were to examine your level of love, what kind of rating would you get?

LESSON #2: What are some of the areas in your life where you are presently being "taught by God"?

LESSON #3: An effective witness focuses on our love, our life, and lastly, our lip.

LESSON #4: As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete.

LESSON #5: Are you growing in your capacity for love by your intimacy with Jesus Christ?

LESSON #6: Have you entered into His rest and are you living quietly?

LESSON #7: Will you forsake the stuff that is stressing and worrying you at this time?

LESSON #8: Do with all your might what your hand finds to do.

LESSON #9: Stay by the stuff and live life one day at a time.

LESSON #10: There is no room for laziness in the Christian life.

LESSON #11: Needy idlers are not good Christians.

LESSON #12: Are you behaving decently toward those who are not Christians?

(Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret  
by Howard and Geraldine Taylor)

Once they were publicly and officially engaged, they began making up for all the time they had been kept apart. Maria's birthday was on January 16; so the wedding was planned for the following week.

Several times that winter Hudson Taylor's finances dwindled to almost nothing. Once his funds were down to one twentieth of a cent before an unexpected shipment of mail arrived with additional funds from supporters back home. Encouraged as he was by such last-minute provision for his needs, he realized again how little he had to offer a wife.

He explained his precarious financial situation to Maria saying, "I cannot hold you to your promise if you would rather draw back. You see how difficult our life may be at times . . ."

"Have you forgotten," she interrupted. "I was left an orphan in a far off land. God has been my Father all these years; do you think I shall be afraid to trust Him now?"

"My heart did sing for joy," Hudson said, recalling the story. And his excitement is obvious in a letter he penned to his mother:

"I never felt in better health or spirits in my life . . . I can scarcely realise, dear Mother, what has happened; that after all the agony and suspense we have suffered we are not only at the liberty to meet and be much with each other, but that within a few days, we are to be married! God has been good to us. He has indeed answered our prayer and taken our part against the mighty. Oh may we walk more closely with Him and serve Him more faithfully. I wish you knew my Precious One. She is such a treasure! She is all that I desire."

And then, six weeks later:

"Oh, to be married to the one you do love, and love most tenderly and devotedly . . . that is bliss beyond the power of words to express or imagination to conceive. There is no disappointment there. And every day as it shows more of the mind of your Beloved, when you have such a treasure as mine, makes you only more proud, more happy, more humbly thankful to the Giver of all good for this best of earthly gifts."

pp. 93-94

## STUDY #8 - Thessalonians

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: If the Lord were to examine your level of love, what kind of rating would you get?

LESSON #2: What are some of the areas in your life where you are presently being "taught by God"?

LESSON #3: An effective witness focuses on our love, our life, and lastly, our lip.

LESSON #4: As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete.

LESSON #5: Are you growing in your capacity for love by your intimacy with Jesus Christ?

LESSON #6: Have you entered into His rest and are you living quietly?

LESSON #7: Will you forsake the stuff that is stressing and worrying you at this time?

LESSON #8: Do with all your might what your hand finds to do.

LESSON #9: Stay by the stuff and live life one day at a time.

LESSON #10: There is no room for laziness in the Christian life.

LESSON #11: Needy idlers are not good Christians.

LESSON #12: Are you behaving decently toward those who are not Christians?