

In verses 9-12 we'll learn

- that we are to be busy bodies,
- we need to work.

Paul speaks to the church about their work ethics

1 Thess 4:9-12

9 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; 10 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; 11 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, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

In the previous chapter, Paul's prayer was that

- their love would abound for one another

So, he mentions their love in verse 12, and their holiness in verse 13.

We don't know exactly how long Paul was in Thessalonica,

- but we do know that he'd taught
- that the Lord was returning soon.

If we knew Christ was returning next week,

- we'd be speaking to everyone
- about Jesus returning in a week.

The JW's on more than one occasion have predicted the return of Christ,

- once in 1874 and the other time in 1914.

As believers, what should we be doing prior to the Lord's coming?

- 1) Our love for others should be growing

Paul says in verse 10 that our love for one another should be increasing more and more.

The words Paul used in verse 9 "brotherly love" is the word Philadelphia.

- It's from the root Phileō
- which is a love or affection
- for a person based on association.

Jesus spoke of Phileō love when He said in Mt 10:37

- that the person who loves his father or mother
- more than Me is not worthy of Me.

When Paul says in verse 9 that you yourselves are taught by God to love one another,

- he's using the Greek word agapaō

When Jesus issued a new commandment or a renewed commandment since it comes from the OT, He said in John 13 that we are to love one another as He loved us.

Rom 5:5

5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Interestingly, this term “taught by God” in verse 9 is not seen in any Greek literature prior to its appearance in this verse,

- Some think it's an allusion to Isa 54.

Isa 54:13

13 All your children shall be taught by the Lord,
And great shall be the peace of your children.

The words of Isaiah refer to a time when God's people

- during the Messianic age will learn from God Himself,

Jeremiah portrays the new covenant as a period when God's people

- will innately know the law since God
- will write it on their hearts.

Jer 31:33-34

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

The second thing believers should be doing prior to the Lord's coming.

1 Thess 4:10

10 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;

- Paul was telling them they needed to increase
- in their love towards one another.

The word “increase” means to overflow and is used 17 times in the NT.

He goes on to say, don't stop here with the brethren,

- Don't just love the brethren within these walls,
- but take this to your workplace as well.

How does that look practically?

- Galatians 5 says that we are to serve one another thru love.
- Eph 4 tells us to forgive one another and
- 1 Pet 4 tells us to show hospitality to one another.
- Gal 6 says we are to bear one another's burdens and
- Rom 14 tells us not to judge one another.

2 Peter 1:12

12 Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught.

Paul's attitude was not to be content with where you're at, keep moving forward.

Has anything hindered your walk with the Lord.

Would it be correct if someone said to you,

Gal 5:7

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

If that's you, ask yourself,

- what has crept in that has changed me?

What has influenced me that has hindered my walk with the Lord?

- Solomon once said, which little foxes have spoiled the vines

The third thing we should be doing prior to Christ's return:

1 Thess 4:11

11 that you also aspire (ambition, it's a restless eagerness in pursuit) to lead a quiet life,

The emphasis is on the quietness of the mind and the heart.

Paul didn't want the believers to go around making noise in the community creating problems.

- Instead, he wanted them to earn their wages

Paul didn't want the Christians freeloading off of others.

2 Thess 3:6-12

6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

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

Back to Verse 11, he tells them:

to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

Minding your own business does not always mean you shouldn't get involved.

- In a sense, we are our brother's keeper.

Remember the OT story of Cain and Abel,

- Cain killed his brother Abel
- and God knew exactly what happened.

He asked Cain where his brother Abel was.

Do you remember Cain's response?

- Am I my brother's keeper!

We are in a sense our brother's keeper.

- we are to look out for the safety of one another.

Paul, in speaking to the Corinthians was reminding them

- that he didn't take advantage of them,
- however, he was concerned for them.

2 Cor 12:20

20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

Instead of judging Peter said:

1 Peter 3:8

8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

These are good qualities to have as believers.

2 Thess 3:13-15

13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 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. 15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Matt 18:15

15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Eph 4:2-3

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The goal is always reconciliation thru love.

Again, Paul says to mind your own business, and work with your own hands,

So, the third thing we should be doing while waiting on the Lord's coming is to mind our own business while keeping busy:

When we meddle in other people's business,

- they tend to become angry
- and you become the brunt of their anger,
- so be careful with what you dive into.

John 21:20-22

20 Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, "Lord, who will betray you?" Peter asked Jesus, "What about him, Lord?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?"

22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."

Jesus was saying in a nice way, mind your own business.

Eventually Peter figured things out.

He wrote in (1 Pet 4), if you suffer, don't let it be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs.

Finally, the fourth thing we should be doing while waiting on the Lord is to be busy bodies:

Paul says:

and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

1 Peter 2:12

12 Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world. (NLT)

Paul set the example of work while with the Thessalonians.

He said in chapter 2 that he worked

- so he wouldn't be a burden to them.

Just for the record, Paul is speaking of those

- who are capable of working
- and choose not to work.

Some would rather live off of the system than to work. Interestingly,

- the biblical welfare system
- was a system of work.

Lev 19:10

10 It is the same with your grape crop—do not strip every last bunch of grapes from the vines, and do not pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. Leave them for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God.

In 1985 there was a person named Bob Black who wrote an essay entitled

- “The Abolition of Work.”

In his essay he wrote, “No one should ever work. Work is the source of nearly all the misery in the world. Almost any evil you'd care to name comes from working or from living in a world designed for work. In order to stop suffering, we have to stop working.”

The scriptures encourage work. In fact, the very beginning of the bible speaks of work, in the beginning God created!

What did God say when His work was finished, that it was good.

Eph 4:28

28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Psa 19 is all about God's revealing Himself to the world by His works. In verse 1 the Psalmist says:

Ps 19:1

1 The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Since Paul said in 1 Cor 10 that whatever we eat or drink should be to the glory of God,

- then everything we do should be
- a representation of our Lord.

Therefore, we should be an accurate representation of the Lord to the world.

When God put man in the garden,

- He told him to work it and to keep it. To cultivate it.
- To cultivate means to foster growth and to improve.

Finally, Paul concludes in verse 12 by telling why our love towards others should grow,

- why we need to remain level headed,
- why we should mind our own business
- and why we should be working.

One reason he says we should do the aforementioned is:

12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside,

Going back to the first 8 verses of the chapter we are to walk in holiness,

- then in verses 9 & 10 we are to walk in harmony
- and in verses 11 & 12 we are to walk in honesty and in integrity.

Our desire should be to have a good testimony before the world and before Christ.

Prov 15:1-2

1 soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.
2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly,
But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

Prov 16:24

24 Pleasant words are like a honeycomb,
Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

**Another reason we should mind our own business and work hard:
and that you may lack nothing.**

If you've got a NIV translation it reads, "so that you will not be dependent on anybody."

The reason for the difference in translation is because

- the noun is neuter and can mean a person or a thing.

It can be translated,

- that you may lack nothing or
- that you will not be dependent on anybody.

Both are accurate, if you're working hard

- you won't lack anything
- nor will you have to depend on anybody.

Paul is saying that we should owe no one anything.

Rom 12:13

13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

If we do owe anything at all, Paul said in the very next chapter of Romans to owe no one anything except to love them.

Phil 4:19

19 And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.