

RESOLVED TO HONOR CHRIST IN THE WORLD **By Leading a Quiet Life**

INTRODUCTION

A new year is often when people make resolutions: things they would like to accomplish in the coming year. When people make goals, they do not plan for failure but success. Imagine having the following goals: this year I going to put on a few pounds; skip class at least once a week so I can do some fun things; sleep in regularly and be late for work; and lounge around and play games all the time. Actually these are the goals I had last year! Resolutions give you direction and purpose. In our text this morning, the apostle Paul challenges us with a resolution: be resolved to honor Christ in the world (**1 The 4:9-12**)! God wants you to have a good testimony with unbelievers so Christ is honored through your life. This would be a wonderful resolution for this year.

The context of this passage is how you walk and please God (**1 The 4:1**). Walking with God is communing with your Father and delighting in his company. God made you, so he knows how to satisfy you. And he satisfies you with himself, so that when you have him through Christ, you hunger and thirst no more! Beloved, God lovingly saved you so you could enjoy him. The way you enjoy God is by walking in the truth. So when Paul discusses behaving properly toward outsiders so you honor Christ, he is not talking about keeping a bunch of rules but delighting in a person, the most interesting, fascinating, glorious person in the universe! The heart of living a holy life is delighting in the one who is the most delightful. God wants you to excel in your walk with him, so you will excel in his delights!

When you excel in your walk and love toward God, this overflows in your love toward others (1 The 4:9-10). In these last two verses Paul instructs believers how you honor Christ in the world. There is no greater privilege for a Christian than to bring glory to Christ. Be determined to honor him with your life before unbelievers; you do this by living a quiet life. This morning we want to look at: Resolved to Honor Christ in the World by Leading a Quiet Life. Paul mentions two things about living

a quiet life. First, to lead a quiet life you must make it your ambition to live that way. Second, to lead a quiet life, you must carry out God's priorities. The results of living this way is you will have a good testimony with unbelievers thus bring honor to Christ in the world. Let's look at this. To honor Christ:

A. You must make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. God desires you live a quiet life, a life that is calm, tranquil, peaceful, and free from conflict. Yet as we all know:

1. Life is often hectic where you are running here and there, from one thing to the next thing. You are always on the go. Your kids are in volleyball, basketball, gymnastics; you work endless hours, six or seven days a week; you are taking college classes; you serve in multiple places in the church; you work on your house and your car; you are so busy, you need a break and go on a vacation; you are all over social media, running from one platform to the next. You never slow down: your life is anything but quiet. There is no time for relationships, especially with God. Life is frantic. Does that sound like you? With busyness, it is usually the important things that get squeezed out, like investing in relationships where you love and care for people.

Why are people so busy? We live a world that values busyness. When you are busy, you often do not think about eternal realities. What is the purpose of your existence? Why are you here? Where are you going? When your life is hectic, you do not have time to think about these things or be concerned that others think about these things. The world wants you to focus on temporary passing pleasures that is all about you and your enjoyment or that focuses on things that appeal to your ambitious pride. For example, playing sports is fun, helps you learn skills and teamwork, is good exercise, but it also can become so demanding that your life is frantic and you do not have time for the better things God wants you to do. With your education, you can become so consumed with getting good grades that you neglect your walk with God and the mission God has called you to do. Some people's lives are chaotic because all they do is work. They are slaves to their job and making money, fixing their hope on the uncertainty of riches instead of on God. Others, instead of working lead an

undisciplined life, doing no work at all because they are busybodies. Instead of being disciplined and doing the things God says are of eternal value, like getting married, bearing children, and managing your home, you are on your laptop posting to different social media sights. But busyness is not something just outside the church; you can become busy in the church, where you go from this event to that event, serving here and there. You can be in the church and keep creating more and more things to do. There is no shortage of good works that can be done. You can be busy doing good things but maybe not the best things. It is always good to stop and examine why life is so chaotic! Eliminate whatever that is keeping you from doing the best things.

Jesus had numerous opportunities to do good works, but often he would not do them so he could prioritize the best things. On one occasion, his disciples found him praying and they said, “Everyone is looking for you. There is lots of ministry to be done here!” Jesus said, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for” (Mark 1:37-38). Even though there are many good things that can be done here, I must preach elsewhere. There is many good things you can be doing, but are you doing the best things?

Life can become preoccupied with so many things: work, school, activities, church, family, friends that all demand your time, sap your energy, and make your life hectic. God says, “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life” (1 The 4:11). Would you say you lead a quiet life or a hectic life?

Yes, yes, yes we say,
Without a thought for the day.
Running, fretting to make ends meet,
Rushing from Susie to Joe to Pete.
Our lives, in upheaval, have turned to a tizzy,
Never completing, because we're too busy.
All we must do for a tranquil soul
Is employ a word, just one, called NO.¹

2. God desires you to delight in him by: **Leading a peaceful, tranquil life.** This would be a great resolution for this year! To do this, you must simplify your life. There are numerous

¹ J. Grant Howard, *Balancing Life's Demands*, ?

things you can do, and many of them are good things, but be resolved to do the best things. Paul told the Corinthians, “I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:3). Satan wants to deceive and distract you from what is most essential: your delight in God; your walk with Christ. You can be busy *servicing* Christ and not delighting *in* Christ! You can diligently hold to right doctrine *about* Christ while you have left your love *for* Christ. This is what we must guard against! Daily enjoy Christ!

Christians often talk about having a “quiet time,” a time to be quiet before the Lord, where you sit at his feet and enjoy his presence. It is where you listen to him speak through his word, and you answer back in prayer, praying his word to him. Be resolved to quiet your soul before the Lord daily.

Satan is busy to disquiet you and your own heart is disposed to be disquiet. So Paul says, “Make it your *ambition* to lead a quiet life.” To be ambitious means to earnestly strive after something; to labor and make it your aim. What Paul is saying is actually paradoxical. You are to *zealously strive* after a quiet life. If you have to be told to be earnest for a quiet life, this means most people do not have this. So you are to pursue this kind of life continually, which means you must constantly check yourself, to guard against a hectic life, to guard against adding things.

Just to be clear: when Paul says to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, he does not mean your life will not be full. He is *not* picturing life lounging on a beach! Paul’s life was full. He preached, he disciplined men, he wrote letters, he constantly traveled. His life was overflowing, but it was full with what God wanted him to do. So how do you achieve a quiet life so you honor Christ in the world? 2nd

B. You achieve a quiet life by carrying out God’s priorities. How does God want you to live? What does he want you to do? Those things should be your priorities. Once you know what God wants you to do, then you can examine what is making your life so hectic and maybe eliminate some things. So what does God require of you? What should your priorities be? Paul mentions three priorities in this passage. The first is:

1. **You are to love others (1 The 4:9-10).** Jesus would agree that love for others must be your priority, for he said, “You are to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And you are to love your neighbor as yourself.” And then Jesus added, “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matt 22:40). You can hang the entire Old Testament on these two commandments! Love God; love your neighbor!

a. **Our problem, though, is that we love ourselves!** Often the reason our lives are so hectic is because we put ourselves first. You are busy doing things for your own pleasure and glory. Stop and examine your life: what are you doing that is for yourself compared to how much you are dying to self so you can love others? I know that my biggest problem is that I must learn to die to self and put others’ interests before mine. So my theme first last year was **Philippians 2:3-5**. Because I still have so much to grow in this area, it is my theme verse again this year. Many of the problems we have in our relationships with one another, in our marriage, or with our children, or with your parents, is because we are not dying to self but loving self. We are not doing what God wants but what we want and when others get in the way of what we want, there is conflict. God says your priority is to love him *and* love your neighbor.

You will notice that when Paul mentions excelling in your love, he does not mention love for God because love for God is seen in your love for others. It is impossible to love God without loving your brother. “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20). Your love for God is seen in your love for your neighbor. Galatians 5:14 states, “The *whole* law is *fulfilled* in one word, in the statement, ‘you shall love your *neighbor* as yourself.’” When you love your neighbor, you are fulfilling the whole law because it is assumed that when you love your neighbor, you love God; you are displaying the love of Christ. So, beloved, you are to love God and love your neighbor. And the way you love God *is* by loving your neighbor.

b. So how do you prioritize loving your neighbor for this is how you live a quiet life? The foundation to loving your neighbor is delighting in Christ! Many of you probably got together with family and friends this past week and you enjoyed each other's company. You talked; you listened; you heard about what has been going on in each other's lives. You hopefully delighted in each other's company. Jesus invites you to do this with him! As you *daily* enjoy Christ, which you do through his word, he will delight your soul. When you continually dwell on what Jesus did for a sinner like you, his love will begin to control you. Love so amazing demands your all. It is the love of Christ that thrills your heart and motivates your soul to love him by loving others. As you spend time with Christ in his word, your mind is renewed by the truth, and that will affect how you relate to others. For example, as you contemplate how Christ gave himself up for the church, this will instruct you husbands how you are to love their wives. As you reflect on how Jesus gave up his own interests for yours, you will sacrifice your interests for others. Or as you meditate on how Jesus came to seek the lost, how he sought you, this will move you to seek the lost. Or as you dwell on how Jesus the King came to serve, this will move you to serve. As you remember the work of Christ on your behalf, this stirs your affections for him! Beloved, be resolved this year to daily enjoy Christ through his word, for this will stir you to love others with the love of Christ.

Your love for Christ is to overflow to one another, for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Be involved in the lives of fellow believers. Excel in your love for them, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, teaching and admonishing one another, bearing one another's burdens, praying for one another. The one another's demonstrate practical ways how to love other believers. I have often been with believers who have shared their burdens, griefs, and struggles, and those become opportunities to encourage them and pray for them.

The Christian life is *not* meant to be lived one day a week on Sundays. You are to love your brother and sister by being involved in their lives, caring for them, discipling them, helping them grow

and mature in Christ, and meeting one another's needs. This is why we meet in homes in small groups, so you can care for one another. The Bible constantly underscores the centrality of loving relationships, and it is our small groups that enable you to develop intimate relationships where you can know and be known, where you can encourage and be encouraged. Are you plugged into a home group? Be resolved to consistently attend a small group. Loving your brothers and sisters is a priority for a quiet life. How are you doing at loving your brother?

Your love for Christ will also overflow to loving your family. The testing ground for love is the people you live with. More than anyone else, they see your faults and you see theirs. When Christ is central to your life, wives will respect their husbands as unto the Lord; husbands will love their wives as Christ loved the church. Children will obey their parents in the Lord; fathers will not exasperate their children but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Love will move parents to disciple their children and care for their souls. Love will cover a multitude of sins. You will forgive as God in Christ graciously forgave you. How are you doing at loving your family? Are you dying to self so you can serve your family? Do you think of ways you can bless those you live with?

Love will also characterize your work relationships, where employees obey their employers, doing their work heartily unto the Lord. Do you serve your boss even if he is unreasonable? Supervisors will treat their employees justly and fairly, knowing that they too have a Master in heaven. And the love of Christ will move you to love unbelievers, showing compassion to their needs and proclaiming to them the gospel. Friend, do you know Christ? Have you turned from your sin and trusted in Jesus who paid for your sins? Come to Christ! Be saved from this perverse generation.

Beloved, God's priority for you is to love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. And your neighbor is your family, church family, those you work with, and those in the world you come in contact with. Loving others is a priority for leading a quiet life. How are you doing at loving others? Besides loving others, Paul says:

2. You are to attend to your own affairs (1 The 4:11). Beloved, while you should be concerned for the needs and burdens of others, you must avoid the neglect of your own things. This is a warning about being a busybody and meddling in the affairs of others, while you neglect your own. In 1 Timothy, Paul warned of women who learned to be idle, going from house to house, being gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. He exhorted them to get married, bear children, and manage their house. In other words, have the regular habit of attending to your own responsibilities. There are things God wants you to be doing!

A Christian woman had a burden for inner city children. She spent hours each week pouring her life into helping these children. One day she came home after a long day of serving and found the police at her house. Her own children had gotten into trouble! She had neglected her own children to serve other children. Beloved, you cannot neglect what God has called you to do. There are some things no one else can do. No one else can be the wife to your husband or the husband to your wife. No one else can be the parent to your children. No one else can walk with Christ for you. There are certain responsibilities you alone are called by God to do. To lead a quiet life so you honor Christ, attend to your own business. Do the things God requires of you. Learn to balance what God has called you to do: family, church, work, world. It is easy to be imbalanced, where all you do is serve your family. You are also to serve your church family. Be balanced! A third priority to lead a quiet life so you honor Christ:

3. You are to work with your hands (1 The 4:11). To lead a quiet life, God wants you to work! Paul is talking about physical labor, working with your hands. Many people see work as a necessary evil, something they must bear to get the things they want. Or the aim is to get the highest paying job that requires the least amount of work. Or the goal of work is to become financially independent so you do not have to work any more. God's perspective on your work is a little different than this! According to Scripture, work is something good.

When God created the first man, he put him in the garden and gave him a job. Adam was to

cultivate and keep the garden. Cultivate means to facilitate the growth of crops, and keep means to preserve, guard, care for. Man was to work in the garden, tilling and plowing it, and keeping and preserving it. Man was not created to be idle. Even though he was in paradise, he was not created to lounge around in his hammock drinking iced tea! God gave man work to do. Work is good for God himself is a worker and delights in the work he does. True joy comes not from being idle, but by finding satisfaction in your work, whatever task it may be.

It is God's design that you work. This world was created to be worked on. God is concerned about your work; it matters to him! You should honor him in your labors. You should take pleasure in your work knowing that you are honoring Christ. You are to do your work heartily unto the Lord, knowing that it is the Lord Christ whom you serve. Many Christians believe serving Christ is something you do when you are discipling someone or serving somewhere in the church body; to them, serving Christ has nothing to do with your school or job. But that is not what God says! When you are working on a job with your hands, that is an opportunity for you to serve Christ. Your work is a means for you to honor Christ! Are you honoring Christ in your work?

Because we are sinful, we have a tendency to be lazy and want to be entertained. We focus on infrequent events, such as vacations or hobbies to find pleasure, fulfillment, and satisfaction, when God wants you to find fulfillment primarily in your daily tasks. Solomon teaches that it is in the ordinary routine of daily living—in the eating, drinking, and work that you do—that one finds fulfillment and satisfaction. He writes, “There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God” (Ecc 2:24). It is from God's hand to see that your labor is good, and you get satisfaction from that. He goes on and says, “As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, he has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God” (Ecc 5:18-19). It is a gift from God to see good in all your labor, no matter how trivial you may think the task is. God wants you to find joy

in your labor; fulfillment in the daily routine of life. Is this how you view your work? Do you find joy in it? Is there a sense of satisfaction when you finish a day of hard work? God wants you to find fulfillment in this because work is good. He created you to work.

Parents, teach your children to find joy and satisfaction in work because God created them to work and they have a responsibility to work. One author has written:

This idea [of teaching your children to work] is a foreign concept to many modern parents, who have grown up in affluent America. They believe that since children have only one childhood, it should be the most exciting and entertaining it can be. To them, childhood is not a preparation time for adulthood, but a time of ease and freedom from responsibility. Instead of teaching children to do as much as they can as early as they can, they encourage them in self-gratification well into their teen years. . . . To them the very suggestion that children should preoccupy themselves with learning to be *responsible* and not with *play* is offensive. If that is you, please reconsider.

If we are overindulgent parents, having as our highest goal to give our children fun, fulfilling childhoods, our children will learn to equate joy with *fun*. They must learn, however, that the greatest joy comes not through abundant recreation, but through a job well-done, and more specifically, through serving [and loving] others.²

That is what this whole passage is about: serving and loving others so you bring glory to Christ.

Beloved, you are commanded to work (**1 The 4:11**). God commands you to work to provide for yourself. This is not an option. If you have ability, you are to provide for yourself.

God wants you to work so you will have a good testimony with unbelievers and not be a burden to others (**1 The 4:12**). The word *behave* is the word *walk*. This whole section is about how you walk and please God, so you delight in him. Paul ends this section talking about your walk before unbelievers. The purpose behind Paul's exhortation to a quiet life, attending to your own business, and working with your hands is evangelistic. It is so Christ will be honored in the world through your life! You should desire to have a good testimony toward unbelievers in how you live, especially seen in your work ethic so that Christ is honored by your work. When you work to provide for yourself, you will not be in any need. You will not be a burden to society but a contributor and blessing to society. Our government wants to give you free handouts to discourage healthy people from work, which is the

² Reb Bradley, *Child Training Tips* (Version 6: Updated/Expanded ed., 2006), 104-5.

opposite of what God wants you to do. He wants you to work so you are a blessing to your neighbors, not a burden. Your motivation to work like this is so that you honor Christ in the world.

The foundation to evangelism is a living a balanced life where you sacrificially love others, have a quiet life where you focus on keeping your life in order, and where you faithfully carry out your responsibilities in the work place. This is a testimony of Christ in you.

In summary, Paul gives three priorities that you are to do to lead a quiet life so you honor Christ. Love others, which includes your family, church family, co-workers, and any unbelievers that God puts into your life; second, attend to your own business, make sure you are carrying out your responsibilities; and third work with your hands. If you simply did these three priorities, your life would be full! So how are you doing? Let me finish by giving some:

C. Practical tips to carry out your priorities so you lead a quiet life and honor Christ.

1. Compare what God requires of you to what you are actually doing. In one column, write down all the things you are supposed to be doing. And then in another column write down what you are doing. Which ones are not being done or not being done well? Are you managing your home? Maybe you are not discipling your children, or not having regular devotions with Christ or family devotions, or you are not be hospitable. If you are not sure what you are supposed to be doing, then get with an older believer and get their help. And then ask yourself: what can you change so those things get done? This will probably require you to die to self so you can do the best things for Christ's honor! When you do that, your life is rewarding because you are accomplishing the eternal matters of the King. Second:

2. Learn to use your time wisely. Sometimes we are not doing what God requires because we are not making the most of our time. Paul wrote, "Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Eph 5:15-16). Learn to master your schedule. Plan your life. Have a monthly, weekly, and daily planner. Plan when to do things

and set aside time to do it. When you look at your schedule, you will find areas where you are wasting time and you will find time you did not know you had. *Do More Better* by Tim Challies is an excellent resource for this! Another problem that arises with many is:

3. Over commitment. There are many good works you can do; in fact, too many! And if you have a tender heart, you will be burdened to do as many good works as you can, often with the result that you are over committed. Over commitment is often seen when you miss deadlines, are late to meetings, do things poorly because you have too many things to do, and life and ministry become a grind not a joy. Learn when to say yes or no. In Acts 6, the apostle found themselves distracted from prayer and the ministry of the word because they were serving widows, which was a good thing! But it was not the best thing for them. So they delegated this good work to some other faithful men. They said no to focus on the one thing they were supposed to be doing. Guard against over commitment.

4. Fourth, people struggle with carrying out their priorities because of: **Lack of discipline or laziness.** Have you ever wondered how some people can be so productive? How do they get so much done? They have learned to discipline themselves for godliness. They set an alarm and get up at a certain time so they can accomplish what they need to do. If you have been lazy, repent of that and learn to discipline your life. Get rid of the things which hinder you from doing all that God wants you to do. Learn to have self-control so you use your life to honor Christ. Have a friend hold you accountable and challenge one another to live a godly life for the glory of Christ. Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Finally:

5. Interruptions will prevent you from carrying out your priorities. One of your biggest distractions is your phone! If I am working and my text alarm goes off, I wonder who that was. Studies have shown people reach for their phones 150 times per day, and on average tap, type, swipe, or click an incredible 2600 times per day, with the heaviest ten percent of users doubling that rate!³

³ William P. Smith, *Obsessed with Your Phone?*, 6.

Some of you were probably distracted by your phone during this sermon! Beloved, to carry out your priorities, you must guard against interruptions.

CONCLUSION: Beloved, be resolved to lead a quiet life by carrying out your responsibilities so Jesus is honored through you. I would encourage you to examine your life and determine what you need to change so you can honor Christ in the world. There is no greater joy than to honor the one who gave his life for you. What will continually motivate you to honor Christ is by daily delighting in him and reflecting on what he has done for you. As we now turn to the Lord's Supper, we want to remind ourselves of Christ's great love who gave himself for sinners like us.