



Silverdale Baptist

VICTORY IN RELATIONSHIPS ~ VICTORY IN WORK RELATIONSHIPS
1 THES 4:9-12; MARK 12:31; 1 TIM 5:13; EPH 2:10; COL 3:23-24
04/29-30/2023

Big Idea

Our work relationships allow us to influence our co-workers for the cause of Christ.

Getting Started

What do you do to represent Christ well at work?

Can you share with us an example?

For most of us, our work relationships are important opportunities to influence people for the cause of Christ. So how do we have victory in our work relationships? Let's discuss Pastor Tony's message and find out.

Learn

1. Show them love.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12.

How would you summarize the main point of this paragraph?

What is the repeated word in these verses?

According to verses 11-12, what does loving one another look like?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 12:30-31.

From 1 Thess 4 and Mark 12, what is the main thing we are supposed to do concerning our co-workers?

2. Mind your own business.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIM 5:13.

Again, what does love look like in 1 Thess 4:9-12?

How does 1 Timothy 5:13 connect with what Paul says in 1 Thess 4:9-12?

3. Be a hard worker.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPH 2:10 and COL 3:23-24

What do you learn about work from these verses?

Regardless of who pays us, who do we actually work for?

“Every day a holy day, all ground sacred ground” – Pastor Tony

Apply

How are you loving your co-workers?

How do you handle gossip at work?

Are you living your life in a way that all of your co-workers, family, and friends know you work for God? If not, why not?

Pastor Tony gave us three application points to help us be consistent at work.

Discuss each one.

Don't brag – no one needs to hear how good we *think* we are.

Don't lag – don't be lazy.

Don't sag – stay joyful and work with a thankful spirit.

Pray

Father, remind us this week that we work for You. Help us live every day, remembering we represent You to a world that desperately needs to know You.

Dig Deeper

Walk in Harmony (1 Thes. 4:9–10)

The transition from *holiness* to *love* is not a difficult one. Paul made this transition in his prayer recorded in 1 Thessalonians 3:11–13. Just as God’s love is a holy love, so our love for God and for one another ought to motivate us to holy living. The more we live like God, the more we will love one another. If a Christian really loves his brother, he will not sin against him (1 Thes. 4:6).

There are four basic words for “love” in the Greek language. *Eros* refers to physical love; it gives us our English word *erotic*. *Eros* love does not have to be sinful, but in Paul’s day its main emphasis was sensual. This word is never used in the New Testament. Another word, *storge* (pronounced STOR-gay), refers to family love, the love of parents for their children. This word is also absent from our New Testament, although a related word is translated “kindly affectioned” in Romans 12:10.

The two words most used for love are *philia* (fil-E-uh) and *agape* (a-GA-pay). *Philia* love is the love of deep affection, such as in friendship or even marriage. But *agape* love is the love God shows toward us. It is not simply a love based on feeling; it is expressed in our wills. *Agape* love treats others as God would treat them, regardless of feelings or personal preferences.

The word *philadelphia* is translated “brotherly love.” Because Christians belong to the same family, and have the same Father, they should love one another. In fact, we are “taught of God to love one another.” God the Father taught us to love each other when He gave Christ to die for us on the cross. “We love, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19, NIV). God the Son taught us to love one another when He said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another” (John 13:34). And the Holy Spirit taught us to love one another when He poured out the love of God in our hearts (Rom. 5:5) when we trusted Christ.

Have you noticed that animals do *instinctively* what is necessary to keep them alive and safe? Fish do not attend classes to learn how to swim (even though they swim in schools), and birds by nature put out their wings and flap them in order to fly. It is *nature* that determines action. Because a fish has a fish’s nature, it swims; because a hawk has a hawk’s nature, it flies. And because a Christian has God’s nature (2 Peter 1:4), he loves, because “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Faith, hope, and love had been the distinctive characteristics of the Thessalonian Christians from the beginning (1 Thes. 1:3). Timothy had reported the good news of their love (1 Thes. 3:6), so Paul was not exhorting them to acquire something they did not already possess. He was encouraging them to get more of what they already enjoyed. You can never have too much Christian love. Paul had prayed that their love might “increase and abound” (1 Thes. 3:12); and God answered that prayer (see 2 Thes. 1:3).

How does God cause our love to “increase more and more”? By putting us into circumstances that force us to practice Christian love. Love is the “circulatory system” of the body of Christ, but if our spiritual muscles are not exercised, the circulation is impaired. The difficulties that we believers have *with one another* are opportunities for us to grow in our love. This explains why Christians who have had the most problems with each other often end up loving one another deeply, much to the amazement of the world.

Walk in Honesty (1 Thes. 4:11–12)

The word in 1 Thessalonians 4:12 that is translated “honestly” in our *Authorized Version*, carries the meaning of “becomingly, in a seemly way.” It is translated “decently” in 1 Corinthians 14:40, “Let all

things be done decently and in order.” The emphasis is on the believer’s witness to those who are outside the Christian fellowship. “Them that are without” is a familiar description of unbelievers.

Christians not only have the obligation to love one another but also to be good testimonies to the people of the world. Paul’s great concern was that the Thessalonian believers earn their own wages and not become freeloaders depending on the support of unbelievers. “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life” (1 Thes. 4:11, NIV) seems like a paradox; if you are ambitious, your life will probably not be quiet. But the emphasis is on quietness of mind and heart, the inner peace that enables a man to be sufficient through faith in Christ. Paul did not want the saints running around creating problems as they earned their daily bread.

For the most part, the Greeks despised manual labor. Most of the work was done by slaves. Paul, of course, was a tentmaker; and he was careful in Thessalonica to set the example of hard work (see 1 Thes. 2:6; 2 Thes. 3:6ff). Unfortunately, some of the new believers in the church misunderstood the doctrine of Christ’s return and gave up their jobs in order to wait for His coming. This meant that they were supported by other Christians, some of whom may not have had sufficient funds for their own families. It also meant that these fanatical people could not pay their bills, and therefore they lost their testimony with the unsaved merchants.

“My wife is going to have plastic surgery,” a man said to his friend. “I’m taking away all of her credit cards!” How easy it is to purchase things we do not need with money we do not have, and then lose not only our credit, but also our good Christian witness. “If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon [money] who will entrust the true riches to you?” (Luke 16:11, NASB) Churches and Christians who defend their orthodoxy but do not pay their bills have no orthodoxy to defend.

“Mind your own business and work with your hands” (1 Thes. 4:11, NIV) was what Paul commanded them. Idle people spend their time interfering with the affairs of others and getting themselves and others into trouble. “We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies” (2 Thes. 3:11, NIV). “But let none of you suffer ... as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Peter 4:15).

Believers who are about the Father’s business (Luke 2:49) do not have the time—or desire—to meddle in the affairs of others. Unfortunately, even a Bible class could become an opportunity for gossip (“so that you might pray more intelligently”) and a substitute for true Christian service.

As believers, we must be careful in our relationships with “those that are without.” It requires spiritual grace and wisdom to have contact without contamination and to be different without being judgmental and proud. “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without” (Col. 4:5). If we lack this spiritual wisdom, we will do more harm than good.

There are several good reasons why Christians should work, not the least of which is to provide for their own families (1 Tim. 5:8). If unsaved people have to work to pay their bills, why should Christians be exempt? We also work in order to be able to give to those who have need (Eph. 4:28); but “if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thes. 3:10). Work is not a curse; it is a blessing. God gave Adam work to do in Paradise. It is the toil and sweat of work that belongs to the curse, and not the work itself (Gen. 2:15 and 3:17ff).

As we review this section, we see how practical the Christian walk really is. The obedient Christian will have *a holy life* by abstaining from sexual sin; *a harmonious life* by loving the brethren; and *an honest life* by working with his hands and not meddling in the affairs of others. When unsaved people see Christ magnified in this kind of a life, they will either oppose it with envy or desire to have it for themselves. Either way, God is glorified.¹

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 176–178.