

Basic Christian Behavior 101
Dr. Michael A. Cox
Original: 11-3-02; Revised: 3-12-17; 8-24-25

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

1 Thessalonians: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: A Life Pleasing to God

Central Idea of Message: The Bible teaches Christians to love the brethren and behave appropriately by not practicing restlessness, meddlesomeness, or idleness.

Introduction: As with many of his letters, Paul was inspired to address basic Christian behavior in his epistle to the Thessalonians.

Like many Christians today, the Thessalonian Christians knew what was right, they just did not always do what was right, especially when it came to loving other believers, restlessness, meddlesomeness, and idleness.

I. Instructions Concerning Christian Love (vv. 9-10)

- A. Love other Christians (v. 9)
 - 1. You have no need to be written to about this
 - 2. Christians have been taught what is right
 - 3. Christians know what is right
 - 4. Christians are taught basic moral and ethical truths from within by the Holy Spirit
 - a) God illuminates hearts and minds
 - b) God himself instructs us concerning basic Christian ethics
 - 5. The word of God teaches from the outside too
 - a) Working in conjunction with the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit
 - b) Neither the written word of God nor the Holy Spirit ever works in a contradictory fashion to the other
- B. Christians should already be practicing love toward other Christians (v. 10)
 - 1. Brotherly love is to be the norm amongst Christians
 - 2. Talk is cheap, so Christian faith is seen in doing

3. **Brotherly love is affection marked by action (cf. Larson 55)**
4. There is always room to grow when it comes to love
5. Paul urged his readers to excel still more

II. Instructions Concerning Christian Behavior (vv. 11-12)

- A. Do not be restless, meddlesome, or idle (v. 11)
 1. Do not be restless: we should know when and how to be calm and be still
 - a) Make it our ambition to lead a quiet life
 - b) **Leading a tranquil life is the opposite of leading a tumultuous life**
 - (1) Full of noise
 - (2) Full of incidents
 - (3) Full of ordeals
 - (4) Full of quarrels
 - (5) Full of carousing
 - (6) Full of sin
 2. **Do not be meddlesome: attending to our own business is the opposite of meddling**
 - a) We all have our hands full taking care of our own business
 - (1) **It is amazing how wise some people are when sharing their advice regarding the business of others, and yet are so unwise when it comes to making decisions concerning their own households**
 - (2) We best be cautious regarding even talking about the business of another
 - b) **This passage of Scripture is surely an injunction against being a busybody!**
 3. Do not be idle: Christians should not have to be told to work
 - a) Were some mooching off others, not working while they waited on the return of Christ?
 - b) Christians should not be idle
 - c) **Some able-bodied people are perfectly willing to live off others, but this must not be so for able-bodied Christians!**
 - d) Christians should not even be late for work
- B. Behave properly toward outsiders (v. 12)
 1. Outsiders are to be attracted to Christ by the behavior of Christians, not repelled from Christ
 2. Behave properly toward outsiders so we will not lack anything, namely love

3. God expects maximum effort from Christians, so we must give more!

Conclusion: As Christians, we must realize that how we live is noticed. It is also remembered. We are commanded to love other believers.

Further, we simply must not be restless, meddlesome, or idle. Those who are able-bodied bring reproach on Christ by relying on others for food, clothing, and shelter.