

FAMILY LIFE AND LOVE OF THE CHURCH

Slide 1

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 “Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. **10** And in fact, you do love all of God’s family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, **11** and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, **12** so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”

Slide 2 [Scroll as I read them]

Here Are Some Quotes About Regular Families:

1. “It didn’t matter how big our house was; it mattered that there was love in it.” — Peter Buffett
2. “Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.” — Jane Howard
3. “Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten.” — David Ogden Stiers
4. “We may have our differences, but nothing’s more important than family.” – Coco
5. "The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other’s life.” – Richard Bach
6. "A happy family is but an earlier heaven." - George Bernard Shaw
7. “The strength of a family, like the strength of an army, lies in its loyalty to each other.” – Mario Puzo

Introduction

When we talk of family we think of Fathers, Mothers, Sons, and Daughters. However, today I want us to think of the family of the church. The church is made up of regular families with everyday problems. We sometimes disagree, or to be honest, argue. But in the end, we are family.

Note: During a visit to the mental asylum, a visitor asked the Director what the criterion was which defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized." Well," said the Director, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."" Oh, I understand," said the visitor. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the

teacup." **"No." said the Director, "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"**

Perhaps our family life was not what we wanted or needed but if not, then let's break the cycle and make our home one that builds stability and pleases God. Maybe we don't consider ourselves normal, but in our passage today Paul lays out some normal expectations for followers of Jesus. And yet we are tempted every day to do what is abnormal for a Christian. As we do life together as part of God's family, we want to be sure we are loving and living the way He wants us to live.

Let's take a look at what that means.

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1. God teaches us to love fellow believers

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1 Thessalonians 4:9

"Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other."

- This is a family love Paul is talking about.
- He uses the word "philadelphia", which refers to a brotherly or sisterly love.
- Unfortunately, we've all seen families where there wasn't a whole lot of this to go around. **This is unfortunate and certainly not what God wants for the family**
- But in God's family that should not be the case. Why? Because God teaches us to love each other!

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Romans 5:5

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

- Love is the result of being changed and led by the Holy Spirit.
- Love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit mentioned in **Galatians 5:22**.
- When we call on the Lord and ask Him to forgive us and become the leader of our lives, the Holy Spirit comes and lives within us.
- No wonder there is a supernatural change that takes place when we receive the grace and forgiveness of God!
- No wonder the Bible describes us as new people!
- God's presence changes us and one of the first things that should change is our ability to love.

Slide 6 [Scripture]

- **1 John 4:19 "We love because he first loved us." Our ability to love changes when we receive the love of God!**
- So this is why Paul can say, **"I don't even need to write you about loving one another, because God teaches you that from the git go!"**
- What he is saying is that it is the responsibility and privilege of all believers to be like their Daddy (God) and to show love to the rest of the family. But we can't stop there! Paul takes it even further in v.10, which brings us to the 2nd point.

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2. God wants our love to keep growing

- And Paul commended them for their love for the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But he challenged them not to stop or settle.
- He urged them to show love to their extended spiritual family more and more.
- In other words, don't stop now! Crank it up! Be more loving, more generous, more responsive to the needs of those in your spiritual family.
- We need to find ways to keep our love alive and growing!
- Love needs an outlet, or it can dry up!
- We love our family at home, and it spreads tot the church

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3. God wants our spiritual family to grow [TEXT]

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1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”

- Growth, both personally and as a family, requires overcoming these life-draining trends
- To live a quiet life is the answer to the problem of restlessness.

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- The word **“quiet”** speaks of the end of conflict, of peace after warfare. **Be ambitious, Paul says, to live quietly.**
- We need these words because our ambition tends to be noisy, to make a splash, a name, to get ahead, to rise above the crowd.

Slide 11 [Peterson Quote]

- Eugene Peterson in The Message translates this phrase with two words: **“Stay calm.”** (Brian Bill)
- **NOTE:** I often told my kids when they were small and were getting anxious about something; **“whatever you do, don’t panic”**. Some time later there was a time I was appearing stressed, and the girls noticed it and told me **“whatever you do, don’t panic”**.
- A quiet life comes from our comfort with God.

Slide 12 [Scroll as I read them]

- **Let’s ask ourselves these questions:**
- Have I experienced God enough to be secure in Him?
- Have I experienced God enough to both accept Him and realize that He accepts me?
- Have I experienced God enough to be familiar with Him and His nature?
- Lord, let my daily life win the respect of outsiders, and draw them ever closer to You!

Conclusion:

- We are a spiritual family! We are not perfect, but we are in this together!
- We might show dysfunction from time to time, but with the Lord's help, we are learning to love each other more and more, and show less and less of who we used to be!
- We can love one another because He loved us first!
- And we can express love to one another appropriately!
- As far as the growth inhibitors go, we can repent for being control freaks and trying to run somebody else's life. That is not encouragement, that is coercion!
- We can repent of gossip and creating drama which distracts people from who God is and what He wants to do among us!
- Whether we're retired, laid off, seeking employment, or blessed with gainful employment, we can work hard, serving the Lord and serving those around us who are in need!
- Let's ask the Lord to help us live and love in such a way that people will see Him in us!
- **Remember, this is good guidelines for church and family!**