

# The Challenge of Living

## Series: I Thessalonians: A Message For Our Times

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In our last two messages we talked about the challenges of suffering and separation. Paul and the Thessalonian Christians were suffering due to the circumstances brought on by persecution, and which also caused their separation from one another. Suffering and separation can cause spiritual and emotional paralysis. We often just want to shut down and not deal with life. Life is hard-don't let anyone tell you something different. If it is not paralysis we can go off into selfish pursuits, doing what is feels good to me. We self-sooth.

In John 10:10 we are told by Jesus that He came to give us abundant life. This is not existence-we already had that. This is true and authentic living. It is a gift that circumstances and the enemy within the circumstances would like to steal from us. Paul recognized in the church at Thessalonica that they were in danger of adopting a destructive way of life which would diminish their witness within the world. So he writes to advocate for real Christian living. Here is what Paul says about this:

### WORK

- Along with the persecutions which made work difficult for these new Christians, there was also the idea that if Jesus was coming back soon then there was no need to keep your job. Between these two ideas, Paul was making sure they did not get lazy.
- 1:3 3 We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4:10-12 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.
- 2 Thess.3:6-15 6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. 10 For even

when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” 11 We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. 13 And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good. 14 Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. 15 Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.

- 5:12 12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you.

### **RING OUT THE MESSAGE**

- This young church was amazing when it came to exporting their faith in the midst of persecution.
- 1:8 8 The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

### **LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF GOD**

- Lives worthy of God 2:11-12 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glo
- Live in order to please God, 4:1-2 1 As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.
- What is a worthy and pleasing life?
  - **Sanctified Lives**, 4:3-8 3 It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.
  - **Loving Lives**, 4:9 9 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.
  - **Quiet Lives**, 4:11-12, 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.

- **Proactive Lives**, 5:12-22 12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.

#### Application:

How does this apply today? During these unusual times we must keep our eye on the ball and continue to live the life God through Jesus called us to live. Though we may have to do some things differently we must not stop doing things. We must continue to live the kind of life God called us to. The body must exercise or it is going to get flabby. We must show the world that God's people do not stop living just because times are hard. They actually need to see us doing so more and more so that they will have hope.