

# 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 - Pleasing God

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     How are we? You alright, Chips? Just draw attention to the fact that you fell over, that's great.! Alright, we will get some clarity around the date of the prayer meeting.
- Mainly because we don't want to surprise Tim and Sheena by showing up on the wrong date, expecting pizza. So, at one point it was on the 8th, which is actually a Sunday.
- So anyway, we'll get some clarity, we'll let you know. Yeah, there was clearly an internal conversation between Tim and Sheena going on at the same time they were trying to text.
- I was just trying to read into that, you know, kind of like that family. We're not here on that date. Oh yeah, but you are. Oh yeah, but... We're clarified. So, yeah.
- We are in 1 Thessalonians, so if you have a Bible, why don't you turn there? Or if you have an app on your phone, you can scroll there.
- [ 1 : 14 ]     This is Paul's letter to this church, this new church, that he has been getting word about from Timothy, about how they are doing.
- And we've come as far as chapter 4. And we come to a section where he begins with the word finally, which means... Paul was clearly a preacher, because like he's finally and it means nothing.
- Right? Because he's going to go for another two chapters before he finishes. And so, he says finally, and he's doing that because this is the introduction to the main, the second main section of the book.
- OK? So, finally, yes. But it's additionally, yes. It's, let me give you the main second point. All of that. All right?
- And remember that Paul is writing really to remind them and to remind us how to live now with the future in view. And this is kind of the direction now that Paul is going to move into.
- [ 2 : 20 ]     At the end of chapter 4 and chapter 5, he's going to talk about, look, Jesus is coming back. Amen? Amen. Kids, wake up.
- So, that's what he's going to say for the next, you know, one and a half chapters. He's going to say, look, the reason that I'm exhorting you to live like this is because the gospel doesn't end with you.
- The gospel isn't just going to be, you know, passed on from you to someone else, to someone else forever. There's going to be an end. There's going to be a time when Jesus, just as he came the first time, is going to step back onto this earth.
- And so, he's giving us this kind of picture about, look, you need to live right now. You need to live well now because Jesus is coming.
- And this whole section that we're looking at this morning is really with that in view. Right? So, if you've come this morning thinking, oh, we're going to get an end times teaching because that's where we are in chapter 4.
- [ 3 : 26 ]     We're not going to get there until next week. So, next week is kind of like the end times teaching. All right? That Paul is going to bring. But this week, it's actually way more heavy than that.

Because look what he says. He says, verse 1, And so, notice that he says that pleasing God is progressive.

Right? So, the more we walk with the Lord, the more we are progressing in pleasing the Lord. That's the idea. And then he says that as you receive from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing.

Like, now that's like a phrase or a verse just loaded with meaning. Right? Because look, he says, There is firstly a command.

We ask and urge you. That's a command. Right? As if they haven't begun to do that yet. But then he says, just as you are doing.

[ 4 : 43 ] So, there's this acknowledgement that they're already doing it. So, Paul, and Paul does this often, you know, he kind of goes, oh, this is what you need to do.

Oh, just to remind you, you're already doing it. And you're like, well, why do you tell me to do it? And clearly, you know, the answer to that is that sometimes we're just weak and sometimes we don't. But he says, generally, you're actually, you're moving in the right direction.

Keep moving. That's what he's saying. They're already living to please God. But he calls them not to settle for what is just true today.

Right? Like we don't get to the end of today and look back on some kind of right and long balance weight checklist and go, well, I've pleased God today.

So I'm good for tomorrow. Right? And this is a call that Paul is saying, look, don't settle for what is just true today. Keep pushing into it.

[ 5 : 42 ] Like you may have had an amazing devotion this morning. Great. Have another one tomorrow. That's what he's saying. Right? And quite conversely, if you didn't have such a great one today, don't give up.

Have a great one tomorrow. That's what he's arguing. Right? So keep pushing into it. And look, the important thing to see is that the basis for pleasing God, and this is where Paul really wants to hammer home this idea, is that the basis for pleasing God is not necessarily found in the things that we do.

Do you get that? Right? It's not found in, again, and like I've shared this before, I love checklists. Like I have a check, at work I have a checklist for everything.

Right? But it's not found in checklists. It's not found in, have I been good today? Have I behaved well today? And I'm not saying any of those things are really bad things. I'm not saying that.

But Paul is going to argue, and he's going to argue in the light of Jesus coming back, is, do you know the Jesus who is coming back? Do you know him today? Are you having a relationship with Jesus today?

[ 6 : 56 ] That's the basis for pleasing God. Are you having a relationship with Jesus? So it's not legalism. It's not checklist Christianity.

The basis of all that we do is a love relationship with Jesus. That's what Paul means when he writes that we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus.

Right? Our union and love for Jesus is the basis for our ability to please God. Right? So it's not about our performance, but about responding to the grace that he has shown us.

With our surrender to him. So our obedience then, because some of you be like, oh, yeah, but what do I do? What do I do? Right? Because we're all like that in certain degrees. Like, well, you know, tell me what to do. What do I need?

Just tell me what to do. Give me a checklist. Right? So our obedience flows from knowing the one who loves us first. And this is the argument that Paul is going to make later on in the chapter and in chapter five is, Jesus is coming back.

[ 8 : 03 ] Do you know him? It's not Jesus is coming back. If you've got a checklist, have you been naughty or nice? He's not Santa Claus. Right? This is Jesus. And he's saying, look, the basis for pleasing him is a relationship with him today.

Walk in that. Know Jesus. Like, we think that sometimes we can just attend some meetings and pay some money and do some deeds.

So long as we look like we're Christians, we must that that that must be the evidence of some inward work of God. But you know what? There's lots of people that are doing lots of great things that don't know the Lord.

Lots of lots of people doing really, really good things. Some even very, very sacrificial thing. They're not walking with Jesus. It's got to flow the other way around.

It must start with a genuine relationship with Jesus and allow the work of God to be done inwardly. And then from that, each and every day, we are faced with a choice, aren't we? We are faced with a choice to live honestly in that relationship.

[ 9 : 11 ] And so the thing that Paul is going to say is, is do this. But they are not the things that you really need to focus on.

The thing that you really need to focus on is your relationship with Jesus. Do these things. Be obedient. Absolutely. No one is saying, well, just be disobedient. Do whatever you like.

Paul's not saying that. He's saying, be obedient. But don't try to do these things to the exclusion of a relationship with Jesus. We abide in him.

We abide in him first. And because we love him, we make the choice to walk in obedience. And Paul is clear that there is a walk of obedience. Look at what he says in verse two.

He says, for you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. That word instructions is actually a military term. And it's just your marching orders. That's what it means.

[ 10 : 13 ] So he said, look, when we were with you, we gave you your marching orders. We told you what you had to do. We gave you instructions. And this is a heavy word that Paul is bringing.

But it's a word of exhortation to choose obedience from relationship. Because it's relationship that we're going to enjoy for eternity.

Do you get that? It's the relationship that we're going to enjoy. Like, none of us are going to get to heaven. And none of us are going to be grumbling and complaining about our relationship with Christ.

Or none of us are going to be like, man, I just struggled this morning. None of us are going to be walking like that. Right? So Paul says, now, look, what you're going to be living for and what you're going to be living in for eternity, you don't have to wait for.

Right? That relationship is the basis of all of our behavior. And so then Paul says, look, after he said that, three things he's going to say in these next nine verses that we should choose to do because of relationship.

[ 11 : 25 ] Let's just look at them. Look at them. They're going to come on the screen all at the same time so you can write them down. He says, live to please God in sexual purity. Live to please God in love for one another and live to please God in work and witness.

Like they're all doing things, aren't they? Right? But they are the overflow of a relationship with Jesus. Right? So we don't just kind of do these things and just think, well, you know what?

I've done A and I've done B and I've done C and therefore I must be right with God. You know what that's called? That's called legalism. Right?

Now we still want to do A, B and C, but we want to do A, B and C because we're choosing to follow Christ. Because we're choosing that relationship. So three things.

We live to please God in sexual purity. That's verse three. We pursue holiness. Why? Because Jesus is returning. That's what he's going to say. Then he's going to say, verse nine, that we please God in love for one another because we want our lives to preview heaven's community.

[ 12 : 42 ] And then verse 11 in work and witness, your quiet faithfulness to the Lord may be someone's louder sermon.

So firstly, Paul says to live to please God, which you are already doing, but live to please God.

That's what he's saying. Don't think you've done it and tomorrow is going to be different. Continue in tomorrow. Live to please God in sexual purity because Christ is returning. Look at verse three.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification. You might want to underline that word. It's a big word. It's a long word. It means holiness. And no doubt, Paul is filled in his mind with imagery from the Old Testament.

Because the idea of sanctification is the same idea as holiness. And Paul could have just as easily as written for this is the will of God, your holiness.

[ 13 : 44 ] And the idea, of course, comes from, again, the Old Testament, the Hebrew word is kadosh. It's to cut off.

And it's the same idea of holiness. And to be holy means to be cut off from everything else. Like it's not specifically, it's actually not a specifically uniquely kind of biblical idea.

You know, you can be cut off from your family. You could be cut off from a number of different things. Right. It just means to be cut off. It means that to be cut off in such a way that there isn't anything that can contaminate or influence it.

And ultimately, the word speaks of the essence of who God is. God is holy. He is kadosh.

He is cut off. He is cut off. There is nothing that can influence or contaminate God. Exodus 15 verse 11.

[ 15 : 00 ] It says, Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness? Awesome in glorious deeds doing wonder.

And it's a rhetorical question. No one is. No one is. Right. First Samuel chapter two. There is none holy like the Lord. There for there is none besides you.

There is no rock like our God. So this idea of holiness just means to be cut off without the ability of being tainted, contaminated, influenced, changed in any way.

And so it's no surprise, you know, when we were in the book of Leviticus. We saw how all of the objects that were used in the worship of God in the tabernacle were also declared holy.

They were also declared kadosh. To be cut off separate. They weren't able to be used for common or everyday things.

[ 16 : 03 ] You had a spoon. And the spoon was to be used in the tabernacle, but not in your house. Like I was in the garden yesterday. Right. And I'm in the garden. I'm using a spoon in the soil to make space for some plants.

That's not kadosh. Because I'm using a spoon for common things. And now everybody's like, I'm not coming around to his house. The spoon is still in the garden. Don't worry.

I'm using scissors in the garden. I'm actually, Laurie doesn't know. I'm using kitchen scissors in the garden. That's not kadosh. Do you see what I'm saying? They've become commonplace.

And in the tabernacle, there were things that were used to be only used in the tabernacle. Clothing and objects and all kinds of things.

Bowls. And if they weren't what was to happen, they had to be taken out and smashed and burnt. And anything that was used in that way, in a common way, in a multitasking way, if you like, they were deemed unclean.

[ 17 : 16 ] And actually, this word unclean, it has all the way through the Bible this idea of sin. Sin is being unclean. And Paul's application is that Christians are those objects and we are to give ourselves in service and keep ourselves holy, clean.

We are to be used for his service. And this is a theme that now Paul is going to pick up on. Look, if you're going to spend eternity with Jesus, you can't give your mind, your body, your time, your energy to things that are unclean, that are common.

That's his point. That's his point. Okay. Because uncleanness and relationship with Jesus don't go together. And so this is what, this is Paul's point.

It's this idea of holiness or the process of becoming it is called sanctification. There is a work of God that is taking place in your life right now, if you're a believer.

And God is making you through the Holy Spirit. He is making you set apart, cut off, holy, clean. That's great news, isn't it?

[ 18 : 42 ] So the idea is that we are being more and more cut off. Like the rising tide.

If you've been to what's that, that castle in northern France? It might be in Cornwall. It's that direction. It's that direction. St. Michael's Mount.

Devon, Cornwall. That area where they eat lots of scones. That place. You know, if you go out there and you're walking along the little bridgey thing, the causeway.

It's not a bridge, it's a causeway. You've got to watch out. Why? Because the rising tide is going to come behind you. But it doesn't happen overnight, does it? Well, it does because you're asleep. But it happens gradually. It's the same idea.

Sanctification will cut you off, gradually making you holy. And you know that, don't you? Like some of you have been Christians for years and years and years and years. And you're not there yet.

[ 19 : 45 ] None of us are there yet. Because that tide is still rising in us. 2 Peter 3 says, Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?

So, since all these things are going to be dissolved. So he's talking about Jesus is coming back and we're going to see an end to what we know now. There is going to be a monumental, cataclysmic change.

Since that is true, how are you doing with your holiness? Right? 2 Corinthians 3, Paul says, And we, all with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed.

That's that idea. Into the same image from one degree of glory to another. So Paul says, like we are, if you like, being set apart for God's purposes, like vessels in the tabernacle.

And then he says, that you abstain, this is verse 3, and he's still on the same point, right? He hasn't really kind of moved off this point. For this is the will of God, your holiness.

[ 21 : 01 ] He says, that you abstain or hold yourself back from sexual immorality. That word sexual is the Greek word porneo. In the Greek, we get our English word pornography from it.

And it refers to any sexual act outside of marriage. Sexual immorality. And in verse 4, he contrasts that with a lack of control.

So other times, Paul will say you need to be self-controlled. And he doesn't really talk about sexual immorality. Here he's saying, well, sexual immorality is almost the opposite of self-control.

It's what he says. He says, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness. Notice that word, in holiness and honor. What's he saying?

Cut your body off. Cut your body off in honor to please God in this way. Don't enter into sexual immorality. He says, Again, a reference about the relationship with Jesus.

[ 22 : 22 ] There's people who don't know Jesus. You know Jesus. This is how you walk knowing Jesus. That no one transgresses and wrongs his brother in this matter.

Because the Lord is an avenger of all things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warn you. So the interesting thing is that Paul contrasts living with self-control in verse 4, where he says each one of you know how to control his own body, versus being ruled by or governed by passion, which means emotions.

And so Paul is calling us to control the emotion of lust. Because notice how he frames it in verse 5, that those who don't, don't know God. So again, this is given in reference to our union or relationship with Jesus.

And the fact that we are in relationship with Jesus should be the guiding principle of a life of holiness. And Paul is literally saying that this life of holiness has an impact, and it is impacted by other things.

Your life of holiness, your relationship with Jesus is going to be impacted by sexual immorality. You can't escape that. But then he says, look, it's not just about your life being impacted by sexual immorality and your relationship being impacted by sexual immorality.

[ 23 : 56 ] But here's what he says. He then warns us that no one transgresses and wrongs his brother in this matter. What? Sexual sins have social consequences. And then he says, if you don't think this is really that important, if you think that actually it's just between you and you, he says, look, this sin isn't hidden from God.

Because the Lord is an avenger of all things, as we've told you beforehand as Solomon warned you. Like, if you think it's between you and you, you're mistaken. The Lord knows. The Lord is very aware.

And if you think you can keep it to yourself, listen, it's going to have social consequences too. In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul says that the church, you and I, we are part of a church if we are followers of Jesus.

He says that the church is the bride of Christ. He says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her.

Notice that? Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

[ 25 : 25 ] That's Paul's desire. That's the Lord's desire for us. That one day when he comes back, he finds a bride that is without spot and blemish.

Paul says in verse 3, this is the will of God, that he present the church to himself in splendor without spot or blemish or any other thing. This is the will of God.

Which means that Jesus didn't just die to forgive us from sin. And look, that's a wonderful thing. And the just in that sentence isn't like diminutive.

It's not playing that down. It would be better for me to say only. Right? Jesus didn't only die to forgive us our sins.

He also died to free us from the power of sin. Right? He's saying to the Thessalonians, and he's saying to us, you don't have to live like that.

[ 26 : 22 ] You don't have to live like the Gentiles who don't know the Lord. You know the Lord. You're in a relationship with the Lord. Oh, and by the way, you're his bride. And when he comes back, guess what? There's going to be a massive feast.

There's going to be a massive celebration when you get married. Romans 8 verse 2 says that the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Right? So pay attention to that little word free. It's still on the screen. Boom. No. Romans 8 verse 2.

You've got a Bible. It says, For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Like this is the whole key to the Christian life. That idea of freedom. Whether we know it or not, or whether we knew it or not, before we came to Christ, we were slaves to sin.

[ 27 : 22 ] What that simply means, and this is Paul's thesis in Romans, is that we didn't have a choice. Why? Because we weren't in relationship. This is what Paul means by the law of sin and death.

We sinned because we couldn't help it. And what's more, our sin was slowly killing us. But through Jesus, those chains have been broken permanently and completely.

Like the chains, I'm going to creep up on you and go, now you're bound again. And the choices that we have now no longer have the same power over us.

God has set us free from the obligation to obey the passions of the old life. We don't have to live that way anymore. And in place of the old life with its insatiable urge to do wrong, God has given us the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the insatiable urge to please him.

Now, I don't need to see a show of hands. You can answer this question in your heart. Do you have the urge to please Jesus this morning? Listen, if you have, you haven't created that in your own heart.

[ 28 : 37 ] That's Paul's point, right? It is the spirit of life that has been given to you to do that work of sanctification, to do that work of pleasing him.

But listen, isn't it true that the spirit who gives us life is very, very, very patient? Having set us free, he then teaches us how to walk with him, how to follow his leading, how to experience life instead of death on a daily basis.

And so Jesus didn't only die to forgive us from sin, he calls us to walk into a new possibility, a new life. He calls his bride to be pure.

And he says, I'm going to give you the power to do that because I know that that's a terrifyingly difficult thing for you to think about doing. And then one day, and we'll read about this next week, Jesus is returning for a pure bride, which means that holiness is not about repression, it's about preparation.

That's what holiness is about. It's about preparing us. It's about becoming who we truly are in Christ. And of course, like in an age of sexual confusion, the church must offer a better story.

[ 30 : 19 ] One that is shaped by identity in Christ first and spirit enabled purity second.

Look what he says in verse seven. He says, for God has not called us. Do you notice that word, that phrase called us? That's a statement about identity.

He has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. That's what we're called into.

Therefore, because of that, whoever disregards this, disregards not man, but God. Why? Because God's called us and he gives us the Holy Spirit. Look, he's saying the same thing. Be honest with your life as a Christian.

Be honest with yourself. You don't have to be honest with anyone else apart from yourself and the Lord, right? Be honest with your life as a Christian. Be honest about your relationship with Jesus. Be honest about the Holy Spirit's work in you and choose life rather than death.

[ 31 : 34 ] Now, secondly, we should not only choose to live to please God in sexual purity because Christ is returning, we should also live to please God in love for one another.

And in doing so, we let our lives preview heaven's community. We let our lives preview I've never really met many people who say that they want to be a Christian and have stayed Christian.

I don't mean that. I mean, I wish I hadn't gone down this rabbit hole. I've met some people who have claimed that they're Christian and maybe later on in life maybe weren't.

I've met some of those who have said I'm becoming a Christian or I want to be a Christian because I agree with the theology. I've met a few. I've met a few genuine people who have kind of come to that conclusion.

But you know, the overwhelming amount of people that I've met who have said that they're now walking with the Lord. they've said it because they have witnessed and felt and seen a love for one another that they couldn't explain.

[ 33 : 17 ] This is what Paul says. He says, Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you. That's a beautiful thing to say, isn't it? And we love to get that from Paul about us.

I'm going to tell you about brotherly love. Actually, I don't need to tell you anything about brotherly love. He says, Now concerning brotherly love you have no need that anyone write to you for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.

For that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers through Macedonia. But we urge you brothers to do this more and more.

Like don't let today be just today. You're doing this continuing this. And look, I think like this is important especially you know if you've been a Christian for a little while or you've been a Christian for a long time I think that there is a tendency for I think you know certainly you know when you become a Christian you're going a thousand miles an hour on your Christian walk aren't you?

Like you're reading all kinds of stuff. You know on YouTube now like you've been a Christian for five hours and you've spent ten hours of those on YouTube right?

[ 34 : 35 ] Because you're on fast speed right? Whatever it's called double speed. You're reading everything. You're watching everything. You're listening to everything. And then like you've been a Christian for a little while and you slow down don't you?

Some of you are just looking at me like please tell me you slow down. But listen what Paul is saying is that there isn't a plateau in the Christian life. Right?

There isn't this steep climb and all of a sudden you get to this point where you're just kind of like things are going well. I'm just kind of I'm not going uphill. Praise the Lord I'm not going downhill.

I'm just going to carry on doing whatever this is. Paul in the previous chapter he said in verse 12 he said may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another.

And we talked about how love is a command. And here he wraps this idea in love that we have already received.



[ 35 : 37 ] You notice that? So he says you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. like it's not something you've just made up.

It's not something that has you know you've just decided in some church committee meeting. You know what we need to do we need to love. And someone's like oh that's a great idea.

What is that? Love? What is that? Right? So he's saying that's not something that you've just decided as a church to do. He's saying that this is something that has been produced in you.

Why? Because of your relationship with Jesus. Like a church that doesn't love is a church that doesn't know Jesus.

A Christian who doesn't love is a Christian who just doesn't know Jesus. It's an oxymoron. It doesn't the right phrase oxymoron. They don't go together. Right? Paul writes to the church in Galatia and he reminds them in Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 that the fruit of the spirit is what?

[ 36 : 45 ] Good. You guys have read it. Right? So the fruit of the spirit is love and then he goes off and says okay this is what love looks like.

Right? But he says look love for others is a product. It's not the root. It doesn't start with love.

It starts with your relationship with Jesus. It starts with God's love. As we draw near to the Lord and get to know him and start walking with him and the Holy Spirit is doing that work of sanctification.

Guess what it produces? It produces love. And it's guaranteed. Guaranteed. I would say almost 100%. always 100%. If you everyone's like oh.

Look at it. If we find in our own spirit, if we find in our own lives or in the lives of others a lack of love then we will also find a lack of being close to Jesus.

[ 37 : 54 ] Like if we haven't, if we are a grumbling people or a backbiting people or all of those works of the flesh that Paul talks about in the same chapter, in chapter 5 of Galatians.

They are evidences that we haven't been with the Lord. And this is what Paul is trying to say. Paul is saying look, if you have a relationship with the Lord, love is going to flow from you.

If love is not flowing from you, you don't need to conjure up love. Right? You don't have to have like a list of things where you go, I must love this person.

Check. You're doing it. Why? You're doing it out of relationship. You're doing it out of because you've been with them.

Jesus would say in John chapter 13 verse 35, by this all people will know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another. And notice we often talk about if you have love for one another, but listen to Jesus again.

[ 39 : 08 ] By this all people will know that you are my disciples. There's lots of disciples around. Lots and lots of different disciples following lots of different things.

Especially in Jesus' day. There's lots and lots of false messiahs poking their heads up, calling people to be their disciples. There still is that going on today. But Jesus says, look, the fundamental difference between those disciples and you is not the love, it's who you follow.

My disciples. I was just thinking about this idea. I was just thinking about this idea this week and didn't have a huge amount of time to think.

Some of us were at our conference this week, at church conference this week, it was good, it was a good time. And I was reminded that, and I wasn't reminded of this because we're at a conference, just in case it gets out.

I was reminded that if heaven is filled with perfected people, then heaven will be filled with perfected love.

[ 40 : 25 ] And if that's true, then the church should be its preview. Does that make sense? like if we are moving towards, and God in us is developing in us holiness, and the evidence of that holiness is that cutting off and love for one another, when people meet us, and especially when people meet us corporately, like here, this should be a preview of what we're going to be doing for all eternity.

And it's a beautiful thing then to invite them to join us in that. Because although we have our beliefs and our theology and our practices and our values, what we're essentially inviting people to is none of those.

It's a relationship with Jesus. relationship And then thirdly, because time's gone already, we should not only choose to live to please God in sexual purity because Christ is returning, and to live to please God in love for one another as a preview of heaven's community, but we should also live to please God in our work and our witness.

Because your quiet faithfulness may be someone's louder sermon. This is what he says in verse 11. He says, and to aspire, and this, I haven't really developed this thought too much because I didn't want to dilute the impact of that word, aspire.

You know what another word for aspire is? Ambition. And sometimes I think in Christian circles we tend to shy away from ambition, don't we?

[ 42 : 28 ] And I think in many ways we should. But Paul says, make it your ambition. What is your ambition? This is what Paul says.

He says, make it your ambition to live quietly. Everyone's like, amen. If you've got kids, you're like, amen. To live quietly.

Some of you are like, it's been too long, I don't remember what that's like. And to mind your own affairs. And to work with your hands as we've instructed you.

Make it your ambition to live quietly, mind your own business, put your hands to work as we've already told you. Isn't that great?

Like, that is so straightforward from Paul. It doesn't need an explanation from me. And I love just how Paul pushes against this sensationalism or drama.

[ 43 : 39 ] He's like, don't be about drama. Even within the church, there is drama sometimes. You know that? Some of you will be like, I don't know, is there? No, there is. Let me just tell you that.

Churches can be really dramatic places, right? Sometimes you just want to kind of like as a leader, you just kind of like, dude, pipe down. Live quietly. Stop meddling.

Put your hand to work. It's Paul's words, not mine. But some people, you know, just live for drama, don't they? There's always something going on.

Always some person doing this. Always some person doing that. It's all dramatic. There's no disconnect.

Here's what Paul's saying as a summary to all of this. There's no disconnect between spiritual devotion and everyday diligence. You're not less spiritual if you're putting your hand to work.

[ 44 : 50 ] You're not more spiritual if you don't. Okay? I think more than that, we should be settled, but not restless.

Now, that's a challenge, isn't it? to be settled but not restless. We should be satisfied with what we have but completely unsatisfied with who we are.

Because if the Holy Spirit is doing a work in our hearts, guess what? He ain't satisfied. So this is an interesting thing because Paul says, make it your ambition to be satisfied with your own affairs.

Your life should be like the house built on a rock, a settledness of your life. There should be a foundation to your life that, and this is where he's going, that other people look at and they are amazed when it doesn't sink under pressure.

Yeah? And all the drama and all the sensationalism just doesn't knock you off course. Like, because there is going to be drama, isn't there?

[ 46 : 09 ] You can't escape it. You can't escape it in the church. You can't escape it out there. You flick on the news, you're like, oh my goodness, drama. And Paul is not saying really escape the drama.

Paul is saying within that drama, stay settled. Know that your settledness doesn't come from the absence of those things, but the presence of relationship with Jesus.

Paul connects this Christian living, then in verse 12, with evangelistic credibility. Like, if you're the person who's always running into the office, and you're like, oh my goodness, oh my goodness, oh my goodness, something this is happening, we run out of staples.

staples. That's what people do in offices, isn't it? I would actually talk about, oh my goodness, oh my goodness, the photocopy is jammed.

He's like, oh, I feel that, right? Look, if you're a person of drama, that is undermining your evangelistic credibility. Now, look, if you do run out of staples, I'm sure there's a stationary cupboard.

[ 47 : 22 ] I'm sure that you can bribe someone for the key, and I'm sure you'll be good. But look, the more that we, the more that we blow things up, Paul is saying, the more we make a sensationalism out of things, the more we poke our nose into other people's business without being invited, or without a genuine care for them.

Paul is saying, look, that's going to undermine your evangelistic credibility. Why? Because you're going to say, hey, Jesus is coming back. Jesus is coming back. Jesus is coming back.

And they're going to be like, oh, he's the staples guy. Have we just run out of photocopying toner again? Like, they won't know what is drama and what is real.

And that's what Paul is saying. He's saying, live a quiet life. He's not saying, find a cave, go hide in it. He's saying, live a quiet life.

Keep your nose out of other people's business. Do your work diligently. Show up to work early. Leave late. Put your hand to the plow.

[ 48 : 33 ] Why? Because it's good for your evangelistic credibility. That's why. And why is that important? Because Jesus is coming back and he's actually coming back. And that is more dramatic than any of your problems.

Right? So, those three things. Can't even remember what they are. We're going to pray. You're going to discuss them in life group. Let's do that now. Father, thank you for your words. Lord, we know that it is sharper, active, like a two-edged sword.

It cuts and divides. Lord, we pray that it would cut this morning, Lord, in the same way that you are making us holy. Lord, we pray that you would cut out all of the stuff in our lives that we don't need.

Lord, we pray, Lord, that our lives would be a reflection of our relationship with you first and foremost. End of story. Lord, we want to be people who are not known for our theology, the things that we teach, the things that we know, but the person that we know and the person that we walk with.

So, help us in that, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.