

Love Follows God's Call

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1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

Core Competency:

Self-control- I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

For the grace of God has appeared with salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

(Titus 2:11-13)

Using This Study

● EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

● EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

● EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

Growing up in the mountains, my family had a German shepherd name Nicky. She was primarily an outside dog. As such, she would come and go when it suited her. Each morning she would get up, eat her food, socialize with my family, and head off into the wilderness on her dog adventures. Each evening she would make her way back home for dinner and rest. This was her pattern, and we came to understand and expect this routine.

I remember the first time she disappeared for a 3-day stretch. Soon, we began to think the worst. However, on the third evening, she returned. Her head was covered in porcupine quills. She had porcupine quills stuck in her face, mouth, nose, and even her tongue. She was pitiful. I still remember the painful and slow-going process of removing the quills. My brother and I would have to lay across her body while my father took his pliers and, one-by-one, pulled out each quill. She would let out a pitiful cry with the removal of each quill. Yet, if she was going to be able to eat or drink, she had to have them removed. I would like to say that she learned her lesson, however, I remember numerous times over the years when she repeated this same scenario. I am not sure what was so tempting about those devilish little porcupines....

When Nicky's face was covered with quills, we did not conclude that she was a porcupine! No, we saw a dog that desperately needed the quills removed if she was to survive. Those quills remind me of sin. Like Nicky, we, as believers sin. God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, is committed to removing those quills (our sins), one by one, so that we will be increasingly conformed to his likeness. This is the process of sanctification. It is a reflection of our true identity in Christ who, through his perfect life and sacrificial death, rendered us holy, without blemish, and free from accusation. It is also an expression of the love we experience in our relationship with the Lord.

This Week

This week, as you study 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12, you will learn that God has placed a specific call on every believer's life. This is God's call to holiness. As you experience various challenges, circumstances, and relationships will you make choices that reflect your true identity in Christ and bring glory to God? Will you allow the Holy Spirit access to do the hard work of pulling a quill of sin from your life?

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

1 Finally then, brothers, we ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us how you must walk and please God—as you are doing—do so even more.

2 For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is God's will, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality,

4 so that each of you knows how to control his own body in sanctification and honor,

5 not with lustful desires, like the Gentiles who don't know God.

6 This means one must not transgress against and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of all these offenses, as we also previously told and warned you.

7 For God has not called us to impurity but to sanctification.

8 Therefore, the person who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who also gives you His Holy Spirit.

9 About brotherly love: You don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

10 In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers, to do so even more,

11 to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

12 so that you may walk properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

1. In scripture, when a word is repeated, it is often for emphasis.
 - a. How many times is the word “sanctification” repeated (HCSB)?
 - b. What does sanctification mean? Use the dictionary for help, if desired.
 - c. Why was sanctification important for the believers in Thessalonica and why is it important for us as believers?

2. What do the following scripture have to say about sanctification or holiness?
 - a. Ephesians 1:3-4

 - b. John 17:17, 19

 - c. Hebrews 12:10

 - d. 2 Thessalonians 2:13

3. What can you do to answer God's call to sanctification, from verse 7? Be as specific as possible.

4. As part of sanctification, Paul specifically mentions sexual immorality and lustful desires.
 - a. How is this a pertinent topic for today's believer?

 - b. Is there anything about media availability that makes it easier for this generation to sin and keep this area of our lives secret?

5. Since Paul specifically addresses this topic, please identify several practical steps that you will take to flee from sexual immorality and lustful desires. (2 Timothy 2:22)

6. In verse 9, Paul brings up the topic of brotherly love. How is this related to sanctification?

7. Paul tells the believers, in verse 11, to do something specific.

- a. Rewrite verse 11 in your own words.

- b. How will you apply this to how you conduct yourself at work, at home, at church, at school, or in the course of your daily life?

- c. What did Paul say would be the result (verse 12)?

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ