

J.J.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

INTRODUCTION :

HAPPY THREE KINGS! (The Bible doesn't even mention if there were three wise men. It just mentioned Wise Men from the east) Matthew 2:1-12

This year, I forgot to make any resolutions. Not that there's anything wrong with it. But every year, I've found out that after only 2 weeks, I forget all about the resolution so I decided to forget it in advance. I changed my mind so I decided to make a list that I can actually keep.

1. I will eat less and eat more good food. This means I will eat less vegetables and eat more adobo.
2. I will procrastinate more. Starting tomorrow.
3. Since I have always been at Facebook, I will lessen checking it and I will start by not looking at Facebook while I'm taking a bath.
4. I will start following my wife's commands because that's what she told me.
5. I will stop eating bacon that are uncooked.
6. I will go on a diet. My diet will consist of potato chips, fries and chicharon bulaklak
7. Since I complain a lot about the weather. I will only complain about the weather during certain times ... and those times are winter, spring, summer and fall.

Today, what we're going to do is to talk about DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING or how do live normal lives. It's good that we attempt and do great things for God but not everyone is called to go to Timbuktu for missions, although I encourage you to support it. Or not all are called to be in full-time ministry. Some of us are called to live lives like any other people - to have jobs, to work, to go to school, to go to church and etc. And this is where God wants you to live your Christian lives and that's how we affect the people around us for Christ – just to live a NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1 Thessalonians 4: 4 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.

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.

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. 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.

Pray

Background : Paul was writing to the Christians in Thessalonica.

- **They were new Christians.**
- Since they were pagans/Greeks/Romans before, **they were worshipping many gods/idols.** When they heard the **Gospel of Jesus Christ, their eyes were opened to the truth and they stopped worshipping these idols and only worshipped the true God.**

1 Thessalonians 1: 4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.

This is how you know you are saved when you have deep convictions when you heard the truth, that your life is entirely changed by it.

Quote : "If you are renewed by grace, and were to meet your old self...you would be very anxious to get out of his company." —Charles Spurgeon

And what is the first thing that changed in their convictions?

9b They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God

- Remember, it was ok for people then if they found another god **but to reject the other gods, that's when the persecution started.**

The Thessalonians Christians were being harassed and sometimes dragged out of their homes to be tried by the government simply because they left their old way of praying to other gods.

This is the reason why Paul had to write them a letter encouraging them that one of these days Jesus will be coming back and they are saved from the coming wrath.

10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead —Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Remember that they were new Christians and Paul **commended them for standing for their faith.** **NOW part of that is they wanted to know how to live this Christian life,** knowing that they **came from a background very much different** from what they have right now.

THEY WANTED TO KNOW HOW TO LIVE LIVES THAT ARE PLEASING TO GOD.

4 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.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

1. Be pure.
2. Be loving.
3. Be hardworking.

I. BE PURE.

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

Some people ask, "Lord what is your will in my life?" Well one thing is for sure, God is asking us to live holy lives.

How?

avoid sexual immorality

Etymology : porneia "fornication" it's an unlawful sexual act – any sexual act that is outside of marriage.

Immoral Background : Thessalonica was conquered by Rome. It's a midway traffic point so it means there's lots of commercial activity. IT'S A WEALTHY CITY

It was **normal for men to have concubines**, meaning they sleep with other women other than their wives. It was also **normal for the men to have boys and have sexual relations with boys**. Homosexuality was also normal during that time and accepted. They also have the Cabiri cult where **part of the ritual are having orgies**.

The Bible is saying to the Thessalonians, a Christian should be pure and holy.

And that is what God is asking us to do, **daily Christian living is just living a pure life.**

How?

Root word of "porneia" is "piprasko" which means to sell yourself/body as a slave to another. So it means since you have sold yourself as a slave, then you need to do whatever that person tells you. That's why the other meaning of porneia which is pornos is to prostitute your body.

The Bible says, that **when you accepted Christ in your life, here's what happened?**

Romans 6:18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

In short, we don't have to follow what the devil is telling us, we don't have to follow the lust in our bodies. That's why the Bible says :

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;

We need to control our own body. Do not be a slave of your lust. Unlike others, we already know who Christ is, what He did for us.

So how do we control our own body?

Romans 6: 19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness,

HANGER STORY: I remember when I was a kid one of the things that I do in order to control my lusts is I get a hanger and beat myself with it. Then what happens I give unto it and so I feel guilty and ashamed, so I get a hanger again and beat myself to do penance. That was just plain weird.

So what do we do?

so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.

PRAYER OF DAILY OFFERING : I remember Chuck Swindoll who used to preach on this said that every time he wakes up one of the things that he immediately says to God, **“Lord, I offer you my mind, my eyes, my body and my eyes today and use it only for your honor and glory.**

We have to remember, everything starts in the thought process.

It’s not a sin when lustful thoughts come into your mind. That’s temptation and being tempted is not a sin. It becomes a sin when you say yes to those lustful thoughts and entertain it.

As Martin Luther said,

“You cannot keep birds from flying over your head but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair”

Remember, lustful and sinful thoughts will always enter your head but the problem starts when you are already entertaining it and saying yes to it. When these things enter your mind, control it

2 Corinthians 10:5 and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Do not become a slave to your own lustful thoughts but be a slave of Christ.

HOW DO YOU REACT TO MOSQUITOES? Treat lustful and sinful thoughts like a mosquito that’s hovering over your ear.

If we don’t and we give in to sexual impurity, here is what you are asking God to do :

The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before.

If we continue giving in to sexual immorality in whatever form or manner, we are asking God to discipline us.

Do not test God story : One time, a person who was struggling with fornication, approached me and told me that he fell again, giving into lust. In the course of our conversation, he was trying to comfort himself saying that we are already under grace and God will forgive him. I told him that's true but the Bible also commands us "Do not test the Lord your God." And I reminded that person about **the second temptation of the devil to Jesus Christ**, where he brought him up on top of the temple and asked him to jump and then quoted a verse in Psalm 91 which says, "For He will command his angels concerning you...so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." What did the Lord say, it is also written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Remember, when you are being tempted by the devil to commit sexual sin, he is asking you to jump from the tower and saying to you, "Don't worry, nothing will happen to you, God will save you." No, you are testing God and asking Him to discipline you.

Why?

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.

When we commit sexual sins, our actions are telling God, "I reject you. I don't care about you."

Daily Christian living is being pure.

II. BE LOVING.

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. 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,

Again, God may not be asking us to go and help the people in Syria or build houses or wells in the Dominican Republic or preach the Gospel in the tribal people in Indonesia or be like a Hillsong signer that leads thousands of people into worship. Or VICE-VERSE – YOU maybe called to do that **BUT WHETHER YOU ARE CALLED TO DO BIG THINGS FOR GOD OR LIVE YOUR LIFE HERE MAKE SURE YOU ARE LOVING GOD'S FAMILY.** But to live a life that is pleasing to God, He asks us to love the church – God's family.

This is one of the things that the Thessalonian Christians were being commended by Paul – they were a loving church.

And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia.

In fact, their love was so great for one another that it was overflowing throughout Macedonia.

Show map: It's like here in Brampton but it's overflowing in the whole of Ontario.

One thing about love – it's never exclusive. It's always inclusive. True love overflows to others. It welcomes other brothers and sisters who may not be from Thessalonica.

That's why one of the "one another" commands is

1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

To be hospitable means to be welcoming, making sure that the person feels comfortable in your presence. **We call that having a “yes” face.**

Notice that Paul called the church, “God’s family”. **In short, we are related to each other.** We have one Father in heaven. **Just like in any other family, even if you don’t see eye to eye, that person beside you here at church they are still your brother and your sister, no matter how annoying they are.**

What is therefore the encouragement of Paul when it comes to loving God’s family?

Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more,

Grapes and not marbles in a bag Illustration: I sometimes tell other people that the church is not a bunch of marbles inside a bag that is hard on each other. We are grapes in a bag. And one of these days, the grapes need to be crushed in order to become wine. So in that process, we will be crushing other grapes or other grapes will be crushing you. In short, there will come a time it’s either you will offend/hurt your brother or sister or you will be offended/hurt by your brother and sister.

What is the answer to that? LOVE!!! MORE AND MORE LOVE!!!

Why love?

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

In short, love covers the offense.

Chuck Swindoll once said something like this, Christians should develop thicker skin and softer hearts.

IMPORTANT : We can only say we are a truly loving person when we are able to love those people who have offended us.

Why? The Bible says, if you only love people who love you or who are loveable, what is your difference with people who do not know Christ? (Matthew 5:43-47)

Remember our Lord Jesus Christ. We have hurt, rejected Him and offended Him a thousand times and yet He gave His life for us. (Romans 5:8) **That’s how He showed His love.**

Seventy times seven. That’s the reason why Peter asked Jesus, how many times should I forgive a brother, “Seven times? Jesus replied, “No, seventy-times seven.” In short, more and more love.

You might say, “I don’t feel like loving him...or I don’t feel like forgiving him”

Arranged Marriage illustration: I was reading this magazine from Ravi Zacharias “Just Thinking” where he wrote an article “The Will To Do”. In their culture in India, arranged marriage is normal so the time came his brother said to his parents that he is ready to get married. They live here in Toronto and they were finding a woman from Bombay. So the

parents narrowed the applicants and the brother was only looking at the credentials and the photos of the women until finally the brother decided to focus on one woman. A thousand invitations were sent and only two days after the arrival was the engagement and then the wedding ceremony.

Ravi joked to his brother, what if the one that you see in the picture is not the same in person? His brother stared at him and said,

Quote : “Write this down, and don’t forget it : Love is as much a question of the will as it is of the emotion. And if you will to love somebody, you can.”

The Will To Do “Ravi Zacharias” (Just Thinking Magazine RZIM Vol. 25.1)

Application : You can will or decide to love your brother or your sister even if they failed your expectations.

In order to live a life that’s pleasing God, be loving.

III. BE HARDWORKING

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,

Ambition slumbook Illustration : When I was younger before Facebook, we have what we call a slumbook. I don’t know why they called it that way. You have different questions there like “What is love?” What is crush? And then one of the usual questions that you need to answer is “What is your ambition?” We would write, doctor, lawyer, accountant and etc.

But when Paul said , *“make it your ambition?”*, he wasn’t talking about occupation.

Etymology : philotimeomai “means” to strive for, to value.

The Bible is asking us to strive to live quiet lives.

It means the Bible is asking us to strive, aim and value for a life of peace and contentment – QUIET LIVES

The reason a lot of people’s ambitions are to have more money is because they are envious of what other people have and thinking if only I can have what they have, then they will be contented.

Now, the reason why people don’t have peace and contentment is because they are always looking at other people – what they have, what they are doing right or criticizing what they are doing wrong and etc.

That’s why the Bible says : MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

You should mind your own business

You want to live a life of peace and contentment? Stop looking at other people at what they have or stop criticizing what they should be doing about their kids, their life or even their clothes or what their kids are doing and etc... **MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS. Unless they ask for your help, mind your own business. **Or unless**, you see that the other person is sinning, mind your own business.**

Remember this : IT'S ALL PRIDE. When we start looking at other people and start comparing ourselves to them – it's pride. Pride is born out of comparing one's self to others.

IMPORTANT :

I always tell my kids and also remind myself. **NEVER COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS.** You will always find someone who is inferior to you – that's the cause of pride. And you will also find someone who is superior than you – and that's the cause of envy or self-pity- which is also pride!

STAY ON YOUR LANE. FOCUS ON THE LORD ALWAYS!

and work with your hands,

You have to remember that Paul, even if he was an apostle, even if he was a scholar, even if he studied under the best teacher Gamaliel, he worked as a tentmaker in order not to be a burden to other people.

You want to live a life of peace and contentment – **MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS AND WORK HARD!**

Remember, no work is underneath you – the dignity of labor is in the actual labor.

If you are a student, **WORK HARD!**

If you are an employee, **WORK HARD!**

If you have your own business, **WORK HARD!**

If you are a mechanic or even a homemaker, **WORK HARD!**

Honorable hands illustration: It really stuck in my mind this incident when a certain, honest politician that I know was campaigning in our street. Her life was really remarkable and example of honesty (rare nowadays for politicians). While she was campaigning, naturally, she was shaking hands with people. So while doing that, she then approached a man who was fixing something and his hands were dirty and she wanted to shake his hand. The man said, "My hands are dirty" (Madumi po ang kamay ko). And this woman said, "Di baleng madumi ang kamay mo basta marangal." (It doesn't matter if your hands are dirty, just as long as it is honorable.)

We were brought up with the idea that only certain kinds of jobs are honorable! Whether you are a doctor, accountant, painter, mechanic, musician, electrician, laborer, massage therapist – **ALL JOBS COME FROM THE LORD AND THAT'S WHY WE SHOULD HONOR HIM BY WORKING HARD.**

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,

At the end of the day, it's all a matter of attitude or on how you look at your work.

Three masons illustration : A man came across three masons who were working at chipping chunks of granite from large blocks. **The first seemed unhappy at his job**, chipping away and frequently looking at his watch. When the man asked what it was that he was doing, the first mason responded, rather curtly, "I'm hammering this stupid rock, and I can't wait 'til 5 when I can go home."

"A second mason, seemingly more interested in his work, was hammering diligently and when asked what it was that he was doing, answered, "Well, I'm molding this block of rock so that it can be used with others to construct a wall. It's not bad work, but I'll sure be glad when it's done."

"A third mason was hammering at his block fervently, taking time to stand back and admire his work. He chipped off small pieces until he was satisfied that it was the best he could do. When he was questioned about his work he stopped, gazed skyward and proudly proclaimed, "I...am building a cathedral!"

"Three men, three different attitudes, all doing the same job."

If you do this, what is the result?

12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

CONCLUSION :

You want to live a life that's pleasing to God on a daily basis that wins the respect of others?
Do you want others to respect you?

Live it in such a way that is

1. Pure.
2. Loving
3. Hardworking

This is daily Christian living!

If you are doing this, **then you are being a good witness**, GOD IS PLEASED AND YOU ARE ALREADY AT THE CENTER OF GOD'S WILL.

S.G.D.