

**Week of October 23, 2016** **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

**Week Overview:**

**“Making an Impact”**

There is something inside the human spirit that desires to make a mark, leave an impression and in some way touch the lives of those around us.

Life in a broken world can batter that dream and leave us disillusioned and discouraged. Our failures and our weaknesses can combine to persuade us that our lives are insignificant.



The Bible reminds us that it is not in our power to do things that will count for eternity—especially in the mind of God. We can build our mini kingdoms on earth, but 1 Corinthians 3:12-13 reminds us that anything we build with the wood, hay, and straw of this world will not endure. It will become kindling on the day of judgment.

The good news for the follower of Christ is that through Jesus our lives can make an impact, both for the days we are on earth and for eternity. As we learn to tap into his grace and his truth, we can make choices that bring eternal values into the present and touch the lives of those around us.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:9-13 the Bible shows us how to make an impact as we grow in our trust and confidence in Christ. This impact goes in two directions—making a difference in the lives of the people of Jesus’ church, and making a difference in the lives of the people outside of the church.

As your love for Jesus grows and your obedience to him becomes more natural, you will become a greater influence for eternity for those inside and outside the church.

In verses 11-12 the Bible addresses making an impact outside of the church. Some confuse the call to “aspire to live quietly” with *quietism*, which is devotional contemplation and withdrawal from people as a form of holiness. Paul cannot be calling us to hide from others because he commends the Thessalonians for making their faith known. (See 1 Thess. 1:8.) These verses stand in contrast to being a Christian who is noisy, loud, or a busybody. It’s a character that is measured and thoughtful as opposed to bombastic and pompous.

6. Why do you think some people equate making an impact on others lives with being noisy, authoritative, strong-willed, and talkative?

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7. How does 2 Thess. 3:11 shed light on a problem in Thessalonica that might link to what he says here in verse 11?

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8. Discuss how Jesus demonstrated this kind of character as he spoke to the people and trained the disciples.

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9. In what ways is faithfulness to Christ and confidence in him more attractive when it is not flashy?

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**1 Thessalonians 4:9** Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, <sup>10</sup> for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, <sup>11</sup> and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, <sup>12</sup> so that you may live properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

1. As a group discuss some of the things our culture believes are essential for anyone who wants to make an impact on the world. What is the world's formula?

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Sadly, greatness does not last long in a world that seems to have amnesia about yesterday. For example, could you name the last 4 Vice Presidents of the United States? Could your children tell you the key figures in World War II? Could you name the valedictorian of your high school class?

Greatness is not found in big things, but in doing the things of God well. God does not call most of us to touch millions of people. But he does call us to reflect Jesus and his values to the people in our immediate world. That is something within reach of all of us—if we cultivate faith in Jesus.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:9 Paul reminds the believers in Thessalonica that God has taught them to love each other. The same is true for all who know Christ. God is always in the process of teaching us how to love. He doesn't do this by speaking to us from a cloud, but by using a variety of ways to train us to love others better.

2. Share with the group some of things God has brought about in your life to teach you about love. (This might include people, experiences, or situations where love was clearly demonstrated or clearly absent.)

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3. What do the following verses teach you about the place of love in the live of a Christ-follower?

Leviticus 19:18 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Mark 12:31 \_\_\_\_\_  
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1 John 3:10 \_\_\_\_\_  
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1 John 4:20 \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Being taught something does not guarantee that we will put it into practice. All of us know much more than we live out in our daily lives. Discuss some of the roadblocks we all face to loving other believers as often and as deeply as Christ would have us do.

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Simple tasks are easy to master. You can learn all you need to know about tying your shoes, responding to a text message, balancing your checkbook, or fixing a flat tire. Learning to love like Christ is a lifelong challenge.

5. As a group, brainstorm and list some of the kinds of behaviors you might see in a Christian who is learning to love well. We've started the list for you ...

*They listen in conversations and ask caring questions*

*They remember important dates in the lives of friends*

*They show hospitality and make others feel comfortable in their home.*

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