

# AUTHENTIC:

REAL FAITH  
IN REAL LIFE

## 1 Thessalonians – Lesson 6



### Authentic Love for People

In chapter 3 of 1 Thessalonians, Paul wrote of his strong desire to return to visit the Thessalonian church so that he could “*supply what was lacking in their faith.*” As a concerned pastor and mentor, Paul wanted to provide guidance and teaching to help them grow in their faith. He wrote this letter to supply practical instruction to help them bring honor to Christ as they deal with the challenges of life.

### *Examine the text:*

### **Authentic faith encourages brotherly love**

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12
  - a. *Look back to chapter 3:12-13.*
    - i. What was Paul's ongoing charge to this church? (3:12)
    - ii. What is Paul's ultimate goal for people of faith? (3:13)
  - b. Now in chapter 4, Paul returns to the topic of growing in love for one another. What does Paul affirm about their practice of brotherly love? What does he urge them to do? (4:9-10)

*There can be no sense of complacency in the Christian life. Although Paul is pleased with the report he received of the Thessalonians' steadfast faith; nevertheless, he urges them to excel still more.*

*The path you are walking...keep on it.*

*The effort you are making...keep doing it.*

*The love you are cultivating...keep growing in it.*

*The desire to please God...keep focused on it.*

*The example you are setting...excel still more!*

- c. How does Paul describe a life that is honorable and commendable in the community of faith? (4:11-12)

### *Explore the Concepts:*

2. Explain how a gospel-shaped community that is characterized by brotherly love stands out in our culture. How does a lifestyle of lovingkindness serve to make the gospel attractive to outsiders?
  
3. Consider the lifestyle described in (4:11-12). Notice that the fierce competitive drive that is pervasive in our culture is missing from this description. How does our American cultural perspective make it harder for us to live in the way that is described here?
  
4. How does the perspective of (4:11-12) contribute to contentedness and gratitude for all that God has given us?
  
5. In what ways can social media *help* or *hinder* our goals of living in a way that is pleasing to God? What positive outcomes do you see from our ability to be connected with one another? How can social media help us love one another? On the other hand, how does our connectedness make it harder to “*lead a quiet life and mind your own business.*” (4:11)

6. *For personal reflection:* Are there specific steps you can take in your own life to grow in these areas Paul has addressed—loving others and leading a life that is above reproach? Jot down any ideas that apply to your life.

## *Exalt the Savior*

The Bible challenges us to love one another. This is obviously virtuous in concept, but we find it difficult when we encounter prickly people, or when we believe we're being treated unfairly by others. We make excuses for our unkind behavior; we try to justify our sinful tendencies to elevate ourselves and dishonor others.

Consider and reflect on these passages:

- 1 Peter 1:22 *"...love one another deeply from the heart."*
- 1 John 3:23 *"This is His command: to believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He commanded us."*
- 1 John 4:11 *"...since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."*

In John 15, Jesus spoke to His disciples, saying this:

*"My command is this: love each other just as I have loved you."* (John 15:12)

- *For personal reflection:* We are to love others just as Christ has loved us. Think about it: how has Christ loved us? What did it cost Him to love us? Consider the amazing love of Christ, and jot down your thoughts for discussion.

We want to grow in authenticity. We want to grow in our love for God and for others, It is helpful for us if we can establish a discipline of a daily reminder of our commitment of faith.

The Anglican scholar and pastor John Stott started each day with this request as a part of his morning prayer. Take a moment to pray this prayer as it expresses the desire of your heart. Perhaps you may want to incorporate this as a part of your daily routine.

***Morning Prayer***

***Heavenly Father, I pray that this day  
I may live in your presence  
and please You more and more.***

***Lord Jesus, I pray that this day  
I may take up my cross and follow You.***

***Holy Spirit, I pray that this day  
You will fill me with Yourself  
and cause Your fruit to ripen in my life:***

***Love, joy, peace,  
Patience, goodness, kindness,  
Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-  
control.***

***The Gospel brings the power of God for authentic life  
change***