

**1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 (NIV)**

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

**Discussion Questions**

- 1. Play the word association game: When a leader says a word or phrase (from list below), students share the first thing that comes to their mind.**

Love | God's family | quiet life | mind your own business | work with your hands | daily life | respect | dependent

**Leader Tip:** Use this list of things out of tonight's passage in order to get them thinking about what influences our perception. But also feel free to add your own list of any fun or silly things too.

- 2. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 to get a refresher on context . What did we learn last week about Paul's instructions and encouragement to the Thessalonian church?**

**Leader Tip:** God's will for them is to be sanctified and a holy life -not an impure life that looks like the rest of their culture, but set apart and looks more and more like Christ.

- 3. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10. Why does Paul say he doesn't need to write to them about loving each other? What do you think it was like for the Thessalonians to hear that?**

**Leader Tip:** He didn't need to give them any specific coaching on how to love each other better because they were doing it so well! How encouraging for the Thessalonians to hear that from Paul and also for Paul to be able to say that about those he disciplined.

- 4. Who does it say taught the Thessalonians to love each other? How has God taught us to love one another?**

**Leader Tip:** God IS love, so he is obviously the best teacher on how to love one another.

**5. Flip over to John 13:34-35. What does Jesus say about loving one another? What other things or people have influenced you in how you love (in positive ways and/or negative ways)?**

**Leader Tip:** Right after washing the disciples feet (<sup>14</sup> *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.* <sup>15</sup> *I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*) and before he goes to the cross he tells them to love each other as he has loved them (serving, loving, and humbling himself) and that would be a sign to the world that they followed Jesus. Help the students reflect on and discuss how they view love and where that comes from (ex: romance in movies, how they're shown value by family or peers, media, etc).

**6. Notice how Paul urges them to "do so more and more." What impact could it have on our communities if we continued to love each other *more and more*? Where is an area in your life you could love more?**

**Leader Tip:** Help them see the joy and power of love not being limited or just a duty, but an abundant overflow of how God loves us through His grace, patience, provision, care... and ultimately through the sacrifice of Jesus for us on the cross.

**7. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12.**

**What are the other things Paul encourages the Thessalonians to do or not do?  
Why do you think he says these things specifically?  
What would be the opposite of these things?**

**Leader Tip:** Quiet Life vs. stirring up trouble or disruptive behavior. Minding own business vs. gossiping or causing drama or meddling. Working with hands vs. lazy or mooching of other's work or cheating. The same way that loving each other should identify us as followers of Jesus, our daily life should also positively impact how outsiders see us.

**8. What are the 2 things Paul says is the goal of living in those specific ways? How does your daily life come across to those outside of your christian community?**

**Leader Tip:** 1) Win the respect of outsiders 2) not be dependent. We do not want to portray our Christian selves as disruptive, lazy, busy bodies who only rely on other people's work. But want to be a respectful people who work hard to not burden others, but put special effort into relieving their burdens by serving them.

**9. Close in prayer, thanking God for how sufficiently he has taught us to love one another and to help us understand his love more and more.**