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1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

A Life That Pleases God pt.7 – The Essence of Abounding Love

Related Topics: Spiritual Challenges; Abounding; The Christian Walk; Pleasing God; The Will of God; Sanctification; Holiness; Sexual Sin; Sexual Purity; Taught by God; Brotherly Love; the Essence of Love; Godly Ambition; Hard work; An Orderly life.



This fourth chapter is all about A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD; how to walk in agreement with God, and how to walk in faith and to be ABOUNDING more and more in it. The Holy Spirit doesn't leave the 1st Century Christians – or us – with any question as to what that looks like.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 1Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3For this is the will of God your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

9Now 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, 10for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 11and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

Verse 3: THIS is the will of God...

9Now 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, 10 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,

Over the past two weeks we have been making a careful examination of this LOVE that:

- So pleases God
- Is the trademark of the believer
- We are to abound in more and more.

1 Cor. 13:4-8 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

In these verses the Holy Spirit shines God's love through a heavenly prism and we are able to see the essential and indispensable properties of this love that should be abounding in our lives individually and corporately. Without these properties you DO NOT have true love.

Love is:

1. LONGSUFFERING
2. KIND
3. DOES NOT ENVY
4. DOES NOT BOAST
5. IS NOT PROUD
6. LOVE IS NOT RUDE
7. DOES NOT INSIST ON ITS OWN WAY
8. IS NOT IRRITABLE
9. IS NOT RESENTFUL
10. DOES NOT REJOICE AT WRONG DOING,
11. BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH
12. BEARS ALL THINGS
13. BELIEVES ALL THINGS
14. HOPES ALL THINGS
15. ENDURES ALL THINGS

6it does not rejoice at wrongdoing

Our word for “rejoice” comes from the Greek word, *sugchairo*.

sún meaning, “together”

cháiro meaning, “rejoice”, “be ‘cheer’ full”

The entire word means, “to rejoice together,” “to share in another’s joy.”

With this in mind let’s see how this love works.

I. LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN WATCHING OTHERS SIN

Real love realizes that ALL SIN is an affront to God.

For example: *Isaiah 6:1-3* 1In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

Since God is Holy, His love must also be morally pure. Real love will never draw personal pleasure from the sinful practices of anyone else. Love does not delight in watching others sin!

II. LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT/REJOICE IN TALKING ABOUT OTHERS SIN

Love does not rejoice in gossip.

One of the most common forms of rejoicing in sin is gossip. It has been said that Gossips would do little harm if they did not have so many eager listeners. MANY take gossip lightly – but it is an especially WICKED sin

Proverbs 20:19 KJV He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:

Proverbs 26:20 KJV Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Gossip uncaringly reveals the weaknesses and sins of others, and therefore hurts rather than helps them.

CRUCIAL INSIGHT: Gossip that is true is still gossip.

The essence of gossip is:

- Gloating over and/or
- Finding a cause to be glad about the shortcomings and sins of others

A person is never helped by spreading the news of his sin. It is a wonderful thing to fellowship with those whose hearts are so full of love that they refuse to rejoice in iniquity through gossip.

III. LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE AT WRONGDOING, BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH

Paul is not just speaking about factual truth here. He is talking about the truth of the Word of God. Seeing the Word of God upheld, seeing it triumph in every situation of life.

1) LOVE Never Compromises the Truth

Paul is saying that God's love takes great joy in seeing the Word of God taken seriously.

Leon Morris wrote, "There is a stern moral element throughout the New Testament, and nothing is ever said to obscure this. Love is not to be thought of as indifferent to moral considerations. IT must see truth victorious if it is to rejoice."

2) LOVE Always Lives the Truth

A life gripped in the love of God labors to understand what God requires of us. It rejoices to go in and shut the door and open the Bible alone with God. It rejoices to understand what God has called us to. It identifies and avoids sinful self-gratification that occurs through explaining away the truth of the Bible.

LOVE rejoices in:

- Being honest with God
- Beholding the clear cut commands for holiness
- That truth when it is understood

3). LOVE Always Applies the Truth to Sin

God's Love rejoices in a Biblical model of discipline in purifying the church. This must be done with a humble

reverence for God's word. To ignore God's Word in these matters is not only unloving, it is indicative of a person seeing themselves as above the Word!

APPLICATION #1: This must be done fairly without respecting persons!

You are not to exercise discipline on those you are not close to (because you don't like them that much) and fail to do so on those that you favor!

THE POINT: It is a false love which compromises "the truth" by glossing over "sin."

Proverbs 17:15 He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.

APPLICATION #2: Sin must be lovingly dealt with in our midst!

In the physical/biological realm – "a body that cannot purge itself of poison will soon die." The same is true in the Body of Christ of relationships in general – including marriage!

This must be done the way our lord instructs in *Matthew 18:15-17*

15 "If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

APPLICATION #3: If we truly love one another we seek to hold one another accountable to live out biblical truth.

That is love at its highest level!

NOTE WELL: We must see the importance of letting God and His Word be uppermost in the marital relationship.

PAXTON wrote, "A braid appears to contain only two strands of hair. But it is impossible to create a braid with only two strands. If the two could be put together at all, they would quickly unravel. Herein lies the mystery: What looks like two strands requires a third. The third strand, though not immediately evident, keeps the strand tightly woven." Then Paxton concluded, 'In a Christian marriage, God's presence, like the third strand in a braid, holds husband and wife together.' God is the only third party in a marriage that can make it work."

3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Whatever is done in the name of Christian love that is not connected to the Word of God is not love.

7Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.8Love never ends.

These four intrinsic and indispensable qualities of love are much more closely tied to each other than any of the other eleven elements (there is a real overlap here).

“BEARS” comes from the Greek word, *stego* {steg'-o} meaning, “to cover over with silence; to keep secret; to hide, conceal.....keep confidential.”

KEY INSIGHT: Man’s depravity likes to uncover everybody’s evil.

For example: Children tend to tattle.... from the beginning.

Depravity has a tendency to do this to gain a cheap sense of self-respect and self righteousness. Some people never grow out of that.

Another example is the spouse that goes around talking to everybody about the faults and sins of their partner. This person has no clue of what real love is all about!

NOTE: To cover sin is easy with those we are fond of. “That’s okay... everybody makes a mistake.” BUT – It is harder to cover the faults of those we don’t care for. Like when somebody you don’t like does something wrong and you find yourself almost rejoicing in it. It’s almost like you want them to do something wrong so THEY can look bad.

By contrast –

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

Listen very closely - to cover sin does not mean that you compromise with sin.

Real love will warn – exhort – rebuke – and discipline sin.

But that same love will also cover it rather than seek to expose it. We are not to think of this in terms of a “criminal cover-up” or sweeping something under the rug, but in keeping the sin known only within the sphere that is necessary for correction, repentance and restoration.

We see a great example of this in *Genesis 9:20-24* .

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. 21He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. 22And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. 23Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. 24When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him...

Shem and Japheth had a love that bears all things...

IV. LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS

7 Lovebelieves all things

1Corinthians 13:7 NIV always trusts

We are to try to think the best about people.

CRUCIAL INSIGHT #1: THIS THOUGHT HAS BIBLICAL LIMITS

Andrew Fausset wrote, (LOVE BELIEVES) “All that is not palpably (observably) false...all that it can with a good conscience believe to the credit of another”

CRUCIAL INSIGHT #2: THIS THOUGHT HAS REASONABLE LIMITS

There are some things we are not to believe such as, the lies of the devil. It is not implied that love is to allow itself to be deceived by the pretences of any dishonest person that comes along. We are called to be a discerning people as well.

Paul is speaking of that the quality in a person that is always ready to allow for circumstances, always ready to give a person the benefit of the doubt. CONVERSELY – when you do not really love somebody you are quick to think the worst of them.

BOTTOM LINE: Love doesn't go through life cynical and suspicious of everybody and everything!

God's Love doesn't jump to conclusions if somebody does something wrong. God's Love doesn't say – “I knew they were rotten to begin with!”

True love actually makes an effort to draw out the best in people. For example, in the little book of PHILEMON we see Paul believing the best and drawing out the best... in his disciple Philemon.

V. LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS

7 Lovehopes all things

Leon Morris wrote, “Thought is not that of unreasoning optimism, which fails to take account of reality. It is rather a refusal to take failure as final.”

The MAIN IDEA here is a refusal to take failure as final! THIS LOVE IS FUELED BY A TRUST IN OUR GRACIOUS SOVERIEGN GOD. As long as He is on the throne there is always hope!

When people don't respond to us we very often give up all hope on them, but REAL LOVE does not take failure as final because Jesus is on the throne – and HE is able!

No one said it better than C. S. Lewis, “To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love... is Hell.”

1 Cor. 13:4-8 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,

7...endures all things.

“ENDURES” comes from the Greek word, *hupomeno* {*hoop-om-en'-o*} meaning, “to endure, bear bravely and calmly.”

This is NOT denoting a resigned acquiescence. It is an active positive fortitude like the endurance of a soldier

who in the thick of the battle is undismayed.

THE POINT: God's Love possesses a willingness to endure suffering for the benefit of the one you love.

Our Lord Jesus Christ exemplified this as He endured all a man could endure because of His great love for us!

Hebrews 12:2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross

APPLICABLE STORY:

The Ring of Death Silenced by Love -

In seventeenth-century England during the time of General Cromwell, a soldier was condemned to die by execution at the ringing of the curfew bell. This soldier, however, was engaged to be married to a beautiful young girl. With tears, the girl pleaded with the judge and with Cromwell to spare his young life. But it was all in vain. The preparations were made for the execution, and the city awaited the signal from the bell at curfew. The sexton, who was old and deaf, threw himself against the rope, as he had for years. He pulled it and pulled it and pulled it not realizing that no sound was coming from the bell. The girl had climbed to the top of the belfry, and had reached out, caught, and held on to the tongue of the huge bell at the risk of her life. As the sexton rang it, she was smashed against the sides of the bell—but the bell was silent. At length, the bell ceased to swing, and she managed to descend from the tower, wounded and bleeding. Cromwell, waiting at the place of execution, wanted to know why the bell had not rung. The girl arrived and told him what she had done.

A poet recorded it for all time. This is what he said:

At his feet she told her story,
Showed her hands all bruised and torn;
And her sweet young face, still haggard
With the anguish it had worn;
Touched his heart with sudden pity,
Lit his eyes with misty light:
"Go, your lover lives," said Cromwell,
"Curfew will not ring tonight."

8Love never ends.

The New King James translates it as, "Love never fails."

THE IDEA is that God's love will never be inefficient; never be of none effect.

Today we live in the age of the INFOMERCIAL. They sell everything and anything (health products, remedies, gadgets), making unqualified promises of the effectiveness of their product. The truth is that many of these things are INNEFFICIENT and leave no lasting EFFECT from their use. THEY FAIL!

We live in the age of GOVERNMENT REMEDIES for social and moral problems. Throw tax money at crime; make laws about this and that. THEY FAIL!

However, no matter WHAT you are doing FOR the Lord, if it is being done out of HIS LOVE it will ALWAYS BE EFFICIENT. It will ALWAYS have an eternal EFFECT on those you are loving.

LOVE WORKS... LOVE NEVER FAILS.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 again only this time take out the word LOVE and put in your own name:

4Richard is patient and kind; Richard does not envy or boast; Richard is not arrogant 5or rude. Richard does not insist on his own way; Richard is not irritable or resentful; 6Richard does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7Richard bears all things, Richard believes all things, Richard hopes all things, Richard endures all things.8Richard never ends/fails.

UNDONE, BUT NOT HOPELESS!!

This time let's read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 only this time take out the word LOVE and put in THE NAME OF JESUS

4Jesus is patient and kind; Jesus does not envy or boast; Jesus is not arrogant 5or rude. Jesus does not insist on His own way; Jesus is not irritable or resentful; 6Jesus does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7Jesus bears all things, Jesus believes all things, Jesus hopes all things, Jesus endures all things.8Jesus never ends/fails.

PERFECT!!

OUR ONLY HOPE to LOVE LIKE THIS IS JESUS! ONCE AGAIN – It's ALL ABOUT JESUS!