

I THESSALONIANS 4:11-12
WALK IN HONESTY!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Thessalonians chapter 4 as we continue our study through Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica. We are currently in a section, which continues through the rest of this letter, that deals with how the church is to walk.

Now I think I can safely say that this is not an easy section for most if not all of us. I am sure the Holy Spirit has convicted our hearts as we have looked at walking in holiness. Paul tells us that God's will for our lives is that we would "**abstain from sexual immorality; that each of [us] should know how to possess [our] own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.**" I Thessalonians 4:3-5.

In other words, God's will for our lives is sexual purity and in a world that seems to think that anything and everything is okay in this area, God says it is not. And thus, He calls for us to walk in holiness, that the world would see that we are different and that is such a witness to the lost. They may not like what they see because the light exposes their darkness, but they can't deny what they see!

Not only are we to walk in holiness, but as we saw last time, we are to walk in love. Now that may seem easy but don't miss the point. This is not just a love toward those who love you back. This is an AGAPE love, or unconditional love. You love as God has taught us to love. And the best example is Jesus, who gave His life for sinners who were in rebellion against Him and yet, His love for them, for us, was so great and is so great that He sacrificed His life so that we may live with Him!

And please understand that this type of love is not one that is manufactured by our own efforts. This love, this AGAPE love is poured into our lives by God and flows through our lives to touch the lives of others. Thus, we need to surrender our will to His will and let that love flow.

And keep in mind that our walk is being witnessed by those around us. So as people look at our lives they should be seeing Jesus in us. They should have questions why we live that way. They should desire to have what we have. But if our walk is off, that is what people will see and they will come to the conclusion that we are just like everyone else. This “Jesus thing” that you are talking about is nothing more than just empty words!

Well, just a warning about today’s study, it does not get any easier. But that should not discourage us or cause us to tune out, drop out, not listen. It should cause us to fall on our knees and ask the Lord to help us so that we can grow, so that we can be more like Him so that our lives would be a witness of Him!

This morning we are going to be looking at walking in honesty. Now that may not sound too bad, but Paul makes three hard points regarding this walk and then he tells us the results that will take place as we walk accordingly!

Remember what John said in III John 3-4, **“For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”**

What is John saying of these believers? That their walk, as they lived out their Christian lives, as they were following Christ, they were a witness of Christ. They walked in the truth and John was so blessed by this witness. And I think any pastor or leader of a church, as they look at the people God has entrusted to them, is blessed when they see their people walking in the truth, that their lives are a witness of Christ. The opposite saddens them of course!

And yes, we do need to remember that we are not perfect, we do blow it, but how we handle that is also a witness. If we try to lie, cover up, make excuses for our words or actions, we blew our witness. But if we are honest, if we show that we were wrong, that is a strong witness to those around us.

Let me share this story with you and I think you will see what I mean when I say that we can hinder our witness to people. We are told,

Many years ago, a city, situated in an arid region, was supplied with water from a beautiful lake far up in the mountains. One day, in the midst of the hot, dry season, the water supply gave out, and the word went from mouth to mouth: "The lake is dry!"

Twenty-four hours passed, the people were famishing for water, when one man declared his intention of climbing up to the lake, hoping to find a bucketful of water.

Imagine his joy when he found the beautiful lake not dry, but overflowing. All of the water which supplied the city must pass through a great leaden pipe. Into this a block of wood had floated, and had become so closely wedged as to stop the flow of the water.

- Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today

By our words, by our actions, we can stop the witness of Christ in our lives. That love of God that flows into our lives can be blocked by our actions. It is not that He loves us any less, we have become a blockhead in a sense, a block of wood, and we are not allowing that love of God to flow in us and through us to touch the lives of others.

In other words, it is a choice on our part and as we reject the truth of God found in the Word of God regarding how we are to walk, then our actions and words will be a reflection where we are at. I have seen this so often and the amazing thing to me, when these people are confronted with their actions, they mostly say that they are good with God. No, they are not, their actions show that!

So, this morning, as we look at this idea of walking in honesty, may we be open to what God is showing us. May we correct those things that need to be corrected. And keep in mind that this is not a study to condemn you, God does not condemn you, but it is a study in growing and sometimes those growth spurts hurt. But it is needed if we are going to grow in the Lord. God wants to bless you, lift you up but sometimes to go up you must go down, you must see yourself as you really are before God and then allow Him to lift you up!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in I Thessalonians chapter 4 beginning in verse 11 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica.

I THESSALONIANS 4

VERSE 11

As I have said, Paul makes three points here and they do cut to the heart, our heart as we read them. First of all, Paul tells us that we should “**aspire to lead a quiet life.**” What does he mean by that?

When Paul says that we are to strive towards this goal he is not saying that we are to keep silent or keep our mouths shut. Although, that is not a bad idea at times. Sometimes we have the same disease that Peter had, foot in mouth disease! But that is not Paul's point here.

Paul is telling us that we are to strive after a restful or undisturbed life. In other words, instead of being anxious, stressed out, frantic, worried about this and worried about that, live a peaceful life!

Now some of you may be thinking, "Are you kidding me? A peaceful life. Have you been to my house? Have you seen what happens when I share Christ with people? Do you know what is happening at work?" And I think we all agree, there is much stress in our lives.

So how can Paul tell us to live a peaceful life when, in this world we are so stressed out, there is so much anxiety, so much! What can we do?

In Psalm 46:10-11 we are told, "**Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.**"

It all begins here, with our focus being on God! Remember what David said in Psalm 42:5, "**Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.**"

Was David discouraged, downcast, depressed, stressed out? Absolutely because his focus was what was before him and it was a mess. Then how did he find peace in the midst of all of this trouble? He focused on God, "**Hope in God**" he said.

In fact, not only did David hope in God, focus on God, but in Psalm 42 we see that David praised the Lord for the deliverance that He would bring to the situation! Now, let me ask you this. What deliverance did God bring to this situation of David's?

He didn't bring anything at this point! Then how can David praise God? Because his hope was in God who can bring about the salvation of the situations he faced and thus, he not only praised God but he rested in God, found peace in the midst of the turmoil.

Can we just be still and know that He is God? I hope so. In this world we get so busy that we forget to take the time to quiet our lives so we can focus on God and listen to His voice. But as we take that time to draw close to God we will find that peace that only God can bring for our lives, that peace that is in the midst of turmoil!

Remember the words of Jesus in John 16:33, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

Now, look at this world, do you find peace in this world? Absolutely not and yet, the world is looking for someone to bring them peace! I like the perspective that this writer had of the situations we are in. She wrote,

Flickering candles, soft music, trickling fountains. I sat in the lobby of a luxurious day spa on my birthday, waiting for a massage. As I glanced around the waiting room, I realized most of us there were likely trying to find escape from the busyness of life. We came to this place hoping for a moment of serenity. Yet despite the calm, relaxing environment, my heart still raced. My thoughts bounced from one item to another demanding my attention: my husband's approaching deployment, my responsibilities at work, an upcoming move to my parent's house. How was I going to get it all done? What could I do to slow my thoughts down? And why didn't the spa experience seem to be helping?

We live in a culture desperately seeking relief from the chaos of day- to-day living. Our nightstands are overflowing with magazines and books with step-by-step guides to reducing stress. Yoga classes are filled with people looking for solace in mental relaxation techniques. We spend our days driving to seminars that promise results, doctors who prescribe medications, therapists who provide counsel, and we tune our car radios to stations that offer soothing melodies. Ironically, we're scrambling to find stillness and missing out on it in the process.

Now don't get me wrong, the desire to avoid stress and chaos in life is healthy and right, but in fleeing these things, we need to stop and ponder the direction of our feet. Are we running aimlessly away from stress or are we running purposefully towards Christ? As Christians, we need to consider the desires of our heart: Are we simply craving rest and relaxation or are we longing for our Prince of Peace?

The Bible says that as Jesus approached the bustling city of Jerusalem, He stopped at the Mount of Olives where He had a magnificent view of the city, and He wept. This was the holy city and it teemed with religious fervor, abundant wealth, and prophetic knowledge. But Luke 19:41-42 tells us, "And when He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!"

Jesus wept because He knew within a matter of decades the city would face destruction. Why? Because they had failed to acknowledge that Jesus was the King of Kings prophesied about; the Redeemer who would save them. The Prince of Peace had arrived on the scene, and they missed it!

We must not live our busy lives failing to recognize that Jesus is who we need to give us true peace. We must point our spouses to Christ when they feel overwhelmed by responsibilities. We must encourage our children to communicate to the Lord about their anxieties with school or friendships. His promises enrich the heart and will not leave the spirit restless. Don't just run from stress. Run to Christ!

- <https://teachthemdiligently.net/blog/2013/04/looking-for-peace-in-all-the-wrong-places/>

That is exactly what the Bible is telling us, run to Christ, hope in Him. In this world we will have tribulation! How many of you have experienced that, this tribulation, life's difficulties? We all have.

The thing we need to remember is that the world does not have the answers to peace for our lives, only more turmoil, only more anxiety, only more stress. You can't run from it because you are living in this world, but you can run to Christ, the Prince of Peace!

Remember what Peter said in I Peter 5:7, **“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”**

That is how we achieve this peace in our lives, we run to Jesus and we cast all of our cares, all of our anxieties upon Him and the wonderful thing here is that Jesus does not say, “Oh my gosh, it is Joe again. This guy just unloads all his troubles on Me. Can you just tell him I am out of town?”

No, Jesus does not say that. He is always there for us and He cares for us. So, as we lay those burdens down, we can enjoy that peace that surpasses all understanding!

But many times we get our focus off and instead of resting in the Lord, we are anxious in this world because we are looking to the world for peace, for rest and it is not happening.

In regard to this, one writer put it this way as he shows us the successful cult that is leading many people to Hell, more than any other cult out there. He tells us,

This cult has a god (the self), an army of priests (celebrities), a set of scriptures (tabloids and the like), a creed (the demand for “excitement”), and countless places of worship (amusement parks, theaters, concert halls, sports arenas, and every TV is a little chapel). This cult seduces people into living their lives for one thing – the thrill of the moment. But these thrills are quickly over and forgotten, and all that is important is the next fun thing. This cult numbs us so that the only question we ask is “Is it fun?” It never wants us to ask, “Is it true?” “Is it right?” “Is it good?” “Is it godly?”

- David Guzik

How true that is. Think about it. If the world truly had the answers for our anxious, restless, troublesome lives, don't you think more people would be at rest. Of course they would, but they are not because what the world has to offer is only temporary. And what brought you rest, comfort, peace last week, is not doing it this week and you have to go on to find something else that will do it.

If you think I am stretching this, take a look around. Look at the number of people that are addicted to drugs, alcohol, sex, work and the list goes on. They are trying to find that peace and in the end, like a hook that is baited with a worm, the fish goes after it and instead of peace, there is death as the fish is caught. And that is exactly what the Devil does in our lives.

In Philippians 4:6-7 Paul says, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

How many things are we to be anxious about? Paul says, **“for nothing.”** “Are you kidding me? How can he say that we are to be anxious for nothing?”

Because Paul tells us that we are to bring it before God, with thanksgiving and as we give it to the Lord, as Peter also told us, then the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will bring that comfort to our hearts or our emotions and our minds or our thoughts!

You see, I think we are so much in this world that we lose sight of God. And Paul does have a solution for that as he goes on to say in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

What are you taking into your life because what you take in will be manifested in your actions, your words! Let me give you a picture of what this looks like with this story. We are told,

Long ago a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide.

Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered.

The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled.

As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd.

A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace?

A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power.

A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

- Berit Kjos, *A Wardrobe from the King*, pp. 45-46

That is the peace that God has for us, it is one that surpasses all our earthly understanding and it is that perfect peace that only God can give, it is a lasting peace.

So, may we lead a peaceful life. A life that is at peace with God through Jesus Christ and then allow the peace of God to come into our lives and be manifested in our words and deeds!

LEAD A PEACEFUL LIFE!

The next point that Paul makes in regard to our walk, and please don't be offended, but he said, "**mind your own business.**" Isn't that interesting! Don't we see that today where everyone wants to give you their opinion regarding someone else's life!

Being a busybody is not a fruit of the Spirit! Sorry, but it is not. Let me give you an example of what I mean and I am speaking to Christians here, not those that do not know the Lord. You see, we should know better, we should walk according to the high calling by which we have been called and many times, we should just mind our own business.

When I look at Facebook, it is a very popular social media site. The reason it is so popular is everyone can give their opinion and they think everyone wants to hear it. The problem, not only with that, is that Christians love to post things on Facebook and many times it is not nice.

Remember, they will know we are Christians by our love and if you don't show that love, look out! And if you don't love your brothers and sisters in Christ, look out! I have learned, or I should say I am learning that sometimes, most of the time it is better not to say anything because it is not going anywhere but putting a bad picture on Christ.

I would rather talk with someone who has said something about me, about the church, about this or that, face to face. But many times we see people in the face of others, telling them what they should or shouldn't do and if you don't agree with them you are backsliding, you are a lukewarm Christian. Be careful!

I think I have shared this with you before but it does give us a good perspective of the things we say that may not be true, may be hurtful to others and what we can do about it once it is out there. We are told,

If you don't say it, they can't repeat it. Yiddish folklore offers a telling tale about gossip-makers. One such man had told so many malicious untruths about the local rabbi that, overcome by remorse, he begged the rabbi to forgive him.

“And, Rabbi, tell me how I can make amends.”

The rabbi sighed, “Take two pillows, go to the public square and there cut the pillows open. Wave them in the air. Then come back.”

The rumormonger quickly went home, got two pillows and a knife, hastened to the square, cut the pillows open, waved them in the air and hastened back to the rabbi's chambers. “I did just what you said, Rabbi!”

“Good.” The rabbi smiled. “Now, to realize how much harm is done by gossip, go back to the square . . .” “And?” “And collect all your feathers.”

- Hooray for Yiddish

Impossible? Exactly! And if you think that I am wrong here regarding being a busybody, listen to what we are told in the Scriptures. Peter tells us in I Peter 4:15, “**But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.**”

Let me share this with you because it will help all of us see what we should and should not be doing. We are told,

A busybody is a person who meddles in the affairs of others. Sometimes this meddling is under the guise of “helping,” but usually the “help” is unwelcome and uninvited. Busybodies are often people who are dissatisfied with the level of drama in their own lives and gain satisfaction by becoming involved in the problems of other people. Gossip is usually a staple of every busybody, but it is usually camouflaged as a “prayer request” or given under the pretense of asking for advice.

The Bible has strong words for busybodies (2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:13). First Peter 4:15 warns us, “Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler.” It is noteworthy that Peter lists meddling as prohibited right along with murder and theft. Busybodies within the church often camouflage their nosey meddling as compassionate concern. The difference between meddling and concern, however, is whether or not the intrusion is beneficial or productive in the lives of others.

Some people have difficulty recognizing themselves as busybodies, so a few questions can aid in determining whether or not attempts to “help” are in fact meddling. A potential busybody should ask him/herself the following questions:

1. Is this any of my business? (1 Timothy 5:13)
2. Has God given me this assignment? (Ephesians 6:19)
3. Am I qualified to involve myself with this? (Romans 14:10)
4. Is my true motivation to bring help, or do I only want to feel needed? (1 Corinthians 13:1)
5. How much of my “discussion” about the situation could be classified as gossip? (Proverbs 11:13)

6. What was the result the last time I intruded in a situation that was not my problem?
(Proverbs 26:11)

7. Has my opinion been sought by those involved? (Proverbs 27:2)

8. Am I motivated by love for this person or by a sense of my own importance?
(1 Corinthians 16:14)

9. Am I basing my “help” on Scripture or on my own opinion? (Proverbs 16:25)

10. Do I respond with anger when my “advice” is not accepted or found to be flawed?
(Proverbs 17:10)

The answers to these questions can help us determine whether our involvement in the affairs of others is, in fact, meddling. If we recognize that our real motivation is the enjoyment of being in the center of other people’s issues, it may be time to let God deal with that insecurity. It is important to remember that busybodies rarely think of themselves as insecure. If we find ourselves often embroiled in the secrets of others, it may be wise to seek the oversight of a trusted friend or pastor. An objective person can help clarify our motivations and keep us from becoming a busybody.

- <https://www.gotquestions.org/busybody-Bible.html>

Here’s the thing. Yes, genuine concern for others that causes you to be involved in people’s lives out of genuine love is good. But, if you are doing this, sticking your nose in everyone’s business, that is not good, it is wrong!

Let me give you this to help you to **THINK** before you speak, before you get involved.

Using the word “think” we should,

T - IS IT TRUE?

H - IS IT HELPFUL?

I - IS IT INSPIRING?

N - IS IT NECESSARY?

K - IS IT KIND?

If what you are about to say or do does not pass this **THINK TEST**; then don't say it or don't do it. It will work and it is important!

So we have seen here that Paul tells us we are to mind our own business or don't stick your nose in where it doesn't belong, don't be a busybody!

In II Thessalonians 3:11-12 Paul once again picks up on this as he tells us, **“For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.”**

So, may we lead a life that is not involved in being a **BUSYBODY!**

How can we stop being busybodies? That is Paul's next point!

The third point that Paul brings out here, besides living a peaceful life and not being a busybody, is also a tough one. Paul tells us that we are to **“work with your own hands.”**

Okay, this is not going to win me friends here, but the Scriptures are very clear on this one. You can be mad at me but this is what the Lord is saying.

Make no mistake about it, we are to work with our hands, we are to supply the needs for our family and our own needs!

And guess what, that is one way to stop being a busybody. You become so busy you don't have time to stick your nose in other people's business!

Now to the Greeks, work done with the hands was degrading, thus, they made their slaves do the work.

Sadly, many Christians do the same today; they expect others to supply their needs because they don't want to work.

We see that so much today with this idea of entitlements. I heard one Millennial say that she thought the 1% should pay off her student loans, increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and pay off the debt. They make too much money and they need to give it to us.

The Bible says the exact opposite. Listen carefully to what Paul said in his second letter to the church in Thessalonica. It seems that they did not listen to Paul's first letter and he responded in II Thessalonians 3:10 by telling them, "**For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**"

Now hear me out on this. If someone is unable to work due to a disability, being let go from work, I have no problem helping them out. But for the most part, that is not the way it is working today. Thus, if you don't work, you don't eat!

But today we have people who would rather stay at home and get money from the government than work. Thus, the people that are working hard for a living are supporting those that are too lazy to work.

Okay, maybe a button for me that was pushed but even in the Old Testament they had a welfare system that made those work for what they ate. You see, you could glean your field once and what was left over were for the poor, the fatherless, the widows. They would come in and glean what they could for themselves then. They worked for what they ate. Today, people want to eat what you have worked for!

I guess the old saying, “Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day. Teach a Man to Fish, and You Feed Him for a Lifetime” can be changed to, “Give a Man a Fish, and You are Going to Have to Feed Him the Rest of His Life Because He is Never Going to Work!” How true that is.

Also, in I Timothy 5:8 Paul tells us, **“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”**

I don’t understand this mentality, especially among Christians. I had one person who felt, because he was in the ministry it was his right to be on welfare because it helped him complete the work of the ministry.

Folks, who does he think is supporting him? People in the ministry and outside the ministry who are working! Folks, if that is your attitude, then don’t get into the ministry. Don’t even advertise that you are a Christian! We will talk more about that in a few minutes.

Regarding this idea of idleness, Clarke made these remarks and they are cutting. He wrote, “There is nothing more disgraceful than an idle good-for-nothing who is of no use either to himself or to others, and seems to have been born merely to eat and drink.”

When sin entered this world, we were told, that we are going to labor, by the sweat of our brow we will labor and that is exactly what we are doing today. We work hard and yet, as we serve the Lord in what we do, we should do it joyfully!

But let me show you where this nation has gone in our lifetime in regard to government assistance. We are told,

America's national character will have to be changed if progressives are going to implement their agenda. So, changing social norms is the progressive agenda. To understand how far this has advanced, and how difficult it will be to reverse the inculcation of dependency, consider the data Nicholas Eberstadt deploys in *National Affairs* quarterly:

America's welfare state transfers more than 14 percent of GDP to recipients, with more than a third of Americans taking "need-based" payments. In our wealthy society, the government officially treats an unprecedented portion of the population as "needy."

Transfers of benefits to individuals through social-welfare programs have increased from less than one federal dollar in four (24 percent) in 1963 to almost three out of five (59 percent) in 2013. In that half-century, entitlement payments were, Eberstadt says, America's "fastest growing source of personal income," growing twice as fast as all other real per-capita personal income. It is probable that this year, a majority of Americans will seek and receive payments.

This is not primarily because of Social Security and Medicare transfers to an aging population. Rather, the growth is overwhelmingly in means-tested entitlements. More than twice as many households receive "anti-poverty" benefits than receive Social Security or Medicare. Between 1983 and 2012, the population increased by almost 83 million - and people accepting means-tested benefits increased by 67 million. So, for every 100-person increase in the population there was an 80-person increase in the recipients of means-tested payments. Food-stamp recipients increased from 19 million to 51 million - more than the combined populations of 24 states.

What has changed? Not the portion of the estimated population below the poverty line (15.2 percent in 1983; 15 percent in 2012). Rather, poverty programs have become untethered from the official designation of poverty: In 2012, more than half the recipients were not classified as poor but accepted being treated as needy. Expanding dependency requires erasing Americans' traditional distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor. This distinction was rooted in this nation's exceptional sense that poverty is not the unalterable accident of birth, and is related to traditions of generosity arising from immigrant and settler experiences. . . .

Eberstadt notes that the structure of U.S. government spending "has been completely overturned within living memory," resulting in the "remolding of daily life for ordinary Americans under the shadow of the entitlement state." In two generations, the American family budget has been recast: In 1963, entitlement transfers were less than \$1 out of every \$15; by 2012, they were more than \$1 out of every \$6.

Causation works both ways between the rapid increase in family disintegration (from 1964 to 2012, the percentage of children born to unmarried women increased from 7 to 41) and the fact that, Eberstadt says, for many women, children, and even working-age men, "the entitlement state is now the breadwinner of the household." In the last 50 years, the fraction of civilian men ages 25 to 34 who were neither working nor looking for work approximately quadrupled.

Eberstadt believes that the entitlement state poses “character challenges” because it powerfully promotes certain habits, including habits of mind. These include corruption. Since 1970, Americans have become healthier, work has become less physically stressful, the workplace has become safer - and yet there has been an almost six-fold increase in claims from Social Security Disability Insurance. Such claims (including fraudulent ones) are gateways to a plethora of other payments.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a lifelong New Deal liberal and accomplished social scientist, warned that “the issue of welfare is not what it costs those who provide it, but what it costs those who receive it.” As a growing portion of the population succumbs to the entitlement state’s ever-expanding menu of temptations, the costs, Eberstadt concludes, include a transformation of the nation’s “political culture, sensibilities, and tradition,” the weakening of America’s distinctive “conceptions of self-reliance, personal responsibility, and self-advancement,” and perhaps a “rending of the national fabric.” As a result, “America today does not look exceptional at all.”

- <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/411954/our-mushrooming-welfare-state-george-will>

Now I do understand that to control the people so that you can join a one-world government you need to have the people dependent upon the government. That way they will do exactly what you want them to do. Hitler did a masterful job at this and was able to perpetrate all kinds of evil because of it. That is coming to America folks, but it should not come to us as Christians. We should work for our wages!

Now I am not saying you can't retire and receive benefits from the government. Let me be clear on this. You are not getting something from the government for free. You have been paying into the government for your retirement and all you are doing when you retire is getting back what you put in. I hope I am clear on that!

We need to work for a living, support our families and ourselves or you don't eat! That is what Paul said, ***WORK WITH YOUR OWN HANDS.***

And did you see how this verse ends here in I Thessalonians 4:11, "**as we command you.**" This is not a suggestion or a good idea. Paul is commanding us to live a peaceful life. Paul is commanding us to not be busybodies. Paul is commanding us to work with our hands, not to depend on others to support you when you can work!

Now why should we do this? Yes, the Lord is telling us but the results that come from living this way are given to us in I Thessalonians 4:12. Look at what Paul says.

VERSE 12

In other words, one of the ways we witness is with our lives! I realize that some disagree with me on this. I have even seen some say it is foolish to believe this way, that it is not even Scriptural. But that is what Paul is saying here. You see, our life is a witness to the lost.

How we walk is important because people are watching our lives. And what is interesting to me is that Paul makes that point when he wrote in II Corinthians 3:1-3, **“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”**

They were challenging the validity of Paul’s ministry and Paul is saying to them, “Do I really need to validate my ministry to you or get letters from you to prove or validate my ministry to others?”

Again, the reason he needed to deal with this is because they were challenging Paul, some of them anyway. Even though Paul spent 18 months ministering to them, (Acts 18:11), there were those who rejected his authority, his apostleship, even though it was the Lord who gave him this position in the body of Christ.

So how did Paul defend himself here? Paul says to them, “You want proof? You are our proof, you are the fruit that was born out of the ministry!”

You might say that they were living letters that validated Paul’s ministry. Even today that is still true, fruit is our testimony.

Thus, as we come to Christ, our hearts of stone are replaced with hearts of flesh that are now sensitive to the things of God. And as people look at us they don’t see some cold, lifeless monument made of stone, at least they shouldn’t, but a living, breathing epistle or letter of Christ and what He has done in our lives for people to see and read!

Listen carefully to this. I don't care how much you go out and witness. I don't care how many Gospel tracks you hand out. If your life, your walk, your actions don't match your words, then your words are meaningless.

One writer put it like this,

For him, the key to evangelism was the integrity Christians manifest to a sinful, confused, and agitated world (cf. Job 2:3; Ps 26:1; Matt 5:16; Phil 2:15-16; 1 Peter 2:12). When believers display diligent work attitudes and habits and live in a loving and tranquil manner that respects others' privacy and does not intrude or gossip, it constitutes a powerful testimony to unbelievers and makes the gospel credible.

- John MacArthur

Paul tells us that we are living epistles for people to read and thus, as people look at your life, what are they reading? Make no mistake about it, ***YOUR WITNESS WILL BE POWERFUL BECAUSE YOU LIVE LIKE CHRIST, YOUR WALK IS IN LINE WITH HIM!***

The second point here is that our needs will be met because of the way we are walking. If you are following the Lord you will be blessed by the Lord.

I am not saying you will not find hardships, difficulties in your life. Look at the life of Paul and the others in the New Testament, they suffered much as they followed the Lord. But look at the blessings they received! The fruit that was born in their lives!

We tend to see blessings as the new car, the new house, the new job, the new spouse, this or that but the blessings truly are the fruit we produce in our lives as we serve the Lord because that fruit is everlasting!

Again, regarding this blessing, we are told,

Furthermore, the Thessalonians' proper behavior (acceptable daily conduct) would ensure that they would not be in any need. If they obeyed Paul's exhortations, they would not always have to depend on more industrious Christians to supply their livelihood.

- John MacArthur

In other words, as we walk in the ways of God, as we live accordingly, we are going to grow, mature in the Lord and that is exactly what God desires in our lives. God will meet those needs in our lives as we walk accordingly!

Remember, we are to walk in peace, not being a busybody, work hard with our hands because the unsaved are watching us and we are to be examples to them of what God has done in our lives.

If we seek attention, if we are all worried, if we are a busybody, if we are lazy, it sheds a bad light upon God, it is a bad witness! You see, by our actions, by what we say we are going to influence people either to Jesus or push them away from Him! Thus, ***WALK IN HONESTY!***