



NG Study Guide: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 "Be Full" [10.21.18]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.

The Study

Thesis: Experiencing the fullness of God's love is paramount for continual Christian growth. However, we must not just experience the fullness of God's love, but also share how others can experience it as well. A significant part of our growth process is sharing God's love with the people around us. Whether church family or our unbelieving neighbors, God's love is best to be deeply appreciated, graciously shown, and poured out on others.

Moving from selfish desires to true love (v.9)

9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

After Paul exhorts the brethren to turn away from sexual sin he praises and encourages what the Christians in Thessalonica are doing right, blessing their fellow Christians, specifically those in Macedonia. Paul encourages the church at Thessalonica to increase in love more and more. His desire is for the church to grow from a "phileo" or brotherly love to an "agape" love which is sacrificial and unconditional.

Loving through labor (v.10-11)

10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; 11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

The Thessalonians were confused about the concept of work. They believed that a person was more valuable for his/her thinking rather than manual labor. As a result, many Christians were neglecting their responsibilities and creating a poor witness for Christians. Paul is encouraging them to embrace hard work and the value of taking care of responsibilities. It is also notable that labor or work for others can be a great "bridge-builder" to show God's love to other people.

Living for others (v.12)

12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

For Christians, living for others will always imply living for Jesus first and foremost. It is out of our love and adoration for Jesus that we can live to serve others. We must accept and appreciate God's amazing love for us if we want to bring glory to God through our love for others. As we model Christ, we will quickly take note of how He loved the people around Him. The hope is, we would live as He did in all aspects of life and love.

Study Guide Qs

Q1: On a scale of 1-10 (1=being a hermit & 10= being like Mother Teresa) how would you rate your love toward other believers? How would you rate your love for others who are "outside the church or "unbelievers"?

Q2: Why is it so important to grow in our love for those around us?

Q3: What are some tangible ways we can labor for God's glory?

Q4: In a world that prides ones self on community service, how can Christians stand out in the way we serve the people around us?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Read the creation account (Gen.1&2) Contemplate God's view of love, work, and fellowship then discuss with someone.

**2. Check out John Piper's workshop on “Love for God is a gift from God.”
<https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/love-for-god-is-a-gift-from-god> and discuss.**

3. Spend time in prayer this week, Ask God to reveal to you the depth of His love and how you can love others more.

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?

2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?

3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Talk with your neighbors this week about what they value in their relationships with other people, share your values with them, and ask how you are doing at honoring those values as a neighbor.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. Feel free to use an icebreaker question or activity** to get to know one another better.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.
 - b. How would each of us like to apply the truths we learned to our life?** This question may be answered simply by completing the study guide. Nevertheless, it will generally be beneficial for leaders to encourage each participant to conclude the study by considering how he or she desires to apply the lessons learned.