

Demonstrated in Action

Key Verse: “We
beseech you,
brethren, and
exhort you by the
Lord Jesus, that as
ye have received of
us how ye ought to
walk and to please
God, so ye would
abound more and
more.”
—*I Thessalonians*
4:1

Selected Scripture:
I Thessalonians
4:1-12

WE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY

have our attention focused on the way that the Apostle Paul begins our key verse. He uses the words ‘beseech’ and ‘exhort,’ which both convey the thought ‘to ask for earnestly,’ or ‘to urge.’ He is admonishing, by way of encouragement, the footstep followers of the Lord Jesus. Paul is pointing out the necessity to apply the things that they have heard and been taught, so that they might go along in the narrow way in a manner pleasing to God. Through his writings, he is

striving to bring out the best in himself and in others, and, in a sense, to make his epistles all the more useful to the true church. Possibly, the Lord’s dealings with us at times may be with the same end in view, which is our preparation for further usefulness in his service.

Certainly one of the most important factors to consider involves the development of our love. This development of love is the type that leans on the Lord, and asks not what we can do, but what the Lord can do in us

and for us. We recall the Lord's words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) It is the Lord's doing, and we can accomplish very little for ourselves. He also has many things at his disposal to help us with our development. The Father is well-pleased to help us increase our love, to increase in the knowledge of the Word of God, our recognition of divine providence, and our fellowship with the brethren.

"My beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:58) Our work at this time may seem to be insignificant, because there are few who have listening ears and hearts that are prepared to accept the Gospel message. But, our work, if rendered unto the Father with the proper heart attitude, will be deemed by God to be acceptable to him through Christ, and will lead us to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Millennial Age.

Our consecration to the Lord, while it must be sincere and complete, was only the beginning. We are to grow in sanctification, and grow in knowledge. Our hearts must gradually be increased in their capacity to be filled with the love of God, and in their complete devotion to him. The Apostle exhorts, "Be [ye] filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18); and again, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" and should abound more and more.—Rom. 5:5

The provision made for this enlargement of our hearts is expressed in the words of our Redeemer's prayer for us, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17) If we strive to do these things, our sanctification, or full setting apart, will increase along with our love and service for the cause of truth and righteousness. ■