

### 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

&quot;Excel in the Grace of Giving&quot;

Sermon

NAS text

Tim Black

1.

#### Introduction

1.

There is a family which lives a few miles from my parents' house in rural eastern Washington, I'll call them the Thompsons. Mrs. Thompson's husband had died from cancer, leaving her to care for her two daughters who were in grade school, and try to earn a living at the same time. The Thompsons became just one of a long list of needy families over the years to whom my parents have given food, clothing, a little money, a place to stay. Every Tuesday night, my Mom would pick up several neighborhood kids, including little Amber Thompson, to give them a ride to the boys' and girls' clubs at our church called Calvinettes and Cadets. And today, partly as a result of my parents' kindness, Amber has professed faith in Christ, and has become a faithful member of a Reformed church. The Lord used my parents' generosity to add one lost sheep to the other 99 in His fold. He can use your generosity to do the same.

2.

Especially in the 70's and 80's, in the earlier years of their marriage, my parents never had very much money, but they always had enough to give something to a family in need. They never called **our** family "needy;" it was always **other** families who were needy, and to whom we should offer our help. I can see now that this was not a pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps

*pride*

, but rather it was

*humility*

; it was not

*pride*

, but rather

*generosity*

.

3.

Mom and Dad were living out what Paul instructs us to do in **Eph  
esians 4:28**

, that

“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.”

And let me tell you, there is hardly a better way to show someone how great is God’s love for them in Christ than to offer them some food, some clothing, to invite them into your family, and into the family of God, when a person is in need. If you know how great Christ’s love is for you, and if you love Jesus Christ for dying on the cross for your sins, then you will extend Christ’s saving love to

the needy in this way. This is why Jesus said in

## **Matthew 25**

“

,

37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 “The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

”

4.

It is this same love, God's saving love for those who are weak, downcast, who are lost in their sin and their misery, which the Thessalonians had begun to show to their needy neighbors in Macedonia.

Reminding them that they have begun well, now Paul exhorts them to excel still more in this grace of giving, so that they will

bear much fruit for the kingdom of God. And so God exhorts us today as well in this passage to do the same; now that we have begun to give, we must work so we will be able to give more to those who are in need, and thereby we will bear much fruit.

5.

We will consider this passage under 3 headings, then, first, in vv. 9-10a, **“You have begun to**



1.

**You have begun to give  
(9-10a)**

1.

**Faith: Taught by God**

1.

**First, you have begun to  
give. Paul speaks**

first of the reason for, then of the fact of, your giving. First, the reason you have begun to give is that you have been “

taught by God to love one another.

” Paul says this in v. 9, saying,

—

“9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no



need for anyone to write  
to you, for you yourselves  
are taught by God to love  
one another. ”

-

Paul didn't need to  
remind the  
Thessalonians of their  
basic Gospel-duty to

love one another,  
because God Himself  
was teaching them to  
do so. Paul is not here  
denying that the  
Thessalonians need any  
teaching whatsoever, for  
clearly Paul is  
teaching them about  
many things throughout  
this epistle, and even  
about their duty to love

one another. But Paul is speaking here about the fact that God has already begun to give them a working faith, and a laboring love. In giving them faith in Christ as their Savior, God has taught them to love one another, and so now their love has begun to labor, even

under persecution,  
even being willing to  
suffer so that others  
might hear the gospel  
and be saved. In  
contrast to the Old  
Covenant, where  
people would look into  
the mirror of God's law  
and then forget its  
requirements for their  
lives, now in the New

Covenant      God in fact  
writes the law on the  
hearts of His people, as  
He      promised in **Jere  
miah      31:33-34**  
,      saying

-

&quot;l      will put My

law within them and  
on their heart I will  
write it.&quot;

-

The New

# Covenant in Christ is the fulfillment of **Is.**

## **54**

,

where God says this  
to His needy, afflicted  
people, in

## **v. 1**

,

—

&quot;Shout for  
joy, O barren one,  
you who have borne  
no child; Break forth  
into joyful shouting  
and cry aloud, you  
who have not  
travailed; For the



sons of the desolate  
one will be **more  
numerous**

Than the sons of  
the married  
woman," says  
the LORD.

-

And in vv. 11-13,

-

11 "O  
afflicted one,

storm-tossed, and  
not comforted,  
Behold, I will set  
your stones in  
antimony, And your  
foundations I will  
lay in sapphires. 12  
“Moreover, I  
will make your  
battlements of

rubies, And your  
gates of crystal, And  
your entire wall  
of precious stones.  
13 "All your  
sons will be taught  
of the LORD  
; And the well-being  
of your sons will  
be great.

”

—

In the  
restoration of His

people, in the New  
Covenant, and in  
the        salvation He  
would bring  
through Jesus  
Christ, God said “Y  
our        sons will be  
taught of the Lord.  
” This is what God

is doing for us  
now, writing His  
holy law on our  
hearts by  
*giving*  
us holy hearts  
in our  
regeneration, and  
now by sanctifying

us, making us  
more holy,  
throughout the rest  
of our lives. We  
are taught by  
God.



—

**Love: You do  
practice it**

1.

But not only  
are you taught to  
love one another,  
Paul says, but  
“indeed you  
do practice it

toward all the  
brethren.”

Paul says this  
in  
**v. 10a**  
  
**,**

—

“10 for  
indeed you do  
practice it  
toward all the  
brethren who

are in all  
Macedonia.”

—

Paul told us  
about the way  
the  
Thessalonian  
s had shown  
love to the

brothers  
throughout  
Macedonia in  
ch. 1:6-10,  
where he  
says

—

“6 You  
also became  
imitators of



us and of  
the Lord,  
having  
received the  
word in  
much

tribulation  
with the joy  
of the Holy  
Spirit, 7 so  
that you  
became an

example to  
all the  
believers in  
Macedonia  
and in  
Achaia. 8

For the  
word  
of the Lord  
has  
sounded  
forth from

you, not only  
in  
Macedonia  
and Achaia,  
but also  
in every

place your  
faith toward  
God has  
gone forth,  
so that  
we have no

need to say  
anything.

—

Now how  
did the word  
of the Lord  
sound forth



from the  
Thessalonian  
church?  
Certainly,  
both in their  
words and

their deeds.

But partly

through the

grace of

giving. Turn

with me to 2

# Cor. 8

, where  
Paul says “  
the  
churches of

# Macedonia

” generously  
gave of their

money for  
the work of

# the Lord . The three key churches in Macedonia

were in  
Berea,  
Philippi, and  
Thessalonic  
a. The  
Philippian

church was  
the first to  
give, but  
undoubtedly  
the others  
followed (cf.

Philippians  
4:15). This  
means the  
way the  
Thessalonians  
practiced



love for the  
brethren  
was  
specifically  
that they  
gave of their

own  
material  
possessions  
to help  
support  
their needy

# neighbors.

# 1

Paul  
says in  
**2 Cor. 8:1-7**

,

—

“Now,  
brethren,

we wish to  
make  
known to  
you the  
grace of

God which  
has been  
given in th  
e churches  
of

# Macedonia

, 2 that in a  
great  
ordeal of  
affliction

their  
abundance  
of joy and  
their  
deep

---



poverty  
overflowed  
in the  
wealth of  
their

liberality. 3

For I

testify that

according

to their

ability, and  
beyond  
their  
ability, they  
gave of

their own  
accord, 4  
begging us  
with much  
urging for

the favor of  
participation  
in the  
support of  
the

saints, 5  
and this,  
not as we  
had  
expected,

but they  
first gave  
themselves  
to the  
Lord and to

us by the  
will of God.

6 So we  
urged Titus  
that as he



had  
previously  
made a  
beginning,  
so he

would also  
complete in  
you this  
gracious  
work as

well. 7 But  
just as  
you abound  
in  
everything,

in faith and  
utterance  
and  
knowledge  
and in all

earnestnes  
s and in the  
love we  
inspired in  
you, see

that you  
abound in  
this  
gracious  
work also

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Written by Tim Black  
Monday, 02 April 2007 07:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2007 20:07

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”

—

The NIV  
translates



this last  
phrase “ex  
cel in  
this grace  
of giving

.” Even  
though  
they were  
in “  
deep

poverty,

” Paul

says, the

Macedonia

ns gave

out of the  
overflow  
of their joy  
in Christ,  
so that

they could  
contribute  
to the “  
support of  
the saints,

” as  
v. 4  
says. And  
so Paul  
exhorts the

Corinthians  
, who were  
more  
wealthy  
than the

Thessaloni  
ans, to  
show the  
sincerity of  
their love



by doing  
just as the  
Thessaloni  
ans have  
done, as

he says

in

v. 8-9

,

—

“8 I am  
not

speaking  
this as a  
command,  
but as  
proving

through  
the  
earnestne  
ss of  
others th

e  
sincerity  
of your  
love also  
. 9 For

you know  
the grace  
of our Lord  
Jesus  
Christ, that

though He  
was  
rich  
, yet for  
your sake



He  
became  
poor  
, so  
that you

through

His

poverty

might

become

# rich

”

■

—

You

see, just

as Jesus  
Christ  
gave up  
the great  
riches of

glory and  
honor  
which he  
had at His  
Father's

right hand  
in heaven  
in order  
to humble  
himself, to

take on  
human  
flesh and  
be made  
in the



likeness of  
a man, in  
order that  
we might  
receive in

# His death and resurrectio n the riches of

salvation  
from our  
sins, so  
now Christ  
calls you

to give of  
yourselves  
self-sacrifi  
cially in

order that  
your  
brothers  
and  
sisters in

Christ  
may come  
to know  
Him, to  
love Him,

to be  
saved  
from their  
sins, and  
to be

delivered  
from some  
of the  
misery of  
this life.



God has  
begun to  
give you  
a real,  
laboring,

hardworki  
ng love for  
your  
brothers  
and

sisters in  
Christ, as  
well as for  
all those  
whom

God may  
call  
through  
your  
efforts to

share His  
salvation,  
but now  
you must  
prove the

*sincerity*  
of your  
love by  
giving  
from your

heart, by  
giving of  
your life,  
of your  
resources,

that others  
might  
be saved.  
Will you “  
excel in



this  
grace of  
giving  
?”

—

You  
see, God

has  
blessed  
you so  
that you

will be a  
blessing.  
Now in  
the New

# Covenant God is fulfilling the

promise  
He made  
to  
Abraham

in Gen.

12:2-3

,

saying

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—

“I

will



make  
you a  
great  
nation,

**And I  
will  
bless  
you,**

**And  
make  
your  
name**

**great;  
And so  
you  
shall be**

**a**

**blessing**

**;**

**3 And I**

will  
bless  
those  
who

bles  
s  
  
you, And  
  
the one  
  
who

curses

you I

will

curse.



And in  
you all  
the  
families

of the  
earth will  
be  
blessed.

&quot;

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—

# And

God  
promised  
to His  
people

# in Deut.

# 28:12-1

# 4

that if  
they  
would  
keep His

commandments,  
then He  
would



make  
them  
a  
blessing

to all  
nations,  
saying

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—

12

&quot;T  
he  
LORD  
will

open for  
you His  
good  
storeho

142 / 1618

give  
rain to  
your  
land in

its  
season  
and to  
bless



**all the  
work of  
your  
hand;**

**and  
you  
shall  
lend to**

**many  
nations  
, but  
you**

**shall  
not  
borrow.**

**”**

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“You  
shall  
lend to

many  
nations,  
but you

shall  
not  
borrow.



” Do  
you  
hear

what  
this is  
saying?

# In Christ God

has  
given  
you all

things,  
but  
more

than  
that, we  
count

all  
things  
to be

loss in  
view  
of the



surpass  
ing  
value of

knowin  
g Christ  
Jesus

our  
Lord.  
God

does  
richly  
bless

us,  
spiritual  
ly as

well as  
material  
ly in

this life,  
and in  
view of

this let  
us not  
cling



selfishly

to what

He

gives  
us, but  
rather

gladly  
give of  
these

bles

sin

gs to  
those

who are  
in need.  
Is this

benevol  
ent  
spirit

not the  
heart of  
what

God  
comma  
nded



His  
people  
to have

in

Deut.

15:6ff

?

God

says

there,

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6

&quot;  
For the  
LORD

your

God

will

bles  
s  
  
you as  
  
He has



promis  
ed  
you,

and  
you will  
lend to

many  
nations  
but

you will  
not  
borrow;

and  
you will  
rule

over  
many  
nations

, but  
they  
will not

rule  
over  
you. 7



&quot;I  
f there  
is a

poor

man

with

you,  
one of  
your

brother  
s, in  
any of

your  
towns  
in your

land

which

the

LORD  
your  
God is

giving

you,

you



shall  
not  
harden

your  
heart,  
nor

close  
your  
hand

from  
your  
poor

brother

; 8 but

you

shall  
freely  
open

your  
hand to  
him,

and  
shall  
genero



usly

lend

him

sufficie  
nt for  
his

need in  
whatever  
er he

lacks. 9

&quot;

Beware

that

there is

no

base  
thought  
in your

heart,  
saying,  
'The

sevent

h year,

the



year  
of  
remissi

on, is  
near,  
and

your  
eye is  
hostile

toward  
your  
poor

brother  
, and  
you

give  
him  
nothing

;  
then  
he may  
cry to

the  
LORD



against  
you,  
and it

will be  
a sin in  
you. 10

&quot;

You

shall

genero  
usly  
give to

him,  
and  
your

heart  
shall  
not be

grieved  
when  
you

give to  
him,  
because



e for

this

thing

the  
LORD  
your

God  
will  
bless

you in  
all your  
work

and in  
all your  
underta

kings.

11

&quot;

For  
the  
poor

will  
never  
cease



to be in  
the  
land;

therefo

re l

comma

nd  
you,  
saying,

'You  
shall  
freely

open  
your  
hand to

your  
brother  
to  
,

your  
needy  
and

poor in  
your  
land.'



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—

# Work

**to give  
more  
(10b-1**

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1)

1.

And

so if  
you  
have

receive  
d the  
incredi



ble  
riches  
of

salvati  
on in  
Christ,

and  
have  
been

given  
life,  
and

health,  
and  
materi

al  
blessin  
gs in

any

measu

re

whatso  
ever,  
do not



harden  
your  
hearts

against  
your

needy  
brother  
s.

Make it  
your  
ambitio

n to  
work  
with

your  
hands  
so that

you  
may  
give

more  
to  
those



■  
in

need.

Make it

your  
ambitio  
n to

give  
more  
food,

more  
clothin  
g,

more  
hospita  
lity,

more  
of  
Christ'

s love,  
more  
of the

gospel,  
and  
more



of the  
ministr  
y of the

church,  
to  
those

who  
need  
Christ'

s love

so

desper

ately in  
the  
world

around  
you.  
Paul

exhorts  
you to  
do just

this in  
1  
Thess.



4:10-1

1,

saying,

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1.

“But  
we  
urge

you,  
brethr  
en, to

excel  
still  
more,

11 and  
to  
make

it  
your  
ambiti

on to  
lead a  
quiet



life

and

attend

to your  
own  
busine

ss and  
work  
with

your  
hands,  
just as

we  
comm  
anded

you,

12

so that

you  
will  
behav

e

properl

y



toward  
outsid  
ers

and  
not be  
in

any  
need.”

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2.

Paul

exhort  
s you,  
then,

to “wo  
rk to  
give

**more.**

**”**



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3.

Now  
Paul is  
not

being  
a  
slave-

driver

here.

He is

not  
exhorti  
ng you

to

drive

yourse

lives  
into  
utter

poverty,  
but  
rather



he is  
exhorti  
ng

you to

work

so that

you  
have  
no

need.

So

that

you

will

NOT

be in  
povert  
y. But

further  
, he  
exhort

s you  
to  
work



so that  
you  
may

give  
to  
others.

Just  
as you  
have

begun  
to give  
to

those

in

Maced

onia,  
he  
says,

just as  
you  
have

begun  
to  
show



hospit  
ality,  
to be

gener  
ous to  
the

needy  
in your  
house,

your  
neighb  
orhood

d, your

presby

tery,

so

now

excel  
still  
more,

for the  
gospel  
must



go out,  
for  
the

needy  
will  
always

be  
with  
you,

for you  
must  
contin

ue to  
grow  
and

aboun  
d in  
love

for  
one  
another

r, for  
you  
must



contin  
ue to  
excel

in this  
grace  
of

# giving.

4.

My

parent  
s have  
diligen

tly,

faithful

ly,

work  
ed all  
their

marrie  
d  
lives,



not  
earnin  
g a

great  
amoun  
t of

money  
, but  
earnin

g

enough

h to

be  
able to  
give to

those  
who  
are in

need.

I have  
sought

to do  
the  
same.



And I  
know  
that

God  
has  
begun

to give

you

this

# grace of giving

as  
well;  
this is

why

He

has

given  
you a  
job, a

house,  
and a  
willing



heart.

But

now

Paul  
exhort  
s you,

you  
must  
excel

still  
more.

## 1 Th. 4:9-12 - Excel in the Grace of Giving

Written by Tim Black

Monday, 02 April 2007 07:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2007 20:07

---

5.

# Practical mean

S:  
work.  
The

practical  
means



by  
which  
you do

this is

to

work

at  
your  
job.

Paul  
had  
set a

# Godly examp le in

word  
and  
deed

to the  
Thess  
alonia

ns, as

he

remin



ded  
them  
in ch.

2:8-9

,

saying

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---

1.

“8

Havin

g so

fond

an

affecti

on for  
you,  
we

were  
well-pl  
eased

to

impart

to you



not  
only  
the

# gospel of God

but

also

our

own  
lives,

becau  
se you  
had

beco  
me  
very

dear  
to us.  
9 For

you  
recall,



brethr  
en,  
our

labor  
and  
hards

hip,  
how  
workin

g

night

and

day so

as

not to

be a  
burde  
n to

any of

you,

we

proclai  
med  
to you



# the gospel of

God.”

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---

2.

Paul's  
goal  
was

not to  
take,  
but to

give.

He

worke

d with  
his  
hands

to  
earn  
money



y so

that

he

could  
preac  
h the

gospel

l to

the

Thess  
alonia  
ns, so

that

he

would

not be  
a  
burde

n to  
them.  
This

was  
his  
patter



n, his  
habit,  
every

where

when

he

preac  
hed  
the

gospel

I.

Some

times

he

even

would  
bring  
a gift

from  
more  
establ

ished

churc



hes  
with  
him,

in  
order  
to

■ impart  
to a  
needy

church  
the  
gospel

I of  
God.  
And

now  
the  
Thess

alonia

ns

had

beco

me

imitat



ors “of

us

and of

the  
Lord,  
”  
as

Paul  
says  
in

1:6

,

giving  
self-s

acrific  
ially

out of  
the

abun  
dance



# of God's

provis

■  
ion,  
  
that

# the gospel

would

go  
out to

perfor  
m its

savin

g



# work in the

# heart s of

their  
neigh

bors.

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---

3.

But  
the

# temptation

is to  
lose



heart  
in

these

acts

of

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To  
negle

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to all,

and  
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faith.

And

some

in fact

# in Thes

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ca,



and  
even

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any

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h

today

, will

fail to  
excel

in this  
grace

# of giving

# ■ My friend



ds,

do

you  
think

you  
have

nothi  
ng to

give?

Do

you  
think

first

of

yours  
elf as



some

one

who

is

need  
y,

rather  
than

as

some

one  
who

can  
give?

That  
you



must  
receiv

e

before

e you

can

# give?

# I

know

what

that  
feelin

g is  
like.

You  
may



need  
to

hear  
Paul'

S  
warni

ng

in 2

# Thes salon

**ians**

**3:6-1**

3

.

Turn

with

me



there,

and

hear  
what

Paul  
says

to us.

He

says,

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1.

6

Now

we  
com



mand  
you,

breth  
ren,

in the  
name

of our  
Lord

Jesu  
S

Chris  
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you

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away  
from



every

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who

# leads

# an

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life  
and

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from  
us.

7 For  
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elves

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how

you  
ought

to  
follow



# our exam

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beca

use

we

did

not

act in

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g

you,

8 nor

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with



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and

# hards

# hip

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night  
and

day

so

that

we

would  
not



be a

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n to  
any

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you;

g not

beca

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the

right  
to



this,

but in

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you,

so

that

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our

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10

For

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you,

we

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to  
give



you

this

# order

# : if

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then  
he is

not to  
eat,

either

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**We**

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Now  
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Lord

Jesu  
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Chris

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their

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But  
as for

you,  
breth

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do

not  
grow

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doing  
good.



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2.

And  
so I

exhor  
t you

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well,

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grow  
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doing

good!

If



you  
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life

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you



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rather  
than

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elf, or

if you

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Paul

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**with  
your**

**hand**

S



He



says

in

**v. 11**

**of**

# 1 Thes

**S. 4**

**,**

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“mak

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it  
your

ambit

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lead

a

# quiet life

and

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d to  
your

# own

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and  
work

with  
your



hand

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just

as

we  
com

mand  
ed

you.

”

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# My friend

ds,  
even

if you  
are

need

y,

even

if you

are

in

deep

pove

erty,

as



*the*

*Thes*

*salon*  
*ians*

*were,*  
work

so  
that

you

will

# have

some  
thing

to  
give



to

those

who

are

in  
need

■ Do

not

think

of

yours  
elf

first

as a

ward

of



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of

yours  
elf

first

as



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think

of  
yours

elf

first

as

one

who

can

give  
to



those

who

are

in

# need



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# The Lord

DOE  
S

richly

bless

us in  
this



life  
with

all  
thing

S,

even

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givin

g you  
this

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just



as

He

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love  
of

Jesu  
S

# Chris

# t.

And  
so if

His  
love



■  
is at  
  
work

in  
you,

you

will

work

to

give  
more

, to  
give

to

the

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y,



that

they

may  
know

the

salva

# tion of

the  
Lord.

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**Then  
you**



**will**

**bear**

**muc**

**h**

# fruit (12)

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---

1.

And

the

# result

,

then,

is

that  
you



**will**

**bear**

**muc**

**h**

# fruit



# Paul

says

this

**in  
v. 12**

,

sayin

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g



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1.

12

so

that

you

will

beha

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ders

and



not  
be in

any

# need



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2.

You  
see,

if you  
grow

and

abou



nd in

love

for  
one

anot  
her,

then

your

growi

ng

holin

ess

will

beco

me



# mani fest

to

the

unbe  
liever

S  
who

**know**

you.

You

**will**

**not**

be

know



n for  
your

desir  
e to

take  
from

them

, but

rath e

r for  
your

desir  
e to

give  
to



them



**You**

**will**

not

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n for

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covet



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but

rather

ryou

**will**

**be**

know

n for

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gene  
rous,



hard-  
worki

ng,  
and

**kind.**

**If**

you

hum

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work

with  
your

hand

s,

and  
work



in  
order

to  
give

to

thos

e  
who

are

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need  
you

will

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prop



erly  
towa

rd

outsider

ders.

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---

3.

But  
also

then

you

**will**

**not**

be in  
any



# need



**You**

**will**

not  
need

to  
ask

other  
s for

their

help

witho

ut

also

bein



g

able

to

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usly

give  
of

your  
own

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sam



e  
time.

And

so

you,  
see,

**you**

**will**

be

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love

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**13:3**

**5**

that

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---

1.

35

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this

all

men

will

know

that


you



are

My

disci  
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you

have

love  
for

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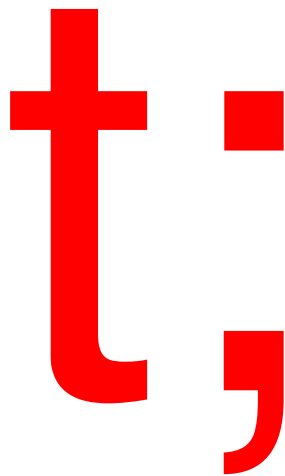
her.

&quo

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2.

wha

t

sort

of

love  
is

this  
love

whic

h we

must

have



**? 1**

**Joh**

**n**

**3:16**

-18

says

that

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---

1.

16

We

kno

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love

by



this,

that

He

laid

dow

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His

life

for  
us;

and

**we**

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our

**lives  
for**

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# 17



But  
who

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2.

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---

# Jesu

# S

spea

ks of

this  
love

as  
the *f*

***ruit***



whic

h we

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bear

in  
our

# lives

,

sayi

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**Joh**

**n**

**15:8**

-9

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1.

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Faith  
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**i**  
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**15:1**

**6-17**

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1.

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16

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2.

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**We**



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## 1 Th. 4:9-12 - Excel in the Grace of Giving

Written by Tim Black

Monday, 02 April 2007 07:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2007 20:07

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