

**WALK IN LOVE**  
**(1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)**

**I. The example of love.**

- A. Paul tells them they have no need for him to write about brotherly love.
  - 1. This type of love is that which should exist between family members.
  - 2. It is to exist between Christians because we have a common spiritual family.
- B. The reason for no need of writing about it is the example set for them by God.
  - 1. By reading the Bible and learning what God has done and continues to do for us, we see love.
  - 2. John simply said, "God is love" (1 John 4:8).
- C. God has set a wonderful example of love for us.
  - 1. The world itself is an example of his love.
    - a. Think of all that surrounds us.
    - b. He has created for us an ideal place in which to live.
  - 2. The physical blessings of life are manifestations of God's love for us.
  - 3. Think of the great many spiritual blessings that are available to mankind because of the love of God (Romans 5:8).
- D. The love that is now under consideration has moved from a brotherly love to a sacrificial love.
- E. There is a progression present here.
  - 1. We first learn to love our brethren because we are now part of a spiritual family.
  - 2. We then learn to love like God.
- F. Notice that love is shown through giving, not through saying.
- G. How do we know God loves us?
  - 1. He has told us in His word.
  - 2. However, we know it in an even greater way because of the way He has shown us His love.
- H. God has set the greatest example for us when it comes to love.
  - 1. We are to learn from that.
  - 2. We are told to be godly and one way to do that is follow His example of love.
- I. God's love is manifested in His revealing His will for us.
- J. God's love is manifested in His providential care for us.
- K. Notice that God's love is continually shown to us.
  - 1. God does not show it occasionally or just when He feels like it.
  - 2. Some brethren only love part of the time.
  - 3. God's love is constantly being revealed to us.
- L. Paul gives us a great example to follow.

**II. The extent of love.**

- A. Paul commends the Thessalonians for the extent of their love.

- B. They did not simply manifest towards one another.
- C. Their love was shown to all the brethren in that area of Greece.
  - 1. Apparently, a bond had grown between the Thessalonians and other Christians in the area.
  - 2. All the congregations that we know of at the time of this writing were Philippi and Berea.
  - 3. More than likely there were others as a result of the missionary efforts of those with Paul but we don't know.
- D. These brethren had shown their love by the support they gave to one another.
  - 1. Each of them were battling against paganism.
  - 2. They needed the support of one another and this congregation had learned that lesson and put it into practice.
- E. Lightfoot, in his commentary, said this refers to all the brethren with whom they came in contact.
- F. They showed their love to all brethren.
- G. This is something the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to learn.
  - 1. We are to love all our brethren.
  - 2. Some want to exclude and be harsh to those exclusions.
  - 3. We can't find support for that anywhere in the New Testament.
  - 4. We are to love all brethren, even those that don't seem like they want to be loved.
- H. How can we do that?
  - 1. Go back and look at the example set by God.
  - 2. Is there anyone that God doesn't love?
  - 3. If I'm going to be godly, and have the love of God perfected in me, there is no one I can't love.
  - 4. I've got to love elders, deacons and preachers.
  - 5. I've got to love members and nonmembers.
  - 6. I've got to love those that don't love me.
  - 7. And you do as well.
- I. The Thessalonians were doing this and we must as well.

### III. **The enlargement of love.**

- A. As much as they loved there was room for growth.
- B. Their love was to super abound, to over flow, which is the meaning of increase.
- C. Notice that Paul called them to this enlargement of their love.
  - 1. This was something Paul knew needed to be done by them.
  - 2. They could not be stagnant in their love.
- D. More and more carries the idea of to a greater degree.
  - 1. Love either grows or wanes.
  - 2. There is no leveling off point.
- E. Think of your love for your spouse.
  - 1. Don't you love him/her more now than you once did?
  - 2. That is the way our love for the brethren should be.
- F. The old saying is, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

1. We can't let that happen in our congregations.
  2. We need to be people that grow in love for one another, not over time drift apart.
- G. It takes effort to have this type love for the brethren.
1. Happy congregations are those whose members love each other.
  2. They are growing and vibrant because of that love.
- H. We then take that love for each other and spread it to the rest of our brethren.
1. Love is not something to be kept to oneself.
  2. It is to be spread and shown to the world.
  3. This is how all men will know that we are the disciples of the Lord.