

HEALTHY HABITS

Work, Home and You

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

February 5, 2016

Focus: The work we do, the environments around us, the rhythms of our lives all have influence on how a day can go. Including God can make all the difference.

Good morning. This morning we are wrapping up our 2017 kick-off series we called Healthy Habits. This morning is the fifth of five messages that are designed to help us start off the year with some healthy habits that will not only last through this year but, help us live out the Christian life that Jesus calls us to live, every single day. So far, we've talked about our future and all the ways we can let God give us a vision for the year that is out there ahead of us. And we looked at how a vision can help us navigate through the year. The second week we dove into the health of our souls and our spiritual lives knowing that our body, mind, and souls are all deeply connected and that God wants our souls to be healthy because they are the one part of us that is going to last forever. The third week we looked at how we're going to take care of our physical bodies. The body you have is a gift and how you treat it is a reflection of how you value God and the gift God's given you. Last week, in the fourth installment, we peeled back our financial picture and considered how God wants us to handle one of the major blessing or the potential curse producers for each of us. The Bible talks about money almost as much as it talks about love because of money's potential to derail us from God's plan in 2017. You can catch any one of the videos of these messages at our website or YouTube link. I don't want you to miss an opportunity to start your year off in a way that puts everything in your favor and sets you up for a year of success.

So, let's jump into what we're going to look at today because I believe that all of us need to hear this. Juggling our work life, our home life, our hobbies and all the fun stuff we enjoy can wear us out – especially when most people work to live and Friday can never come soon enough, right. How to properly manage the work of your hands, your home life, and all the fun opportunities that life offers can make or break us and can affect the relationships that are important to us in positive or negative ways.

As you've started looking at putting in to place some healthy habits that are going to help you in 2017 I want to ask you...how will you do work and home and fun and family in ways that will give you energy and excitement and not wear you out? Most of us are burning the candle at both ends and wondering how we can fit just one more thing into an already crazy life. And what ends up happening is something gives. Something suffers. When we get too busy or our lives are not balanced in a way that is sustainable, something suffers. Most of us know all about this yet, we keep doing it to ourselves when something comes up that we really want to do and we can't say no. Or when something happens in our family that we need to pay attention to and we think that we can keep doing all the other things we've always done. Someone gets sick, or a parent has a health problem, or a child is having trouble at school and we start thinking about how we're going to fit in what we need to do in an already busy life. It's like the old commercial...I can do that, I can do that, I can do that, how am I going to do that.

Here's the thing I want you to hear this morning...if you don't get anything else, I want you to hear this...

When we get overwhelmed, somethings going to give.

¹⁰ Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia.

1 Thessalonians 4:10 NLT

Alright, turn with me to one of the letters a guy named Paul wrote to one of the earliest churches we know about. This Paul, who writes a lot of letters to churches back in the first century, a bunch of which, by the way, end up being in the New Testament of the Bible, is writing to encourage the people in these church communities to live their lives according to the teachings of Jesus just like most of us want to do, right. So, it's good to read this and see how God is telling us how we need to live and how we need to set priorities and have balance in our lives. Sound good? Right. So, I'm in 1 Thessalonians, chapter four...

¹⁰ Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you to love them even more. ¹¹ Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. ¹² Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

We're talking about healthy habits that you can put into your life today that are going to help you through the year and maybe through the rest of your life. And we all know that there is only so many minutes in an hour, so many hours in a day, so many days in a week, and so many weeks in a month and so many months in a year. And our fear is that if we don't do it all, if we don't try to squeeze as much out of each minute, if we don't see all the places we want to see, and try all the things we've heard about, and read all the books that we love, and visit all the food places we've had friends tell us about, we'll end up living an unfulfilled and empty life. And while we know that's not true – in our heads we know that's not true – we are still trying as hard as we can to do it all.

We work extra hours at the office or on the job site, and we tell the boss we can get it done when we know that it will be impossible to get it done unless we bend over backwards. We all know that there are those times when we stay a little later than we ought to, or say *yes* to something when we've already looked at our calendars and there is already something there and now we're going to have to reschedule, and juggle and move things around. And what we do at work and how we handle things at work affects our home life. We know that we do those kinds of things at work that I just mentioned and there's a ripple effect that hits home when we made promises we can't keep or we miss some event or concert, or family get together that we said we'd be at or that we really wanted to be at.

But, it's not just what we do at work...we also know that what we do at home has a ripple effect in all the other areas of our lives too, more so than the things at work do. If you don't believe me, stand around the water cooler and listen to the conversations about how things are going at home, right. We try to please everyone and that doesn't work. We deal with kids and finances and relationship issues, and parents. And if we're honest there are times when we're frustrated because we want more and we'd just like to have what other people seem to have.

Most of our frustrations come from wanting more stuff.

We're not always satisfied with our house, or with our car, or maybe even with our spouse or kids, and we look at what other people have and we would love to have the bigger and the better or the newer and more improved, or the nicer. And let's face it, for some of us we are in a relationship that wasn't what we planned on and doesn't look like we dreamed it would be. We thought we'd live happily ever after and this doesn't look like that. As a matter of fact, we're so busy or so frustrated, or so unsatisfied that some of you have wondered if it's worth staying...staying married, staying faithful, staying honest.

So, we do things like binge watch to catch up on all the cool things people talk about where we work. Or we go to gym, or pick up some hobby thinking that it will make everything better or at least easier to live with the frustration and dissatisfaction.

And in the middle of all this crazy living we're doing we are robbing something every time we say yes to something else. Every time we say we can do something at work somethings got to give at home or somethings got to give in or hobbies. And every time we say yes to something at home we say no to something somewhere else. And so, this passage is telling us that if we want to be healthy and live healthy lives that balances work and home and fun and hobbies...then there are some thing we need to do. It's not going to happen on its own. We are going to need to take some steps this new year to change or it will be just like all the other years that helped get us here.

Healthy habits create **balance** at work, at home and at play.

Let's go back to the passage. This is a part of a larger letter Paul is writing to people just like us. I want you to put away the tendency we all have of saying things like, "well, that's the Bible, what do they know about my life or life now-a-days." The city of Thessalonica is bustling in the first century. It is a Roman capital city and a critical trading hub for the Roman Empire. There is a huge amphitheater where plays are put on and where gladiators fight it out with each other. There are temples to several of the Roman god's, of which there is no shortage back in those days...and there is a Jewish synagogue, which Paul visits several times and is recorded over in Acts chapter 17. If we were to try to find a modern-day town that was an equivalent, we would look no further than Harrisburg. It is centrally located on key trade routes (Turnpike, route 83, route 81, route 15), it is a capital city, and it has several theaters (the Forum, city island stadium) where plays are put on and where gladiators fight it out. And there are plenty of temples to the god's (bars, movie theaters, shopping malls, etc.) as well as a few Jewish synagogues too. So, don't write off this passage as old or outdated, or out of touch. Harrisburg has a whole lot more in common with Thessalonica than you may have thought.

Look at the first thing that we are supposed to do if we want a healthy, balanced life. This passage says that there is one thing that stands out over all the other things and one thing that should be at the top of the list and one thing that we should use as a gauge to judge our decisions and who or what we're going to rob when we say yes to something. That one thing is love. **The most important thing we all need if we're going to have a balanced life is love.** Look at what it says: ***Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you to love them even more.*** I know you don't need to hear that there is something more you should be doing...you're already busy, I'm already busy, we don't need to hear about one more thing we should be doing and then we hear that this one thing is love. Now, I know there is a husband or two who is elbowing his wife and saying see, I told you we should be doing the love thing

more often...now Dave is on my side. Don't go there...it's tempting but don't. What this is saying to us is that love should rule the day when we are living our lives, making our decisions, and if we want our lives to be balanced. Here's why I say that...because we all know that when we engage love into the equation, everything changes. That's why it's easier to break up by text. That's why pink slips in mailboxes make it easier to fire someone. If you engage love into your decision making you find yourself asking questions like: how will doing this communicate to them that I love them? Or, how will saying that really say I love him/her? Or, how will staying away longer, spending money we don't have, neglecting things that need done communicate that I really love them?

How can I put love first? _____

You see, what God wants for the people in Thessalonica and what God wants for us – is that we might ask the question, how can I put love first. I mean look, as Paul writes this from the city of Corinth where reports have come to him that there are problems back in Thessalonica, he says to them...I know you're already doing a lot...I know you're busy, I know things are crazy, I know you feel like things are out of control some days, and I know you are going to church and I know that you're giving, and I know that you're reaching people who need Jesus but, do me a favor, love more. Do me a favor, put love first, do me a favor, make sure you're doing things out of love. Because, if you do that...the decisions you make will be for the highest of all reasons. If you put love first, you will make decisions about work, about your hobbies, about your free time or your fun time based on who gets your love. And when you make decisions out of love, you find that you are willing to let certain things suffer and other things – other things you're willing to die for.

We are living in a world where it is easy to phone snob people, to blast people on Facebook, to "unfriend" people but, what about love. If we are going to balance work and life and home, there is a way.

Go back to this passage with me for just another moment. It says that we can live better with love but, we need to stop jacking people up. It says in verse 11 that we need to: *Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before.*

A quiet life and minding your own business. I know, you're wishing that friend or family member you've been having problems with was here this morning to hear this, right. But, God is talking to us right now because we can't tell others about it if we don't have it first. Look, we are the saints, the salt and the light that this world needs and **it is our responsibility to live in a way that shows more of God** and less of us at work, at home, and in all the places we go. So, if our lives are out of balance, if we're living crazy, out of control, swearing up a storm, workaholic, deadbeat, no good to anybody, road rage inflicting, back stabbing, (pause)...then how is the world ever going to see more of Jesus.

One more time in 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 12 says: *Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.* The anecdotal statistics are in, Christians are not respected like they used to be. The stats for 2015 put pastors number six on the list of trusted and respected professionals with firefighters, teachers, doctors and nurses, military and police officers all coming in higher. Notice, those are all positions where

people feel the love. The world we live in is desperately in need of seeing Christians living out their faith in loving ways that show Jesus to people who need him. So, when Jesus tells us that they will know us by our love and that we are to love one another he is telling us how to live in our work places, our homes and everywhere we go.

This is going to take some effort on our part, it's going to take some conscious thought about how our words or our actions can show love to other so that other people can see and experience God's love. And while we can't make some kind of massive change overnight, there is at least one thing you can do right now, one thing you can change at home, one thing you can change that you do at work, one thing you can do with your guys or when you hang out with the girls. There is one thing you can do...so, what is that one thing? It will mean being purposeful. It will mean being intentional. It might mean some sacrifice...but, God believes you're up to the task not because of who you've been or our track records of love. God believes we can bring love to every situation because He can make it happen. God is love. All we have to do is be willing to let God work in and through us.

God is really good at showing love. In order to show what that love looks like he stood in the way of the eternal separation that was coming to the world and to each of us...