

ORDINARY IMPACT

3. A QUIET AMBITION

HVC, 9/13/20

1 Thess. 4

What ambitions did you have growing up?

What do you think are *worthy* ambitions?

What ambitions impress the world?

What was the last thing you made from scratch with your own hands? [SERENDIPITY]

Thessalonians 4:1 (NIV84)

Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

How would you feel if the apostle Paul told you that you were doing well in your spiritual life?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you think your life pleases God?

What other kind of “religious” motivations compete with pleasing God?

What is appealing about the thought of pleasing God?

What are you doing more and more of this year than last year?

What do you wish you could be doing more and more of *next* year?

The word live is actually walk in the Greek. How does the idea of the spiritual life as a walk encourage you or give you hope that you could be at a different place spiritually a year from now?

1 Thessalonians 4:2 (NIV84)

For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

What difference does it make that these instructions are by the authority of the Lord Jesus?

Do you think most of the time we know what to do, or do not know what to do, to obey Christ?

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NIV84)

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

How do you think they were taught by God to love each other?

How have you experienced love in the church of Jesus Christ?

What's the hardest thing about loving others in the church?

What, in your experience, was the time when the church was the most united and loving for you?

1 Thessalonians 4:10 (NIV84)

And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout

Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

If the Thessalonians loved all the brothers throughout Macedonia, what would our "Macedonia" be today?

Who do we need to be loving that is outside HVC?

What would that love look like?

What do you think would most impress the world about a love like that?

What bearing does this teaching have on the problems with racism we are experiencing? (*looking for a spiritual vs. a political answer here*)

1 Thessalonians 4:11 (NIV84)

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life,
to mind your own business
and to work with your hands,
just as we told you,

If your ambition was truly to lead a quiet life, what would you need to change in the way you are going about your life?

What would be the hardest or most radical change for you?

What are some ways you have observed that "church people" do NOT mind their own business?

What do you think of the idea that just "doing your job" faithfully (whether paid or unpaid) could be one of the most spiritual things you'll do this week? How does that make you feel?

How does that change your idea of what is "spiritual"?

Frank pointed out that in the wilderness Satan tempted Jesus to "hurry" to accomplish his goal of saving the world. What are some ways you are tempted to "hurry"?

In what ways are those temptations like Jesus' temptations?

Dallas Willard said the one word he would use to describe Jesus was "relaxed." Does that make sense to you? What word would you have probably come up with on your own? Why?

Do you think people are busier today than they were in the past?

What do you make of this quote by a pastor, Percy Ainsworth, from the 1800s who died in 1909? What surprises you most about it?

*This busy world will surge about you
with the tread of restless feet
& the throb of restless hearts.
And little that you will do will seem to make a
pause in the rush of things.
But you may in Christ find **rest for your soul**.
You will rest in your work,
knowing that duty is eternal;
rest in your service of others,
knowing that sacrifice is eternal;
rest in your purest earthly communion,
knowing that love is eternal.*

*This is the **hasteless life**,
and those that “believeth in Christ” will
live it.*

Titus 3:14 (NIV84)

*Our people must learn to **devote** themselves to **doing**
what is good, in order that they may provide for daily
necessities and not live **unproductive** lives.*

What do you think it means to “devote yourself” to doing what is good? What would that look like?

You might want to end by discussing this quote from Henri Nouwen:

*Each one of us has to seek out our own
descending way of love.*

*That calls for much prayer,
much patience,
and much guidance.*

*It has nothing at all to do with spiritual heroics,
dramatically throwing everything.
overboard to “follow” Jesus.*

*The descending way is a way that is concealed
in each person’s heart.*

*But ...
it’s often overgrown w/ weeds.
Slowly but surely we have to
clear the weeds,
open the way,
& set out on it unafraid.*