

Theme: Christians are called to holy ambition - not for fleeting fame but for praise of God for a quiet life of honest work and loving others.

## I. Intro - Ambition to Be Famous

- A. Photos of Kim Kardashian; Paris Hilton; Kato Kaelin
- B. We have people who are famous for being famous
- C. They are usually very wealthy - even because of this
- D. Whole industry - paparazzi; National Enquirer magazine; TV talk shows; reality shows - anything to be famous
- E. How should Christian's live in such a culture?
- F. What should we have as a holy ambition?

## II. A Holy Love

- A. Paul returns to the subject of love  
Now concerning **brotherly love** you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to **love one another**,<sup>10</sup> for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 1 Thessalonians 4:9–10
  - 1. Paul is returning to the subject of love (v9)
  - 2. This is picking up same call from 1 Thess 3:12-13  
May the Lord make you **increase and abound in love for one another** and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. 1 Th 3:11–13
    - a. Prayer for them to love one another - more & more

- b. Love was part of concern in section on sexuality
  - c. He will now be addressing love in a new area
- B. A call for practical love for fellow Christians  
Now concerning **brotherly love** you have no need for anyone to write to you, for **you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another**,<sup>10</sup> for that indeed is **what you are doing** to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. **But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more**, 1 Thessalonians 4:9–10
  - 1. Brotherly love - philadelphias - love for siblings - now applied to fellow believers
  - 2. We know this - by Scripture and by Spirit - we love fellow believers
  - 3. The love is 'doing' here - the actions of love for brothers and sisters in Christ
  - 4. They have been doing this, but there is always room for growth
- C. The Christian life is not about fame and flash, but rather practical deeds that express love to others

## III. A Holy Ambition

- A. Paul gives them a holy ambition  
and to **aspire** to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 1 Thessalonians 4:11
  - 1. Aspire - NIV has ambition and this is better here  
I make it my **ambition** to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, Romans 15:20  
So whether we are at home or away, we make it our **aim** to please him. 2 Corinthians 5:9

2. Colorful phrase/oxymoron - to arrest our attention  
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, 1 Thessalonians 4:11 NIV

- a. Ambition for quiet life; strive for restful, quiet life
- b. How different this is from worldly ambition
  - 1. Lead a quiet life rather than seeking to garner fame
  - 2. Strive for restful life, rather than ceaselessly striving for our place and to be noticed

B. Holy ambition in practice

and to aspire to live quietly, and **to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands**, as we instructed you, 1 Thessalonians 4:11

- 1. Mind your own affairs - do not be a busybody
  - a. True love and holiness do not desire to be a busybody, engaging in gossip or trying to run other's affairs
  - b. True love and holiness strive to lead a quiet, productive life that is an example and blessing to others
- 2. Work with your own hands - the value of work
  - a. Greek philosophers and aristocrats despised manual labor - but Scripture values it highly
  - b. The Greek ideal was a life of idle contemplation, while others (slaves) labored to provide your needs
  - c. Scripture teaches that we are made in God's image to work, and that work is a blessing, not a curse
  - d. This includes manual labor - long before Mike Rowe and Dirty Jobs!

- e. Never doubt that God values your labor as service to Him as you serve others via your calling
- f. Calling refers to the specific tasks and responsibilities given to us by God, through which God works to serve our neighbors and promote the common good, restraining the effects of the curse and bringing blessing to every realm of life and every corner of creation.
- g. Each of us has received many callings - areas of responsibility where God works through us to serve others in every realm of life and every corner of creation.
- h. Working hard at your various callings - including your job - is an essential part of holy waiting
- i. You can learn more about this in our series "Called"
- j. I will talk about this more in AfterHours

3. The apostolic teaching and example

and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, **as we instructed you**, 1 Thessalonians 4:11

- a. Not a new message - basic Christian instruction
- b. The apostles had also taught this by example  
For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:9

C. This holy ambition is an important NT teaching  
Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in **idleness** and not in accord with **the tradition that you received from us**.<sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to **imitate us**, because **we were not idle when we were with you**,<sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but **with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you**.<sup>9</sup> It was not because we do not have that right, but **to give you in ourselves an example to imitate**.<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: **if anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat**.

<sup>11</sup> For we hear that **some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies**.<sup>12</sup> Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ **to do their work quietly and to earn their own living**.<sup>13</sup> As for you, brothers, **do not grow weary in doing good**. 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13

1. Vv6-10 - The apostolic example of holy ambition seen in hard work, not being a burden to others
2. Vv11-13 - holy ambition - hard work, not busybody, quiet life, earn your way, do good (help others)
3. The exact same concerns as in our passage

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,<sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, **that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way**. 1 Timothy 2:1–2

1. One of Paul's last writings - same concern

2. We are to pray to be able to lead a quiet life - one devoted to working hard and serving others
3. We are to pray to be able to live this holy ambition

#### IV. A Holy Motive

- A. A motive related to unbelievers  
so that **you may walk properly before outsiders** and be dependent on no one. 1 Thessalonians 4:12
1. So that - the purpose/result of love, holy ambition
  2. Walk properly before outsiders - unbelievers
  3. Especially important since our sexual ethics will bring derision (last weeks text in 1 Thess 4:1-8)
  4. We must always be concerned that our lives adorn the Gospel with love and good works
- B. A motive related to believers  
so that you may walk properly before outsiders **and be dependent on no one**. 1 Thessalonians 4:12
1. Love and holy ambition make us work hard to not be a burden on others
  2. Some had taken advantage of the love of others and had become idle busybodies - this is not love or holiness
  3. Some thought that since Jesus was coming, they should just wait and not work - this is not holy waiting!
  4. True love and holiness produce a desire to work hard so that we can meet our own needs and then have some to help others

5. This independence is not individualism but rather not taking advantage of the love of others

## V. Applying the Word

A. Do I have holy ambition - or worldly ambition?

1. Our culture prizes and pushes empty fame, riches, and “looking out for number 1”
2. We are encouraged to desire the lifestyles of the rich and famous
3. It encourages us to be voyeuristic busybodies
4. Scripture gives a far different ambition for us!
5. Do I find my significance in public recognition, or in quietly fulfilling my callings?
6. Do I find my significance in success or faithfulness?
7. Am I content and at rest in fulfilling my callings - or am I always restless, yearning for something more?
8. Do I find joy in a job well done that helps others?
9. Do I believe it is more blessed to give than receive?

B. The Table of the Lord

1. Jesus was not about flash, but substance!
2. This Table reminds us of His humble incarnation and obedience!
3. Isaiah 53 - He would not have been on the cover of a magazine!
4. He was out of step with the unholy ambition of His age

5. In fact the unholy ambition of the leaders put Him to death!

6. But His life of quiet, constant obedience won us salvation!

7. So we come here, giving thanks for His obedience to His calling, and confess our own unfaithfulness

### A Holy Ambition

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

June 18, 2017

Communion

Psalm 90:16-17

Teaching keywords: love; calling and work; holiness

May God's deeds be shown to us, His splendor to our children.  
<sup>17</sup> May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us to establish the work of our hands for us. Psalms 90:16–17

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