**OCF Small Groups:** *passionately pursuing God, healthy relationships with each other, and people who don’t know Jesus, as part of a Gospel Community.*

**1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

(Sunday, November 10)

1. Paul turns to another means of living out holiness: brotherly love (v.9). The Greek word here is *philadelphia*, which outside of the New Testament usually describes the love uniting blood-related siblings, and in the New Testament always describes the love uniting Christians. According to verse 10, the Thessalonians are truly acting out this love in a huge and visible way. How central in your life is this love for fellow believers, and how have you experienced or witnessed it in action?
2. Interestingly, Paul connects this love to a certain lifestyle. List the three elements of the life to which Paul calls these believers to aspire to in verse 11. What kind of a life is this? What would it mean to *aspire* to such a life?
3. Many scholars agree that verses 11 and 12 were directed toward members of the church who had quit working and were relying on the kindness of their fellow Christians to provide them with necessities. Why would Paul have been concerned about the effect this attitude was having on outsiders?
4. What might unbelievers notice about our work habits that attracts them to Christ? What work habits detract from our Christian witness?
5. As we try to win the respect of nonbelievers, how can we avoid compromising our Christian principles?
6. How do we lead a “quiet life” (v. 11) while still sharing the gospel?
7. How is working for one’s own living a mark of Christian love and testimony to others?
8. Outsiders, looking at a movement that made striking claims about Jesus as Lord of the world, would be interested to see what effect it had on the behavior of the members. They would have seen the Thessalonians living a life of practical love, taking care of one another financially and extending their outreach to the other churches of Macedonia. Think about your Christian community. How do you think unbelieving “outsiders” view OCF, and why? How do you think “outsiders” in your own life—whether family or friends or neighbors or coworkers—view you, and why?

**SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

Meditate on 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

**9**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, **10**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, **11**and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, **12**so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

**PRAYER EXERCISE**

Ask the Lord Jesus to reveal other ways you can continue to love your brothers and sisters in Christ “more and more” (v. 10b). Be open with the Lord and ask if you are “walking properly before outsiders” (v. 12), and what, if anything, needs to change in your life.