

The Quiet Life of a Christian (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The following command is given in 1 Thessalonians 4:11: “Make it your ambition to...”
 - a. “Lead a quiet life.”
 - b. Talk about anti-climactic. Those two don’t seem to go together, do they?
2. What does it mean to “make it your ambition to lead a quiet life”? One way to better understand this admonition is to think about what the text does NOT say.

BODY:

I. What The Text Does NOT Say

- A. “Make it your ambition to be ‘seen by men’; do whatever it takes to get noticed.”
 1. Matthew 6:1, 5.
 2. The Pharisees made this kind of noise, and Jesus didn’t like it one bit.
 - a. Matthew 23:5 (verse 2 indicates He was speaking of the scribes and Pharisees).
- B. “Make it your ambition to be obnoxious, to always be heard, to always get the last word.”
 1. That doesn’t exactly conform to the quiet life, nor does it conform to the way of love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13.
 - a. “Love...does not seek its own” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).
 2. You know who talks the most—fools do, because they don’t stop to think before they speak.
 - a. “Wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding, but what is in the heart of fools is made known” (Proverbs 14:33).

C. “Make it your ambition to get your own way.”

1. These were certainly not the only two, but I’m thinking of two people in the Bible who had this disposition, one from the Old Testament—Absalom, one of David’s sons who led a rebellion against his throne (2 Samuel 15:1-6); and one from the New—Diotrephes, who is described in 3 John 1:9 as someone who “loves to have the preeminence.”
2. Needless to say, both of these men made a lot of bad noise. They caused a lot of problems, because they did not make it their ambition to lead a quiet life.

D. “Make it your ambition to defy authority.”

1. Students, you can’t stay in the principal’s office and lead a quiet life.
2. You can’t buck every order your parents give you and lead a quiet life.
3. We can’t accumulate traffic citations and lead a quiet life.
4. In short, we can’t be lawbreakers and lead a quiet life.
5. Submit to authorities—that’s the message of the N.T., and we’ll talk more about that in part 2.

E. “Make it your ambition to know as much as you can about your friends, neighbors, and your brethren in Christ.”

1. Here’s the full text of 1 Thessalonians 4:11, which we read at the beginning of the lesson: “that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to **mind your own business**, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” (NKJV).
2. We can’t cause the commotion a busybody does and still lead a quiet life.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

F. “Make it your ambition to be a drama king or queen.”

1. We know these people, right? Everything that involves them (or their family) is a big deal—if it’s good, it’s the most wonderful thing in the world; if it’s bad, it’s a crisis like nothing the world has even seen.
2. “All eyes on me”—that’s how they operate.
3. But there’s no way we can operate that way, if we understand what it means to deny ourselves, or crucify ourselves.
 - a. Can we say with Paul, as he did in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”?

G. “Make it your ambition to be at the center of as many personal feuds as possible, with teachers, coaches, friends, brethren, people on social media, etc.”

1. One way to accomplish this is to be the person who is never treated right, and whose children are never treated right, either (never gives people the benefit of the doubt).
2. To remain at the center of controversy, all we have to do is be the opposite of what we’re supposed to be—self-centered, quick-tempered, and unyielding.
 - a. These are not the fruits of heavenly wisdom, which we read about in James 3:17-18.
3. “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).
 - a. Folks who ignore that sure do make a lot of noise.

II. Let's remind ourselves again what the text actually does say: "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life."

A. Lest any misunderstandings develop about this, let's talk for just a few more minutes about what this does not mean.

1. Be as inactive as possible, or just sit around and do nothing.
 - a. Christians shouldn't be busybodies, but they should be busy.
2. Never raise your voice.
 - a. This is not just about volume, it's about a spirit or disposition, and we'll talk more about that in the next lesson.
3. Stay in the background; always let someone else lead.
 - a. A quiet life and leadership are not incompatible, but it does say something about the manner in which we should lead, and again, we'll talk more about that in the next lesson.
4. Be as dull and bland as possible.
 - a. Not everyone has to have the same personality, and aren't we glad for that?
 - b. I have four children, each with different personalities. I think they can keep those personalities and still lead a quiet life.

CONCLUSION:

1. In the next lesson, we'll look at ten different things we can do to lead a quiet life.