Daily Devotion #162

**Living the God Dream**

**1 Thessalonians 4:11 (NASB) –** *“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands.”*

There are many pressures in this life. Pressure to have a lot of things, pressure to accomplish, pressure to perform, pressure to be someone different than the next guy or girl, pressure to have control over situations and people, etc. I remember a commercial some years ago that was advertising a brand of deodorant with the tag line, “Never let them see you sweat”. This clever play on words pushes the point that we as humanity have always put an extreme amount of pressure on ourselves to look like we don’t have any pressure on ourselves.

But that is not God’s plan. God has always wanted for His children to be content with the life He has given them and at peace with themselves and others. (1 Timothy 6:6-7) That’s the message Paul was reiterating. The Thessalonians were caught up in the cultural pressure to perform. And that pressure was causing them to miss the fundamentals of the faith – namely, love for one another and living a simple life.

They were a church that was indeed living their love for others. Paul made that clear in verse nine of this same chapter. But Paul wanted to make sure they continued in that love for one another, so he encouraged them to push more in their love or to use his words, “to excel still more”. (1 Thessalonians 4:10) But in their love for one another, Paul wanted them to understand that this life is not to be what most people think. On the contrary, it is to be one of peace and quiet, enjoying the life the Lord has given us.

Often, as believers in Christ, we desire so much for people to live the right kind of life that we put pressure on them in ways they are not ready. We get them frustrated instead of moving them more to peace. For years, our culture pushed people out of the trades and into schools of higher learning. It was and has been the theme of our culture to say to young people, “If you want to be someone in this life, you need to go to college”. It became normal for people to take that route. That has been wonderful for many people.

But interestingly, because of so many people going to schools of higher learning, the workforce in the trades has dropped. Those industries that are essential for the survival of society are struggling to find enough workers. For example, the average age of an HVAC technician is 50+. Heating and air-conditioning are things that people need in this country. Who will service these things when those 50+ folks retire?

Often we have the idea that the right kind of life is the path that were taught to take. But God says that the best life is the one where we are content with whatever we are doing as long as it is honest and honors Him. We are to be people who live lives that are quiet. We are not to sinfully involved ourselves in other people’s business. We are not to be busy bodies, always telling people how they should live, but we are to be active with our daily lives, working to make our ends meet but always relying on the Lord. (Philippians 4:19)

We often forget that God wants us to be at peace. He doesn’t want us to get bent out of shape when things don’t go as we planned. When He said He had come to this earth to give us life and life more abundantly (John 10:10), He didn’t mean we were to live our lives like chickens with our heads cut off. We are not to be running all over the place exhausting ourselves so that we can say we did it, that we accomplished a goal or lived the American dream.

Our priority in this life is twofold – we are to worship God and to obey Him. That’s what Solomon said as he summed up his life. (Ecclesiastes 12:13) He was a man who had it all, but in the end, it came down to these two priorities.

What is driving you? Is it your ambition to make something out of your life? Or is it your ambition to live for God? Let me encourage you to live each day enjoying God and what He has provided. Strive for the God dream instead of the American dream, then watch and be amazed!