

# Words of Life

(September 4, 2007)

*But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;*

1 Thessalonians 4:9,10

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*As I read through these verses last week the phrase that caught my attention was “for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another”. Paul is basically making the point that there is no need for him to instruct the readers any further on the subject of brotherly love. God Himself had taught them how to love one another and since God had been their “love instructor” there was nothing Paul could add to the lesson! There was a song that was released in the early 1960’s by the Monotones titled “Who wrote the book of love?” Well, God did! And since He wrote the book, He knows how to teach the subject. It makes perfect sense, right? I mean, if God is the teacher there isn’t much anyone else will be able to do to “enhance” the lesson!*

*Well, here is what fascinates me about God’s teaching methods. As we read the first three chapters of this letter we gain some insight into the condition of the readers of this letter. We are told in chapter 1 verse 6 that “they received the word of God in much affliction.” We are told in chapter 2 verse 14 that they had “suffered from their own countrymen.” And in chapter 3 verse 4 we are told that they were “suffering tribulations.” These people were in an extremely hard place! They had received the word of God and turned to Christ and were now paying a price for it. They were facing stiff opposition for their faith. What is so interesting to me is that it was precisely this affliction that God used as His school of love. He didn’t teach them from the eloquent words of educated or skilled preachers. He taught them how to love others by allowing stiff opposition and affliction into their lives. This tells me that God’s school of love may not look like what we think. It seems to be a slightly different curriculum.*

*These verses should speak to every one of us. You probably don’t have to look far to see someone in your church that is suffering some type of affliction. It just may be that God is allowing it for the express purpose of giving you an opportunity to show the love of Christ by reaching out to that person. It is important to remember that the word used for love is an action word. It is not the kind of love that feels sorry for someone and says “I’ll pray for you”. It is the kind of love that gives. The kind of love that reaches out. That makes calls, fixes meals, helps with chores, gives rides, and shoulders burdens.*

*Many times we are prone to look at the afflictions among us and associate them with “spiritual warfare”. They may be. But they may be something more than that. It just may be that it is a condition permitted by God to test the level of love we have for one another. I encourage you this week to be alert to others that may be suffering in some way. Reach out to them as you would to someone in your immediate family. It will minister to them, it will please God, and it will promote love within the body you fellowship in.*

Pastor Ted

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*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

John 6:63