

**ACTIONS THAT ATTRACT**  
**1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**  
**By Andy Manning**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. There are three elements to effective personal evangelism.
  - i. First, prayer. This involves praying for their salvation, for opportunities to witness, for boldness to witness, for the right words to say. You should be regularly praying for your lost friends.
  - ii. Second, words. This involves sharing the gospel. It is by believing in the gospel that people are saved. This can happen by personally sharing the gospel, or by inviting people to church to hear the gospel, or by giving people a book or gospel tract, or sending people a letter, or sending a message or video containing the gospel.
  - iii. Third, actions. This involves showing people the positive difference that Christ makes in your life.
2. Actions speak louder than words.
3. There's an old expression that says, "Your actions are so loud that I can't hear the words that are coming out of your mouth."
4. We can say all the right words, but if our actions are not Christlike, then we will push people away from Jesus.
5. Today we are going to focus on actions that attract. Winsome behaviors. Contagious conduct.

**II. TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

1. 9 About brotherly love: You don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. 10 In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more, 11 to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

**III. FOUR ACTIONS THAT ATTRACT**

**1. A church that cares about each other.**

- i. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10** "9 About brotherly love: You don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. 10 In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more"
- ii. The Greek word for brotherly love is *philadelphia*. In documents outside the NT, it usually referred to the mutual love of siblings. It is the special kind of love that family members have for one another. In the NT, it always refers to the love of fellow believers in Christ. It means that we are to treat each other in the church like family.

- iii. The Bible teaches that we are to love everyone, but we are to have a special kind of love for other believers. You might say, "That's not fair." But it is. You have a special, preferential love for your spouse, children, and siblings, and that's not unfair. You are to also have a special, preferential love for your church family.
- iv. **Romans 12:10** "Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor."
- v. **Galatians 6:10** "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith."
- vi. When outsiders see the way that we love each other, they will want to be a part of our fellowship. They will want what we have.
- vii. Many people in our society are lonely. They are isolated. They don't have many friends. They are not close to their families. They are not close to their children. They are not close to their parents or siblings. People long for community. They long for fellowship. They long for friendship. They long for love. When they see this love and fellowship in the church, they will want it.
- viii. What does it look like to be a church that attracts people with its brotherly love?
  - 1. Church must be a place of relationships. It must be more than an event to attend. It must be more than showing up for Sunday church, shaking a few hands, and leaving. There must be a group of people in the church that you know deeply, and who know you. This level of fellowship is found when you move beyond Sunday attendance and start serving in ministry, and get involved in a Home Group.
  - 2. Church must be a place where burdens are shared. When one person in the church goes through a hard time, the church rallies around him and lifts him up. Whether it is sickness, or surgery, or hospital, or death in the family, or job loss, or financial stress, or any other kind of adversity, the church shows up.
    - a. **Galatians 6:2** "Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."
- ix. The first church in Jerusalem set the best example of this.
  - 1. **Acts 2:44-45** "44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need."
  - 2. When someone in the church had a need, the church came together and supported that person, and sometimes that meant selling their possessions and property.
- x. The first action that attracts is a church that loves each other.
- xi. When unbelievers get to know you, do they see that you are involved in church? Do they see that you have deep, caring relationships in your church? Do they see that when you go through a hard time, your church stands by

your side? And when someone else in the church goes through a hard time, you join with others in supporting that person?

## 2. Peacefulness.

- i. **1 Thessalonians 4:11** “Seek to lead a quiet life”
- ii. The ESV Study Bible says, “Live peaceably with others.”
- iii. A person who is always arguing, and quarreling, and clashing, and butting heads with others is unattractive. Nobody wants to be around a person like that.
- iv. **Romans 12:18** “If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
- v. Saul was the first king of Israel, but he wasn’t satisfied. He was jealous of David, his popular and successful army commander. He was afraid that David was going to steal his crown. So, Saul set out to murder David. Obsessed with this one goal, he hunted David all over Israel. Twice he threw a spear at David, intending to kill him. On another occasion, he tried to trap David by sending him into an impossible battle with the Philistines. Saul ordered his son and all his servants to kill David. Despite Saul’s determination to destroy David, David never sought revenge. On two occasions David had the opportunity to easily kill Saul, but he spared him. No matter how hard Saul tried to pick a fight with David, he was unsuccessful. David was committed to peacefulness.
- vi. What is peacefulness? It is working hard to get along with others. It is striving for relational harmony; for the absence of conflict.
- vii. You can’t always be at peace with others, but you can always be peaceful. You can always work hard for peace. You can do everything within your power for peace. Peace isn’t always possible, but you must do everything possible to be at peace with others.
- viii. How to work hard for peace?
  1. First, pursue peace with God through salvation (Rm 5:1). When you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God gives you the Holy Spirit to empower and inspire you strive for peace.
  2. Second, don’t expect peace to be easy. The Bible says we must seek peace and pursue it (Ps 34:14). Peace will require our best effort (Eph 4:3; 2 Pt 3:14). It is something we must work for (Mt 5:9, NLT).
  3. Third, strive for peace with everyone (Rm 12:18). This includes your parents, siblings, neighbors, church family, classmates, teammates, friends, and even your enemies (Rm 12:20).
  4. Fourth, when someone sins against you, you must go to them and point out the offense (Mt 18:15). Do not wait for them to approach you; you take the initiative. The purpose is not to fuss at them, but to restore the relationship.
  5. Fifth, if someone has something against you, then you must go and make peace (Mt 5:23-24). Even if you are not guilty, you must go. Peace has broken down and needs to be restored.

6. Sixth, when people sin against you, you must forgive them (Eph 4:32). It does not matter what they have done, or how many times they have done it, you must forgive as God has forgiven you.
7. Seventh, avoid disturbing the peace. There are certain behaviors that disturb the peace:
  - a. Offensive behavior: actions that anger, aggravate, hurt, frustrate, or insult others.
    - i. **Proverbs 17:19** "One who loves to offend loves strife; one who builds a high threshold invites injury."
  - b. Arguing and bickering.
    - i. **Proverbs 26:21** "As charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife."
  - c. Mocking: making fun and teasing others in a hurtful way.
    - i. **Proverbs 22:10** "Drive out a mocker, and conflict goes too; then quarreling and dishonor will cease."
  - d. A quick temper: being easily offended or angered. Develop a long fuse and thick skin. Don't take things personally.
    - i. **Proverbs 15:18** "A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but one slow to anger calms strife."
  - e. Criticism and complaining.
    - i. **James 4:11** "Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters. Anyone who defames or judges a fellow believer defames and judges the law."
- ix. Paul is telling us that peacefulness attracts.
- x. There is so much conflict and strife today. People are shooting each other because of road rage. Parents are getting in fist fights at their child's t-ball games. People hate each other because of politics. There is so much anger, and fighting, and quarreling, and violence in our society.
- xi. When people see our commitment to leading a quiet life, a life free of conflict, a life of peace they will want what we have.

### 3. A tongue that does not gossip.

- i. **1 Thessalonians 4:11** "... to mind your own business"
- ii. Here Paul is talking about a person who doesn't gossip.
- iii. What is gossip? Gossip is talking bad about a person behind their back. It is criticizing or complaining about someone behind their back.
- iv. **James 5:9** "Brothers and sisters, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!"
- v. Triangulation: Another word for gossip is triangulation. It is when there is a conflict between two people, and one person complains about it to a third person. Now you've heard that person's reputation, and possibly their relationship with the third person.
- vi. Why do we gossip? Because it makes us feel good. It makes us feel good about ourselves when we criticize others. It also makes us feel good when we can get someone else to sympathize with us.

- vii. But there's a hard truth about gossip: It's like Popeye's chicken. Gossip feels good in the short term, but leaves you feeling bad in the long term. This is especially true when you are talking about someone who has hurt you. You are looking for sympathy, but every time you rehearse what happened to you, all the feelings of hurt and frustration come back. As you keep talking about it, you stay hurt and frustrated. But if you will drop, you will begin to heal.
- viii. People give four excuses for gossip:
  1. "It's not gossip; I'm just asking for advice." This is an excuse because it is rarely true. Most of the time we're not asking for advice. We're not asking, "How should I handle this?" We are looking for sympathy.
  2. "It's not gossip; I'm just sharing a prayer request." Right. We have to be careful about this in Home Group when we are sharing prayer requests. Share just enough so the group knows what to pray about, but short of gossip. To avoid gossip, don't use any names.
  3. "It's not gossip; it's the truth." Gossip isn't necessarily a lie. It can be the truth. But it is criticizing and complaining about someone behind their back. It is sharing their secret.
  4. "It's not gossip; I'll tell them to their face." Just because you are willing to tell it to the person to their face doesn't mean that you should; and just because you are willing to tell it to their face doesn't mean you have permission to gripe about the person to others.
- ix. How should we handle the faults and flaws of others? Be a raving fan in public, and an honest critic in private. When you are talking about the person, be a raving fan (or don't say anything at all). And if you a problem with the person, then go to that person in private to discuss it.
- x. The bible calls this "concealing an offense."
- xi. **Proverbs 17:9** "Whoever conceals an offense promotes love, but whoever gossips about it separates friends."
- xii. How does gossip make us less attractive to unbelievers. People instinctively know that if you talk bad about other people, then you will talk bad about them. But if you will keep quiet about the sins and faults of others, then you will keep quiet about them. People are looking for friends they can trust.

#### 4. Financial independence.

- i. **1 Thessalonians 4:11b-12** "and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone."
- ii. The first century church had a big problem with moocher; loafers; leaches. People who refused to work, and instead relied upon the charity of other church members.
- iii. There were two reasons for this:
  1. It is likely that many of them were expecting the Second Coming of Christ to happen at any moment, and so saw no need in continuing with normal daily life.

2. In the Greek culture, manual labor was seen as degrading and fit only for slaves.
- iv. This issue comes up several times in Paul's letters to the Theassalonians:
    1. **1 Thessalonians 5:14** "Warn those who are idle."
    2. **1 Thessalonians 2:9** "For you remember our labor and hardship, brothers and sisters. Working night and day so that we would not burden any of you, we preached God's gospel to you."
      - a. The next passage sheds light on this verse.
    3. **2 Thessalonians 3:6-12** "6 Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister who is idle and does not live according to the tradition received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you should imitate us: We were not idle among you; 8 we did not eat anyone's food free of charge; instead, we labored and toiled, working night and day, so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 It is not that we don't have the right to support, but we did it to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us. 10 In fact, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: "If anyone isn't willing to work, he should not eat." 11 For we hear that there are some among you who are idle. They are not busy but busybodies. 12 Now we command and exhort such people by the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and provide for themselves."
      - a. Paul was saying that as a preacher he had the right to live off the tithes and the offerings of the people, and in some cases he did. But because the problem of laziness was so severe in Thessalonica, Paul voluntarily abdicated this right and instead worked bi-vocationally to provide for his own needs (he was a tent-maker), and preached the gospel free of charge. He did this to set an example of hard work and financial independence for the people.
  - v. The bottom line is that Paul was telling people that if they were physically able, they need to go to work and provide for themselves rather than mooch off of others.
  - vi. Laziness is not attractive. Mooching off of others is not attractive. It is a form of theft. It is crooked. But hard work, and diligence, and financial wisdom, and financial independence are admirable. It is respectable and will win the respect of unbelievers.
  - vii. If you are able-bodied, you shouldn't mooch off your parents. When you graduate high school, go to college or trade school, learn a trade, and earn a living. Become financially independent. At the same time, if you are able-bodied, then you shouldn't mooch off the government or off the church if you have the ability to provide for yourself. Don't try to cheat the system. Don't live off welfare or disability when you could be out there earning a living.

- viii. On another note, Paul is saying there is dignity in manual labor. Verse 11 says, “work with your own hands.” Just as there was in the first century a disdain for manual labor, so there is today. There are many people who have developed a snob mentality, as if there are some jobs that are beneath them. We tend to respect white-collar work and workers more than blue collar work and laborers. This should not be. Work is work. Working with your hands is good. Manual labor is good. Plumbing, roofing, landscaping, waste-management, custodial, cleaning, repair work, carpentry, delivery, etc. – these are good jobs that make life better for all of society, and if you do them with a high level of skill they often pay very well. Manual labor is good. It is respectable.
- ix. So the Christian lives in a paradox. On the one hand, it is our duty to give, because there are some who cannot take care of themselves. At the same time, it is our duty to take care of ourselves – to be financially independent. So, on the one hand we love to give to those in need; but on the other hand we hate to take hand-outs so long as we are able to take care of ourselves. This is the Christian work-ethic that is so attractive to the world.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

1. Actions that attract.
2. Unbelievers are watching you. People aren’t just looking to see if you are a hypocrite. They are looking to see if there is any power in Christianity. They are looking to see if Christianity is simply an alternative lifestyle, or a superior lifestyle.
3. What do your actions say about Jesus? About Christians? Do people want what you have? Are you attracting people to Jesus, or turning people off?