



Putting Off Idleness in Brotherly Love

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

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Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia.

But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

Main Point

We have been taught by God to love one another and to care for each other's needs, but idleness takes advantage of this love and does harm to Christian witness.

Putting Off Idleness in Brotherly Love

Why didn't Paul need to write to them about brotherly love?

1 Thessalonians 4:9

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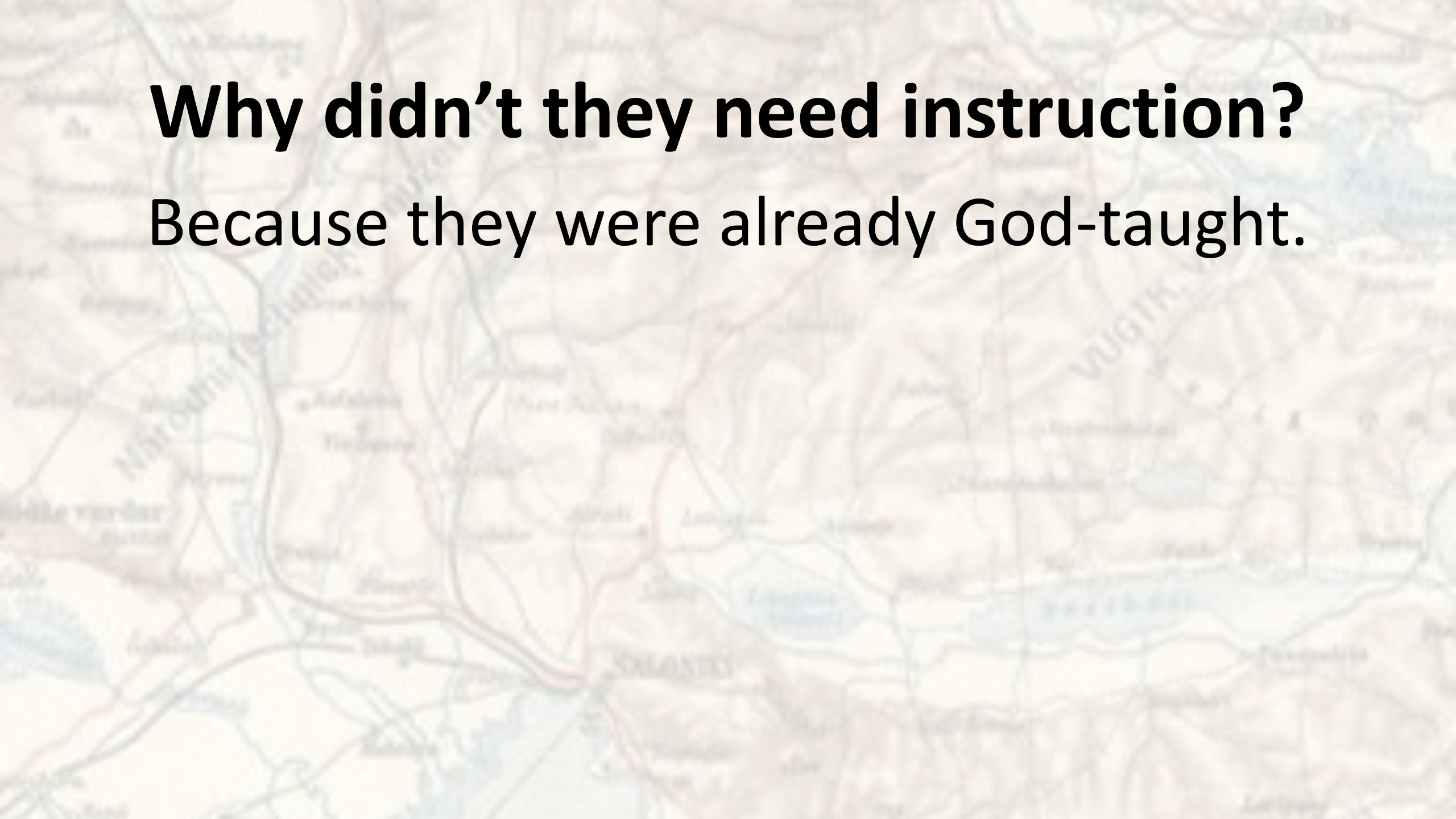
1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now **as to the love of the brethren,**
you have no need for anyone to write to you.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now **as to *philadelphia***,

you have no need for anyone to write to you.



Why didn't they need instruction?

Because they were already God-taught.

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To what was Paul referring?

John 6:44-45

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

It is written in the prophets,

‘and they shall all be taught of God.’

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.”

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To what was Jesus referring?

Isaiah 54:13

All your sons will be taught of the LORD;
And the well-being of your sons will be great.

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1 Thessalonians 4:9

...as to **the love of the brethren**...
you yourselves are God-taught...

Paul addresses the Thessalonian believers as part of the New Covenant family of God who have been cleansed, renewed, taught of God, and empowered by the Spirit to live together as a redeemed people.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

They didn't need instruction because love was already written on their hearts.



Why didn't they need instruction?

Because they were already God-taught.

Because they were already practicing it.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

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1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

We give thanks to God always for all of you...
bearing in mind your...labor of love.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

But now that **Timothy** has come to us from you,
and **has brought us good news of your...love.**

This church was already demonstrating an understanding of the bonds of brotherly love that moved them to care for one another, especially when there were physical needs.

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Why did Paul go on to urge them
to excel still more?

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But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.

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Why did Paul urge them to excel?

Because our sanctification is progressive.

1 Thessalonians 4:10

...for indeed you do practice it...

But we urge you, brethren, to **excel still more.**

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk),
that you excel still more.

Remember Paul's Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:11-12

Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and **may the Lord cause you to increase and abound** in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you.

Because the standard of measure is the love of Christ, there will always be opportunity for more growth!

Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;
and walk in love, **just as Christ also loved you** and
gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice
to God as a fragrant aroma.

Why did Paul urge them to excel?

Because our sanctification is progressive.

Because some in the church
were selfishly idle and were taking
advantage of this love.

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,
and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and
attend to your own business and work with your hands,
just as we commanded you, so that you will behave
properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

Paul was addressing an idleness that
resulted in dependence.

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Paul was addressing an idleness that
resulted in dependence.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

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The Thessalonians were loving and generous, but some among them were taking advantage by refusing to work.

Why is this a matter of love?

2 Thessalonians 3:12

Now **such persons**

we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ

to work in quiet fashion and **eat their own bread.**

Somebody has to work for the bread!

Why did Paul urge them to excel?

Because our sanctification is progressive.

Because some in the church were selfishly idle.

**Because this idleness was
harming their testimony.**

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These idle believers may have also been depending on others outside the church; but in any case, their idleness was known and reflected poorly on Christ who had labored with His life.

Putting Off Idleness in Brotherly Love

Why didn't Paul need to write to them about brotherly love?

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What did Paul exhort them to do?

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What did Paul exhort them to do?

To make it their ambition
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2 Thessalonians 3:12

Now such persons we command and exhort
in the Lord Jesus Christ to **work in quiet fashion**
and eat their own bread.

Paul is referring to a *quietness of heart* that reveals gratefulness for work to be done and contentment in the provisions of God.

What did Paul exhort them to do?

To make it their ambition to lead a quiet life.

To attend to their own business.

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2 Thessalonians 3:11

For we hear that some among you are leading
an undisciplined life, doing no work at all,
but **acting like busybodies**.

1 Timothy 5:13

At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around
from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and
bushbodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

There is no such thing as idleness:
the heart will busy itself with something!

But it won't be something good!

What are ways the idle meddle in
the affairs of others in our context?



What did Paul exhort them to do?

To make it their ambition to lead a quiet life.

To attend to their own business.

To work with their own hands.

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Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to **work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.**

Ephesians 4:28

He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

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Love labors, it sacrifices, it shares,
it refuses to take advantage of others;
it recognizes that dependence due to
idleness is theft of another's labor.

The gospel calls us to labor in this way by reminding us of the labors of Christ on our behalf:

He labored with His life and in His death so that we could rest in Him.

Conclusion

Do you see yourself as a member of God's family and as a brother or sister to those in your church?

Are you striving to excel even more
in your love for others?

Is the gospel moving you to lead a quiet life,
to attend to your own business, and to work
for your own bread and share with others?