

# The Day of Thanksgiving – Epistle

## CAUGHT UP IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS

I Timothy 2:1-7

### The Day of Thanksgiving

Analysis by Cathy Lessmann

1: First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2: for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3: This is right and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4: who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5: For there is one God, and there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6: who gave himself as a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time. 7: For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

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## DIAGNOSIS: Apathetic Orphans

### Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – *Apathy*

Eli Wiesel once said that it wasn't hatred that sent so many people to the gas chambers. It was indifference. Everyone just wanted to go about their own business and not bother with what was happening to "those people." One wonders whether anything has changed! Political activists today bemoan the crippling apathy that hinders social involvement and change. On the

individual level, we'd rather just stick to our own business and let other people worry about and take care of themselves.

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – *Selfish Hearts***

Our lack of concern is merely a reflection our self-centered hearts. Martin Luther described sin as the heart turned in on itself: a self obsessing on itself. Because all care is self-directed, it is impossible to be cognizant of, much less care about, other people. Cain asked flippantly: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Even though Able was "in the family," Cain felt no obligation to look out for him.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): – *Orphaned***

Hard-hearted indifference towards one's brother does not get overlooked by the head of the family. In fact, the Divine Parent perceives that that callousness is directed not only towards the brother, but extends to the rest of the family as well, even, especially, towards the head of the family! Callousness backfire on the callous kid. Instead of "saving" the self (the task that it has been so absorbed with), the self actually becomes lost, as if dragged away from home by malevolent kidnappers. Orphaned. Most excruciating to hear, on the way out the door, are the words of the Divine Parent saying, "No, I don't recognize him/her. That one is not mine."

## **PROGNOSIS: Caught up in the Family Business**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *Bought Back into the Family***

Yet, as our writer continues, that is not the whole story. In fact, we learn that it is the Heavenly Parent's overwhelming desire to re-claim every orphaned human back into the family. "God... desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (v. 4). To accomplish that, the Heavenly Parent pays a staggering ransom – the life of His own Beloved Son, Jesus "who gave himself as a ransom for all" (v. 6). For his

part, Jesus, on account of his self-offering, establishes himself as Chief Mediator and sets the family precedent.

**Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution)** – *An Offer We Can't Refuse*

Jesus' mediation is available to every apathetic orphan in the world – no strings attached! This offer is so sweet it truly is an offer too good to refuse! Merely accepting the offer, we are told, brings orphans back into the Family. In turn, that adoption does something stunning to in-curved heart: It does a one-eighty and begins to turn outward. This means that adoptees adopt the Father's tender-loving-care toward all siblings, thus internalizing the family business.

**Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution)** – *Immersed in the Family Business*

This internalization of the family business prompts all adoptees to get to work. Our writer urges that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone," (v. 1) – especially for those who are given positions of authority. Tender-loving care is the motivation, mediation (to re-unite lost orphans to the Divine Parent) is the goal. The family business, after all, entails nothing less than the "care and redemption" of the entire world. Talk about wiping out indifference!