

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

⁹ Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, ¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

—1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 (ESV)

v 1 – “how you ought to walk and please God”

This is what we are called to—to walk in a way that pleases God
He is not a “faultfinder”; He is a loving Father—but He is also Almighty God
“do so more and more” – we strive to grow in our faith and in our walk

v 2 – what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus

This is not just Paul’s opinion, or that of the other apostles, but are instructions from the Lord Jesus

vv 3-5 – the will of God—your sanctification

And it needs to be your will, too!
Sanctification – *hagiasmos*, to be made holy, pure; all the you are and have dedicated to God; your body as a vessel for His Holy Spirit
This is God’s will for everybody.

“that you abstain from sexual immorality”

This, in particular, and needing to be addressed in Thessalonica

Ancient Greece life was completely accepting of sexual immorality—much like the US
has become

We are to have no part of sexual immorality; nothing to do with it

v 4 – “control his own body”

More lit. translation is to possess, have his own body

In holiness (*hagiasmo*) and honor – this is for everybody

v 5 – not in the passion of lust...

There should be a marked difference in behavior between those who know God and those
who do not

We are not to be followers, not even to be influenced, by a godless world that pursues
lusts—of all types—as a life

v 6 – that no one transgress and wrong his brother

Here referring specifically to adultery

“Because the Lord is an avenger in all these things” – this sin is specifically punished by
the Lord on the behalf of the brother who is wronged.

vv 7-8 – Paul’s emphatic summary

God has called us to holiness—not impurity, and everything we do is His business

This teaching is from God Himself

vv 9-10 – Now concerning brotherly love...

In this area, the church seems to be commendable; they have a reputation for it

This was, no doubt, being demonstrated in various ways, including meeting various needs

Here also, urged to do so “more and more”

“and” – what follows relates to walking in love

v 11 – to aspire to

aspire – more lit. to strive earnestly

“live quietly”

“mind your own affairs,” more in the sense of taking good care of one’s business, not just
refraining from being nosy

“work with your hands”

C.S. Lewis – much of Scriptural teaching is reassuringly “humdrum”

v 12 – so that ...

as a witness to the world

v 13-18 – But we do not want you to be uninformed...

“those who are asleep” – we say “pass” or “passed away”

Some were afraid that those who had already passed away would miss out on Christ’s
return.

“this we declare to you by a word from the Lord” – v 15

When the Lord comes again, the “dead in Christ will rise first”

Part of Christ’s return will be a visible resurrection of all the dead in Christ in their new, glorified bodies

Then, those that are left—still on the earth—will “meet the Lord in the air” in “the clouds”

And so we –all who are His—will always be with the Lord

Some believe this refers to what has been called the “rapture”; and of this group, some believe that the rapture will come at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (7 years) and some believe that it will occur in the middle of the Great Tribulation. Some do not hold to either of these views. We can all love and serve Jesus without the same beliefs on these matters. Time will tell.

The great theme is that we are to “encourage one another with these words.”