



1 THESSALONIANS

A Study of Paul's Letters to a New and Growing Church with a Hopeful Future

◆ **Wednesday March 25, 2009**
(1 Thess. 4:1-12; 5:12-28)

Where We Are Headed

March 25, 2009 –	Living a Holy Life Before God (1 Thess. 4:1-12; 5:12-28)
April 8, 2009 –	The Future Coming of Christ & Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-5:11)
April 22, 2009 –	The Future Coming of Christ & Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess. 1-2:13)

^{1TH 4:1} Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

^{1TH 4:3} It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. ⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

^{1TH 4:9} Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

^{1TH 4:11} Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

Chapter 4:1-12 Living to Please God	Chapter 4:13 – 5:11 The Rapture & Return of Christ	Chapter 5:12-28 Living to Please God
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NOTE – The teaching about the 2nd Coming of Christ is placed in between instruction of how to live to please God.

“Although the teaching concerning the Lord's return was clearly an exciting subject for the Thessalonians, Paul endeavored to set it into a context of practical daily living. The Christian's hope for the future must have a sanctifying influence upon the present.” (Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996)\

Principle – The perfect future that we hope and long for ought to provide motivation for how we are to live our lives today. We should be practicing the “reign of God” even now.

Inward reign → Outward Reign

Take for example Paul's link between the inward reign of God and the outward reign of God.

TIT 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

COL 3:4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

What is the Holy Spirit doing now and bringing us toward?

PHI 1:6 being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 JOHN 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

The Instruction of the Teacher (4:1-12)

v. 1-2 How to Live and Please God

1TH 4:1 **Finally**, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order **to please God**, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you **in the Lord Jesus** to do this more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority **of the Lord Jesus**.

1) "Finally" is more of a transition word than a time marker. He has much more to say – the sermon is not yet ending! "Further" would be a better translation.

2) Paul sets forth that the primary motive in how we live is **to please God**. He affirms that they are doing this and urges them to do it with renewed vigor in light of his commands.

Who are we more tempted to please?

3) "In the Lord Jesus" – notice that these words are used twice, which communicates that Jesus is the central figure in all of this. He is to be thoroughly involved in our lives and we are to submit to His reign and authority over us. THIS IS NOT JUST MORALITY FOR MORALITY SAKE!

The Christian's walk – by Ray Stedman

Walking merely consists of two simple steps, repeated over and over again. It is not a complicated thing. In the same way, the Christian life is a matter of taking two steps, one step after another. Then you are beginning to walk. Those two steps (are seen in Colossians 3). Paul describes them as, "Put off the old man" (see Colossians 3:5-10) and "put on the new." Then repeat them. That is all. Keep walking through every day like that. That is how Scripture exhorts us to live."

V. 3-8 The Will of God -- Sexual Purity

³ It is God's will that you should be **sanctified**; that you should avoid **sexual immorality**; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. ⁷ For God did not **call** us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ Therefore, he who rejects this **instruction** does not reject man but God, who gives you his **Holy Spirit**.

What is the will of God? Sanctification, or that 'you should be sanctified'

Sanctification A progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives. This process begins at justification and is a necessary result of saving faith. The goal of sanctification is Christlikeness. (Wayne Grudem)

Three Kinds of Sanctification

1. *Positional Sanctification* – The perfect righteousness of Christ is given to our “spiritual bank accounts” the moment we believed. We are **united** to Christ and His **righteousness is credited** to us.
2. *Progressive (Practical) Sanctification* – Our daily growth in grace where we progressively become like Christ in actuality in our moral character, attitudes, actions, and experience. This kind of sanctification is primarily achieved by the Holy Spirit using the Word of God in our lives to make us holy. (John 17:17) *My college experience*
3. *Final (Total) Sanctification* – This is when our spirits reach moral perfection in the life to come, either when Jesus returns or we die and go to heaven, whichever comes first. In this state, we will be made morally perfect like Christ in all aspects of our lives.

What is the will of God for the Thessalonians?

To abstain from **sexual immorality** (*porneia*) – the term covers a wide range of sexual misbehavior which was of special difficulty for pagan Gentiles in converting to Christianity. Entering the Christian community meant a radical lifestyle change – and it was up to the church to “culturalize” the new converts into this way of living.

Has that changed? Why is it important for the church to maintain a prophetic stance in regards to sexual ethics?

What is the connection between sexual morality and the knowledge of God? (cf. Rom. 1:21-27)

^{EPH 4:17} So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

On what basis does Paul make this appeal to sexual purity? (see 4:7-8)

God's _____ and _____ and the presence of the _____.

V. 9-12 The Will of God – Brotherly Love

⁹ Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more. ¹¹ Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

- 1) “Brotherly love” – The Greek word is *philadelphia* – brotherly love or the extended love between family members or siblings.
 - A) Similar method as 4:1 – affirmation, followed by emphasis.
 - B) Method of rhetoric called ‘paralipsis’ in which the speaker pretends to skip a subject when in reality addressing the very thing.
- 2) Their love for one another flows over into their love for other believers in Macedonia

How important is it to show love to other Christians in the area?

- 3) This kind of love and lifestyle will be a testimony to “outsiders.” They are to live respectfully so as to garner good reputations.
 - A) Live quietly
 - B) Mind your own affairs
 - C) “Work with your hands” – statement which places greater emphasis on *work* than a specific *type* of work.
 - a. Support yourself – *for the good of the community*
 - b. John Stott -- “It is an expression of love to support others who are in need; but it is also an expression of love to support ourselves, so as not to need to be supported by others.”

Campfire song – “then they’ll know we are Christians by _____ .”

How important is it that believers in Christ maintain a measure of respect with outsiders with their work ethic? (What are we communicating when we do this?)

How can this be done in a world that’s already hostile towards Christ?

Final Words on How to Live (5:12-28)

² Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

^{1TH 5:16} Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

^{1TH 5:19} Do not put out the Spirit's fire; ²⁰ do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold on to the good. ²² Avoid every kind of evil.

V. 12 -22 More "Wisdom from the Spirit"

READS LIKE PROVERBS

- 1) Respect those who work hard and have spiritual authority over you - "Church leadership" ---
*** Note the role of church leaders includes "admonishment."
- 2) Church leaders are to be held in high regard due to the nature of their "work."

There is a tendency, due to human nature and its unwillingness to submit to and criticize others, to live at odds with the idea of someone who holds "authority: over you. Paul knew this, and therefore commanded them to live at peace with those who are leaders. The leaders will have to give an account for their leadership.

- 3) Warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient.
- 4) Be merciful in how you treat others, practicing forgiveness and kindness
- 5) **THE WILL OF GOD – Be joyful, prayerful, and thankful at ALL TIMES**
- 6) Do not squelch or grieve the sanctifying activity of the Spirit through sin.
- 7) Do not disregard the revelation of God or treat Scripture lightly.
- 8) Use discernment and wisdom – "test all things."
- 9) Avoid that which has the appearance of evil.

A CLOSING BENEDICTION

^{1 THESS 5:23} May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The One who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

^{1TH 5:25} Brothers, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

^{1TH 5:28} The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

What's the Holy Kiss?

1) Note on Spirit, Soul and Body:

"This comprehensive reference makes the terms "through and through" or "completely" more emphatic. By using *spirit* and *soul*, Paul was not indicating that the immaterial part of man (his soul) could be divided into two substances. The two words are used interchangeably throughout Scripture (cf. Hebrews 6:19; 10:39; 1 Pet. 2:11; 2 Pet. 2:8). There can be no division of these realities, but rather they are used as other texts use multiple terms for emphasis. Paul was not a believer in a 3-part human composition, but rather two parts, material and immaterial." - MacArthur Study Bible

2) Note the assurance of the completion of our salvation