

Worship God by Growing in Holiness

Sunday, July 14, 2024 • Ryan Wildauer

Walk as you _____ to. (vs. 1-2)

Determine to live in sexual _____. (vs. 3-8)

_____ in our love for one another. (vs. 9-10)

Be _____ members of your community. (vs. 11-12)

Pleasing God = _____ God.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

¹ 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. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Share about a time you received affirmation from someone. How did you feel? Why?

Read & Discuss: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

1. In verse 1 Paul says that he and his team “ask and urge” the believers in Thessalonica to live in a way that pleases God. Why should Paul and his companions be so concerned about how the believers in Thessalonica were living? In a culture that encourages us to let others live however they want, how should we show proper Christian concern for other believers?
2. Although Paul affirms these believers in their current attempts to walk in a way that pleases God, he still encourages them to “do so more and more” (v. 1b). Why would it be important for these believers to keep this goal before them? How do you tend to respond when others call you to a greater commitment in your obedience to Christ (especially in areas you feel you’re already doing well)? How *should* we respond to such admonition?
3. In verse 3 Paul describes the will of God for these believers as being that they “abstain from sexual immorality.” What reasons does Paul give for avoiding sexual immorality (vv. 4-8)? How does sexual immorality “wrong” others (v. 6)? How would you explain to a new believer the importance of pursuing sexual holiness?
4. In verses 9-10, Paul challenges these believers to once again do better at something that they’re already doing well—In this case, to “love one another...more and more.” Why would learning to better love other believers be so important to Paul? What are some factors that keep us from loving other believers as well as we could? How might we make progress in better loving other believers?
5. In verses 11-12 Paul is likely speaking to a specific group of believers in this church who had grown lazy and who were relying on others for their needs (*See 2 Thes. 3:11*). For each command of Paul in verses 11-12, what would be its opposite? How would living in this way have a negative impact on both the local church and the broader community that would have been watching them? What are some ways that our own work ethic can have a positive or negative effect on our Christian witness?
6. Looking over Paul’s challenge to these believers in this passage, how would you answer the question of how to live in a way that pleases God? Knowing that we are saved by grace and not by works, what do we need to remember as we aim to please God with our lives?

Apply: How could you seek to better live in a way that pleases God this week?

Pray: Pray we would be a church characterized by sexual purity, love, and an honest work ethic. Pray as well that we would be people who are open to challenge and correction from each other.