

# 1 Thessalonians

## Chapter 4

### Introduction:

1. In many of Paul's letters, Paul will begin by writing about things pertaining to sound doctrine. Paul will then follow this with practical instruction regarding daily Christian living.
2. Why is this? Because sound living comes from the understanding and application of sound doctrine. Holy living always proceeds forth from the inward assimilation of sound doctrine. **Titus 2:1-8**
3. Paul knew this, so he always began with the doctrine and then showed them what the doctrine should produce. Sound doctrine works in us to produce outward change. 2:13
4. This is the case again in 1 Thessalonians. Chapters 1-3, for the most part, have been very doctrinal in nature, but in chapter 4, Paul will now get very practical.
5. What good is it to understand sound doctrine and right division of God's Word if it doesn't affect the way we live our daily lives?

### Verse 1

1. Paul is now going to "*beseech*" (request), and "*exhort*" them in the practical application of what they already know.
2. What is the basis of His admonishment? It is the Lord Jesus! Jesus, and what He has done for us, must be the motivation of the believer. cf. **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**
3. Paul had taught these believers how to walk and to please God. They had received sound doctrine from Paul and Timothy. Paul encourages them to abound in what they knew.
  - The word "abound" means "to super-abound, to be in excess, to excel."
4. His desire was for them to put into daily practice the doctrine that they had learned and understood.
5. This is one of the functions of the local assembly. We don't go to church to always learn something new. Many times when we go to church and fellowship around God's Word, we are exhorted and motivated to do something that we have forgotten or let slip.
6. Often we **know** the truth; we simply aren't **abounding** in it. We need somebody to remind us. **1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Peter 1:12-13, 15**

### Verse 2

1. Paul said in verse 1 that they had received from him how to walk and to please God. How did they know how to walk and please God?
2. This verse explains, "*For ye know what commandments we (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) gave you by the Lord Jesus.*"
3. Paul had given these believers commands to obey. Where did Paul get them from? He got them by direct revelation of Jesus Christ. **Galatians 1:12; 1 Corinthians 4:17, 14:37**

4. Let this be a lesson: In this dispensation of grace, we are no longer under the Old Testament law system that God had for Israel, but this does not mean that we are lawless. We are not without clear-cut, straightforward commands.
5. Jesus gave to the church (through Paul) definite commands to be obeyed.

### Verse 3

1. As we can readily see in this verse, the will of God is not a mysterious, mystical thing that we struggle to know. The will of God is found in the Word of God.
2. What is the will of God? Paul says, "...*even your sanctification...*"
  - The word "sanctification" is speaking of purity and holiness. It carries the idea in Scripture of being cleansed and set apart for divine use. We see this illustrated in the Old Testament. **Exodus 19:9-11, 29:43-45**
3. In the church age, sanctification in the believer is a work of the Holy Spirit and has a three-fold aspect:
  - **Positional** sanctification - we are cleansed of all sin and set apart for God eternally in Christ at the moment of salvation. **1 Corinthians 1:30**
  - **Practical** sanctification - the Holy Spirit works in our lives through God's Word to produce holiness in our daily walk. The goal is that our daily walk would reflect our eternal position. **1 Thessalonians 4:3**
  - **Total** sanctification - this is future and will happen at the very moment Christ returns for the body of Christ. Our vile bodies will be changed, and there will be a total sanctification of body, soul, and spirit. **Philippians 3:21**
4. In **Titus 2:11-13**, we see all three aspects of sanctification. The child of God has been sanctified (at salvation), is being sanctified (our daily walk on earth), and will be sanctified (at the Rapture).
5. Our text is dealing directly with the second of these, practical sanctification. Paul is dealing with the issue of moral purity, and commands them to "*abstain from fornication.*"
  - This is speaking of sexual sin. The Greek world was well known for its lust and licentiousness. The Thessalonians had been saved out of a heathen lifestyle of idolatry.
6. Paul reminds them that sexual sin is always out of God's will for the believer.