

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.

Verse 4-5

1. It is also God's will that believers know how to possess their Spirit-indwelt bodies in sanctification and honor.
2. In verse 5 Paul contrasts this with the pagan Gentiles who made sex a religion. They lived perverted lifestyles, treating their bodies like nothing more than a trash can.
 - "Concupiscence" means "a longing for what is forbidden."
3. Paul makes it clear that there was to be a distinction between these believers (those who know God) and the pagan idolaters of Thessalonica (those who know not God). It should be like light and darkness. **Ephesians 5:3-8**
4. Paul uses the analogy of a vessel when speaking of the believer's body (**2 Corinthians 4:17**). When you are working in the kitchen, what do you expect from

your vessels and utensils? You want them to be clean and useable.

2 Timothy 2:20-21

5. Our vessels (bodies) have been bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ and indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. Based on these Scriptural facts, Paul taught that the believer should "...glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Verse 6

1. Paul is explaining in the text how to possess our vessels (bodies) in sanctification and honor. vs. 4
2. One way we can do this is to refuse to defraud our brother in any way. Paul says, "*That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter....*"
3. The phrase "go beyond" carries the idea of transcending and overreaching. There are established boundaries of right and wrong that God has given us (vs. 1-2), and we are not to "go beyond" those boundaries of holiness.
 - Those boundaries are there for our good. **cf. 1 John 5:3**
4. To "defraud" carries the idea of coveting and being eager for gain. If we defraud our brother, it means that we want something that he's got and we're willing to enrich ourselves at his expense. **Leviticus 19:13**
 - In **Ezekiel 34:1-10** we see an example of this. The shepherds were enriching themselves at the flock's expense. This is what it is meant by defrauding.
5. The Corinthian believers were actually taking each other to court in order to get gain. Paul takes this a step further and says that we should allow **ourselves** to be defrauded rather than take a brother or sister to court. **1 Corinthians 6:7-8**
6. Unfortunately, we live in a day in America in which Christianity has been commercialized and it seems that everybody is looking for an angle in which they can turn a buck off of the church or Christians.
7. What does Paul say about those who defraud their brother? "*...the Lord is the avenger of all such.*"
 - "Avenger" means "one who carries out justice."
8. There will be a day of accountability for all believers. It is called the Judgment Seat of Christ. **Romans 14:10-12**
9. So if you discover that you are being defrauded, what should be your response? Read **Romans 12:17-21**.