

Studies in the Book of 1 Thessalonians
Lesson 5 - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
Hope for a Hopeless World
Living to Please God

We move now into the second half of the letter dealing with the practical instructions for these new believers in Christ. The key word is “walk,” and Paul encourages them to obey the Word. The Christian’s behavior is compared to a walk for several reasons: 1. It demands life, for the dead sinner cannot walk. 2. It requires growth, for a little baby cannot walk. 3. It requires liberty, for someone who is bound cannot walk. 4. It demands light, for no one wants to walk in the dark. 5. It cannot be hidden, but is witnessed by all. 6. It suggests progress toward a goal. Paul continues on to describe the kind of walk the believer should have.

Here Paul deals with marriage and the home. The marriage vows in heathen cities said nothing about purity, so there was great danger of immorality in the lives of these new Christians. The Christian has the responsibility of building a Christian home that will glorify God.

Immorality is basically selfishness and robbery. Paul directs them to live lives that please God and not themselves. He had commanded them, from the Lord, to live in holiness and purity by the power of God. God’s will for their lives was that they be sanctified “set apart for a purpose.” We have the daily responsibility of devoting ourselves more and more to God so that in body, soul, spirit we completely belong to Him.

Now Paul talks about the believer’s occupation and his contacts with the unsaved in the world. One of the problems in the Thessalonian church was that some people had misunderstood the promise of Christ’s return, quit their jobs, and had become “parasites” who lived off the other Christians. It is a sad thing when Christians have nothing to do and become busybodies in other people’s lives. The Christian who does an honest day’s work and who is careful to maintain a good testimony will influence the unsaved. Those who do not work, should not eat. Let us not practice unscriptural Christian “charity” by taking the Lord’s money to support “Christian loafers” and encourage them in their careless way of life.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 and answer the following questions

1. Why do you think Paul felt the need to remind the Thessalonians that his instructions were given under the authority of Jesus Christ? (See 4:1-2)
2. What goals should Christians pursue according to 4:1? Discuss the importance of pleasing God and how we ought to walk with Him.
3. In verse 4:3, what did the will of God require of them? Define your answer.
4. What do you believe Paul meant by the statement, “*possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor*”? (See 4:4)
5. Paul describes “*the Gentiles*” as those “*who do not know God.*” There is a difference between “knowing God,” and “knowing of God.” What does knowing God involve according to the following Scriptures?

Jeremiah 9:23-24

1 John 2:4-6, 4:7-8

6. In what way is it possible to “wrong” a brother or sister in regard to the issue of sexual immorality? (See 4:6)

7. There are three different references to God in verses 4:6-8. These verses indicate that each person in the Trinity is involved in the lives of the Thessalonians. Keeping in mind that God is normally used to refer to the Father while Lord normally is used for Jesus, summarize how each person of the Trinity relates to Paul’s command about holy living.

Jesus (See 4:6)

The Father (See 4:7)

The Holy Spirit (See 4:8)

8. What do you think Paul means when he says that the Thessalonians have been “*taught by God to love each other*”? (See 4:9)

9. Nowhere in 1 Thessalonians does Paul encourage his readers to evangelize the neighborhood in the sense of preaching. Instead, he outlines a very different evangelism strategy in 4:11-12. What is the strategy?

10. How should Christians live according to 4:11? What reasons are given for such a life according to 4:12?

Quiet Living in a Hectic World

1 Thessalonians 4:11

If any one word characterizes life in the modern world it may be the word hectic. Better known as: “the rat race,” “the grind,” the fast lane,” the laser lane.” Things seem to move faster and faster, and anyone who cannot keep up is in danger of being run over or left behind.

For that reason, Paul’s encouragement to “*lead a quiet life*” seems out of touch with today’s culture. How can we live a quiet life when technology accelerates change and increases complexity? When television, internet and other media sources bring the world into our homes and broadcast private lives to the world. When a global economy makes everybody’s business our business.

The challenge to live a quiet life in a not so quiet world can be just that, a real challenge. As believers we can take certain steps in preparing us to live a quiet, God centered productive life.

As far as quiet living, Paul probably wasn’t objecting to noise and sound, but to needless distractions. One way that most people could bring a little more peace and quiet into their homes would be to cut their television and social media viewing in half. Imagine the time left for spending more time with family members, neighbors and most importantly, personal time with the Lord.