



## Purity and an Orderly Life (I Thess. 4:1-12)

### Plea for Purity

“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, **just as you received from us how you ought to walk** and to please God; for **you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus**. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that **you should abstain from sexual immorality**; that **each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God**; that **no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter**, because the Lord is the **avenger** of all such, as we also **forewarned** you and testified. For **God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness**. Therefore **he who rejects this does not reject man, but God**, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.” I Thessalonians 4:1-8 NKJV

## I Thessalonians 4:1-8

☑ *“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, **just as you received from us how you ought to walk** and to please God; for **you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.**” I Thessalonians 4:1-2 NKJV*

☑ **We taught you what your walk of faith should look like!**

☑ *“**blameless in holiness** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” I Thessalonians 3:13*

☑ (See last teaching: [Faith that Inspires](#))

☑ **Blameless and holy**

☑ Blameless: Pure perfection is Paul’s expectation of God’s people.

☑ Holy: Separated, set-apart for God in all things!

☑ **You know what commandments we gave you!**

☑ To my precious students: if you don’t know to what this is referring, the walk of faith Paul taught them about, pause here and make sure you have studied the previous four messages from I Thessalonians (total time 2 hrs. 40 min.).

☑ [Disciples Doing What Disciples Do](#) I Thess. 1:1-10

☑ [My Life is the Gospel](#) I Thess. 2:1-12

☑ [The Word of God or Word of Man](#) I Thess. 2:13-20

☑ [Faith that Inspires](#) I Thess. 3:1-13

- ☑ **Paul also wrote:** *"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."*

I Corinthians 11:1 NKJV

- ☑ Paul was looking at Y'shua as the model citizen (of earth and of God's kindom). John pointed at Him and said, *"Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matthew 3:2) And Y'shua pointed to Himself and said, *"Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matthew 4:17)
- ☑ Y'shua represented the kingdom!
- ☑ The Kingdom: God's perfection manifesting in man!
- ☑ Y'shua: God's perfection manifesting in man!
- ☑ Paul: *"**Imitate** me, just as I also **imitate** Christ."*
- ☑ **Imitate me:** emulate, copy, take as a model, model oneself on, take as a pattern, pattern oneself on/after, follow the example of, take as an example, take as a role model, take after, follow, follow in someone's steps/footsteps, echo, parrot; follow suit, **resemble, look like, be like**, simulate, match, echo, mirror; bring to mind, remind one of.
- ☑ **As I imitate Christ:** emulate, copy, take as a model, model oneself on, take as a pattern, pattern oneself on/after, follow the example of, take as an example, take as a role model, take after, follow, follow in someone's steps/footsteps, echo, parrot; follow suit, **resemble, look**

**like, be like**, simulate, match, echo, mirror; bring to mind, remind one of.

☑ What does it mean to **resemble or look like Christ**? What or who should we **be like**?

☑ **Christ**: Christlikeness, God's perfection manifesting in you!

☑ Paul was not just a talking head—he walked his talk. Earlier in this letter he worded it so elegantly...

☑ ***“You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;”*** 1 Thessalonians 2:10 NKJV

☑ And they were already imitators in the suffering department...

☑ ***“For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,”*** 1 Thessalonians 2:14 NKJV

☑ ***“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification***

and honor, ***not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;***” 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NKJV

☑ **God’s will is your sanctification!**

- ☑ This is God’s business model.
- ☑ Sanctification: the action of making or declaring something holy; the action or process of being freed from sin or purified.
- ☑ Holy: set-apart, separated, different from the world!
- ☑ This is what it looks like practically:
  - ☑ ***“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*** 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV
  - ☑ ***“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.””*** 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 NKJV

☑ **Abstain from sexual immorality!**

☑ Here Paul echoes James' ruling from the Jerusalem Council, the one Paul was charged with bringing to the Gentiles.

☑ *"Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to **abstain** from things polluted by idols, **from sexual immorality**, from things strangled, and from blood." Acts 15:19-20 NKJV*

☑ *"Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, **to send chosen men** of their own company to Antioch with **Paul** and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren **who are of the Gentiles** in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings." Acts 15:22-23 NKJV*

☑ And as we know, he did not only stop in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia on on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36 - 18:22) after that ruling in Jerusalem; He continued through Galatia, Asia and into Macedonia where he visited Thessalonica (Acts

17:1-9). And then He returned through Greece, and Ephesus (in Asia) before arriving back to Caesarea.

- ☑ How do you avoid sexually immorality?
- ☑ Be in control of your own body, unlike the Gentiles who do not know God. I love how Paul says it, ***“Each of you should know how to possess his own vessel.”***
- ☑ Consider your Body as a vessel of sanctification and honor.
- ☑ Paul wrote letters to other cities he visited on his second missionary journey, Corinth, Philippi and Ephesus...
- ☑ **To Corinth:** he wrote, “Your body (your vessel) is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.”
- ☑ ***“Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*** 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 NKJV
- ☑ And we know Paul’s sentiments on sexual immorality: ***“It is actually reported that there is among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among***

**the Gentiles**—that a man has his father’s wife!” I

Corinthians 5:1 NKJV (See I Corinthians 5:1-12)

- ☑ **To Philippi:** he wrote, “You can do it! You can master yourself, no matter how difficult it seems.”
- ☑ *“I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**”* Philippians 4:12-13 NKJV
- ☑ **To Ephesus:** he wrote, “Stop acting like a Gentile. Stop giving yourself over to lewdness, uncleanness and deceitful lusts. Start acting like the new person you were created to be in the Lord!”
- ☑ *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that **you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk**, in the **futility** of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, **have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.** But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*



that you **put off, concerning your former conduct**, the old man which grows corrupt according to the **deceitful lusts**, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:17-24 NKJV

☑ "that no one should **take advantage** of and **defraud** his brother in this matter, because **the Lord is the avenger of all such**, as we also **forewarned** you and **testified**." I Thessalonians 4:6 NKJV

☑ **What does it mean?**

☑ ...to take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter of sexual immorality?

☑ **Take advantage:** to lure someone into the sin because of their weakness, ignorance or past tendencies.

☑ **Defraud:** to convince them that it's okay, that there is no sin in it and thus no consequences.

☑ Ancient Example! After the Balaam and Balak fiasco (Numbers 22-24)...

☑ "Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to **commit harlotry with the women of Moab**." Numbers 25:1 NKJV

- ☑ And who took advantage of and defrauded them to do so...Balaam!
- ☑ The Depravity of False Teachers
  - ☑ *“But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, **speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness,** as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having **eyes full of adultery** and that **cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls.** They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. **They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam** the son of Beor, **who loved the wages of unrighteousness;** but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet.” II Peter 2:12-16 NKJV*
- ☑ The ultimate cost of unrighteousness! *“the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.”*

- ☑ *“They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. **Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.**”* Numbers 31:8 NKJV
- ☑ **Forewarned and testified?**
- ☑ Again, like earlier in his letter, when he spoke about suffering, saying he had told them something previously...
- ☑ *“For, in fact, **we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation**, just as it happened, and you know.”* I Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV
- ☑ ...we do not specifically see in the short narrative recording Paul’s visit to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), what exactly Paul forewarned and testified to them about the consequences for those taking advantage of and defrauding others regarding sexual immorality.
- ☑ In his letter to the Thessalonians we simply learn he did warn them.
- ☑ Paul then makes a definitive statement about sexually immorality!
- ☑ *“For **God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.**”* I Thessalonians 4:7 NKJV

☑ **Sexual immorality is...**

- ☑ Unclean: morally wrong, sinful, bad, wicked, evil, corrupt, impure, sullied, unwholesome, sordid, disgusting, debased, degenerate, depraved, licentious, lewd, unchaste, lustful!
- ☑ And we know from Romans that when people deny the truth about who God is, that sexual immorality is the principle sin, the gateway sin that ensues, the first sin in a long line of depraved choices...
- ☑ *“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, **to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;***

*being filled with all unrighteousness, [first] sexual immorality, [and then a long list of iniquities]..."*

Romans 1:24-29 NKJV

☑ **And you are called to be HOLY**

☑ Set-apart for God in all things; separated, different from the world!

☑ And then Paul makes a definitive statement about his definitive statement about sexually immorality! *"For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness."*

☑ *"Therefore **he who rejects this does not reject man, but God,** who has also given us His Holy Spirit."* I Thessalonians 4:8  
NKJV

☑ **NO COMMENT NECESSARY!**

## **An Orderly Life**

"But concerning **brotherly love** you have no need that I should write to you, for **you yourselves are taught by God** to love one another; and indeed **you do so** toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we **urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more**; that you also **aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business**, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you, that you may **walk properly toward those who**

**are outside**, and that you may **lack nothing**.” I Thessalonians 4:9-12  
NKJV

### I Thessalonians 4:9-12

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NKJV

#### ☑ **Brotherly love!**

- ☑ Paul praises them for their reputation in the region of Macedonia about their love for everyone, which he need not teach them about.
  - ☑ They have obviously downloaded this gift from God.
  - ☑ Nevertheless, he does encourage them to keep it up in an ever increasing display!
- ☑ *“that you also **aspire to lead a quiet life**, to **mind your own business**, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you, that you may **walk properly toward those who are outside**, and that you may **lack nothing**.” I Thessalonians 4:11-12 NKJV*

## ☑ Life Advice

- ☑ **Aspire to lead a quiet life:** don't be noticed for anything that will draw attention away from the good things of God!
- ☑ **Mind your own business:** stay in your own lane; be faithful with your calling; don't insert yourself where you don't belong; don't try to be God to others!
- ☑ **Work with your own hands:** Paul worked to support his ministry, and he was never against those who worked for the cause being paid to do so.
- ☑ *“Let the elders who rule well **be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.**”* 1 Timothy 5:17 NKJV
- ☑ But he did warn that it was paramount to be beyond reproach. He was so careful of such that he decided to work with his own hands to support himself.
- ☑ *“If we have sown spiritual things for you, **is it a great thing if we reap your material things?** If others are partakers of this right over you, **are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.**”* 1 Corinthians 9:12-14 NKJV

☑ *“For **you yourselves know how you ought to follow us**, for we were not disorderly among you; **nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge**, but **worked with labor and toil night and day**, that we might not be a burden to any of you, **not because we do not have authority**, but to **make ourselves an example of how you should follow us**. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat**. For we hear that there are **some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all**, but are busybodies. **Now those who are such we command and exhort** through our Lord Jesus Christ that they **work in quietness and eat their own bread**.”* II  
Thessalonians 3:7-12 NKJV

☑ **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

☑ *“**He who has a slack hand becomes poor**, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.”* Proverbs 10:4 NKJV

☑ *“He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread, **But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding**.”*  
Proverbs 12:11 NKJV

☑ *“A prudent man conceals knowledge, **But the heart of fools proclaims foolishness**.”* Proverbs 12:23 NKJV



- ☑ *“In all labor there is profit, But **idle chatter leads only to poverty.**” Proverbs 14:23 NKJV*
- ☑ **Walk properly toward those who are outside:** the Gentiles are watching. People could not care less about what comes out of the mouth of those whose lives don’t match their words.
- ☑ Hypocrisy is rigor-mortis to your witness.
- ☑ Empty words are cancer infecting your testimony.
- ☑ **The Payoff! You will lack nothing!**
- ☑ No matter what it takes!
- ☑ *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that **the testing of your faith** produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**” James 1:2-4 NKJV*
- ☑ And certainly they were tested!
- ☑ *“For, in fact, **we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation,** just as it happened, and you know.” I Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV*
- ☑ **Lead a quiet life; mind your own business; work with your own hands, walk your talk among the Gentiles!**
- ☑ **Sound difficult?** Fear not! You don’t have to do it alone!

- ☑ *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as **His divine power** has given to us all things that pertain to life and **godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” II Peter 1:2-3 NKJV*

### **NEXT TEACHING**

Caught Up Together (I Thessalonians 4:13-18)