

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 6TH - 7TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

INSTRUCTIONS (1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8)

ENCOURAGEMENT AND CHALLENGE

Don't miss the fact that Paul is trying to encourage them to continue to live a life worthy of God (1 Thess. 2:12). He isn't mad at them or dissatisfied at how they're living, he's challenging them to "do this even more." You're doing it right, keep on doing it.

- **Sometimes we need to be reminded to look at the big picture.**

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Don't become discouraged when things get hard (James 1:2-4). We don't quit when we're faced with difficulties, we look at the bigger picture of what God is trying to do. This entire letter was to compel Christians to live a holy life even in the midst of opposition.

- **We need to encourage and challenge each other, 'more and more'** (Heb. 10:23-25).

HOW WE LIVE MATTERS

There should be a difference between a follower of Christ and someone who isn't. The only difference can't be that I go to church, serve, or give. Living a life worthy of Christ prepares us for His return.

- **Living in a way that pleases God isn't optional. Pleasing God needs to be the point of the Christian life!**

"...THROUGH THE LORD JESUS"

This is all about the authority of the Word. Paul isn't writing just to increase moral standards, he's proclaiming this is the very Word of God.

- In a time where the Word is under attack, we need to make a clear distinction between what the Bible says and our opinions. **The Word is our authority.**

GOD'S WILL

God's will is very specific. His will is that we are obedient. It is in our obedience to God that we enter this process of sanctification. It's interesting he contrasts sanctification with sexual immorality, but it is one of the things that sets us apart.

- **God's will isn't a job, home, or mate, it is living a life of purity and obedience.**

LEARNING CONTROL

Self-control is evidence of the Holy Spirit in us, but it requires effort. This is one of the distinctives of a Christ follower (Gal 5:23). **We surrender our own will for the Will of Christ.** We must place our sexual desires under Christ's control.

- **The one person you can exercise control over is yourself.**
- **Rom. 6:13 and 6:19**

SEX WAS GOD'S IDEA

We need to understand sex in the context of marriage. Marriage is a covenant. Sex is beautiful when it doesn't deviate from God's standards. God established His standard in Genesis when he created man and woman for procreation and pleasure.

- **God has a perfect design for His creation.**

IT ISN'T JUST ABOUT SEX

Paul was addressing what was 'lacking in their faith' when he said, control your own body. Sexual sin is rampant in our culture leading to broken families, sexual confusion, perversion, and broken lives. We are reaping what we have sown and are receiving the just punishment.

- **This is about honoring each other.**

"LIVE IN HOLINESS"

God has made transformation possible. Through confession and repentance, we receive forgiveness. All of us have, in some way, participated in sexual immorality but there is hope.

- **The only way to meet God's demand of holiness is to allow the Holy Spirit to have full reign in our lives.**

ACTIONS (1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12)

BROTHERLY LOVE

There is a recurring theme of love for Christians. We are to love each other as we've been taught by God. (John 13:34) The crazier the world gets, the harder it is to love them (Matt. 5:43-48), but Paul says, 'do this even more.'

- **More often the church is judged by the way we love people, not doctrine.**

"...LEAD A QUIET LIFE"

Paul insists on three things the follower of Christ needs to be about and they all relate to behavior. There must have been issues with worry, idleness or gossip. Paul challenges them to be responsible and have a good reputation.

- **We are to live to win the respect of those who don't know Jesus.**

"...MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS"

Handle your own stuff. This isn't about your popularity, creating your own brand or keeping up with everyone else. Don't get involved in silly quarrels. Don't covet what your neighbor has. Don't be one of those annoying Christians.

- **Stop comparing yourself to everyone on social media.**

WORK HARD

Get a job. Pay your bills. Don't be a burden to anyone. Work hard at everything. **Don't compartmentalize your life and expect Christ to be glorified.** Everything is a reflection of our Christian life. Don't separate your faith from your behavior.

- **People are watching to see if our faith makes a difference in our actions.**

THE FUTURE (1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18)

LET ME MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR

Paul wanted to clear up some misunderstandings about death and the coming of Christ. Apparently, some followers thought those who already died missed out and it was causing them grief and anxiety.

- Paul encourages them that because of Christ's resurrection, they too will be resurrected.

"JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN"

Paul starts with the foundation of their faith. As followers of Christ our faith is built on the fact that the grave is empty. Because Jesus defeated the grave death is not the end of the story.

- We don't have to wonder what is going to happen at the end of our lives. All believers will be reunited.

WE HAVE HOPE

We don't grieve like those who have no hope. The death of a Christian is different from the death of an unbeliever. The pain of this life is temporary. The Christ follower has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5).

- **The difference is the hope and assurance that death doesn't have the final word.**

END TIMES

What Paul wants to communicate from this passage isn't as much about eschatology (study of end times), and the sequence of the events, as to assure and encourage us to know of Christ's coming for those who have died as well as the living.

- **Jesus is coming again and we will be with him.**

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

Paul goes through this great sequence for them because he doesn't want them to be discouraged. Jesus is coming again! All who have gone on before us will be together with the Lord. We have the promise of the resurrection, so encourage one another.

- **We need to encourage each other along this journey.** (Heb. 10:24-25)

GOD'S STANDARDS

- The call to holiness never ends. Sanctification is a process.
- We are to love others. This isn't just for those in the church. We love because Christ first loved us.
- **Obedience isn't an option!** There is more required than just hearing the Word.

AN ASSESSMENT

- Is there a visible difference between you and those who don't follow Jesus?
- Who or what is in control of your life?
- **What is it in your life that isn't pleasing to God?**
- **Are you living in anticipation of Christ's return?**