

“What Is God’s Will For Your Life?”

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

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Teaching Aim: To understand the importance of living a holy lifestyle as we share our Christian faith with the world around us. To realize it is the will of God that Christians abstain from sexual immorality. To recognize God has called us to lead a quiet life, mind our own business, work with our own hands, and walk properly toward those who are outside the church (unbelievers).

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Knowing and living the will of God in your life (1 Thess. 4:1-5)

1. Paul introduces **chapter 4** by using the word “*Finally*.” This does not mean the epistle is about to end but rather the subject matter is changing (**vs. 1**). According to **verse 1**, what should the Thessalonians be doing more and more of? What does the word “*walk*” refer to in this context? Why is it important for Christians to “*walk*” in a way that pleases God? On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your walk with Christ?
2. What is the importance of each of the following commandments from Jesus (**vs. 2**)? (See **Matt. 22:37-40; John 13:34-35**)
3. According to **verse 3**, what is the will of God for the Christian? There are three different aspects of God’s will: 1) God’s decretive will (His sovereign or hidden will); 2) God’s preceptive will (God’s revealed will through Scripture); and 3) God’s will of disposition (What pleases God). Which of the three aspects of God’s will does **verse 3** fall into?
4. The Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are the authority for what we believe. What are some truths from Scripture that you know for fact are the will of God? Why is it important for us to spend time in God’s Word every day?
5. What was the sexual climate like in ancient Greek culture? How might this affect the Christians in Thessalonica? What can we learn about the will of God from the following verses? (See **1 Thess. 4:3; 5:15-18; 1 Pet. 2:13-15, 17**) How do you see **1 Pet. 2:13-15, 17** being disobeyed today, even by many Christians?

6. Why do you think sexual immorality is something that so many Christians struggle with today (**vs. 3**)? As our culture changes, sexual immorality has now become the norm. What are some ways that the multimedia has aided in normalizing sexual immorality?

7. Those who hold to a celibate lifestyle today are often mocked by the culture around us. How should young Christians respond to the peer pressure they are facing? (See **2 Tim. 2:22**) How should the spiritual leaders of Christian families respond to this threat against their children?

8. In what two ways can the phrase "*his own vessel*" be interpreted (**vs. 4**)? (See Commentaries) Which interpretation do you believe is correct? Why?

9. According to **verse 5**, how should Christians not behave? How did monogamous Christian marriage contrast sharply from that of ancient Greek culture? Do you think the Greeks must have looked down on Christians because of this? With the Judeo/Christian view of marriage under attack from our culture today, why is it so important for churches to take steps to protect themselves from legal action?

Part II: The importance of walking in holiness before God and not taking advantage of others (1 Thess. 4:6-8)

1. Why is it so important for Christians not to become involved in sexual immorality (**vs. 6**)? (See **1 Cor. 6:18-20; Col. 3:4-7; Heb. 13:4**) What are some ways that committing sexual immorality can hurt others? How can we hurt ourselves by participating in sexual immorality? (See **Psa. 66:18**)

2. According to **verse 7**, what kind of lifestyle does God want us to live? What is the difference between "*positional sanctification*" and "*practical sanctification*?" Why is each important to our Christian walk today? What is required for us to live a holy lifestyle today? (See **1 Pet. 1:13-17; 1 John 1:9**)

3. Who are we really rejecting if we reject Paul's teaching on holiness and his call for Christians to avoid participating in sexually immoral acts? Is there a measurable difference today between the lifestyles of those who call themselves Christian and those who are not? Why is this? Who is the ultimate authority on what is right and what is wrong? Are you willing to yield to the Lordship of Christ in every aspect of your life? Why or why not?

Part III: The Christian love for one another should be increasing more and more each day (1 Thess. 4:9-12)

1. Why is brotherly love so important to the Christian life (**vs. 9**)? (See **John 13:34-35**) Love is the mark of the true Christian; who is the ultimate example of love? (See **John 3:16**) Is love something that just happens or is it something that we have to work at? What are some ways that God helps us grow in our love for others? How has God worked on you?
2. The Thessalonian Church was already known for its love, but even they needed to increase that in love more and more (**vs. 10**). On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing at loving others? What are some ways that Christians can demonstrate the love of Christ to others today?
3. What three instructions did the Apostle Paul give to the Thessalonian Christians in **verse 11**? Were these suggestions or commands? Do these instructions apply to us today? Why is each important?
4. The Greeks despised manual labor. Apparently, some of the Thessalonian believers believed that the return of Christ was so close that they stopped working and depended on other people and the church for their financial support. Did Paul agree with the change in their lifestyle? (See **1 Thess. 2:9**) How serious was the Apostle in his desire to see Christians work? (See **2 Thess. 3:10-12**) Should the same be true today for Christians who refuse to work?

5. Today we see panhandlers everywhere. Should Christians give to everyone who asks for a handout? Why or why not? How should we determine today who we should give to and to whom we should not? What are some practical ways to give to these individuals?

6. Do you give regularly to the Lord's work? Why or why not? (See **2 Cor. 8:12; 9:6-7; Mal. 3:10**) How do you feel about Christian giving?

7. As Christians, it is important to remember that the world is watching; we live in a fishbowl (**vs. 12**). How does **verse 12** instruct the believer to live? What does this mean? What will we lack if we live our lives in a way that honor's the Lord?

8. What are some of the notable differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant? What was the purpose behind the Old Covenant? (See **Rom. 3:19-20; Gal. 3:24**) Who does the responsibility to obey fall upon under the Old Covenant? (See **Exod. 20:1-17**) What makes the New Covenant different? (See **Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:28-30**) How many times do you see the words, "I will" in these Scriptures? Who takes on the responsibility to fulfill the terms of the New Covenant? Who do we see fulfilling the terms in **1 Cor. 11:23-26**?

9. Have you repented of your sin and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so in prayer right now?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Pleasing God should be the major motivation of the Christian's life!
- It is God's will that believers in Christ be sanctified and abstain from sexual immorality!
- Christians should not be living their lives in passionate lust like the Gentiles (or unbelievers) do!
- God has called every Christian to live a life of holiness, meaning a life set apart for Him!
- The love of Christians should grow more and more for each other every day!
- Christians should aspire to live quiet lives in which they mind their own business and don't spend their precious time judging others!
- Christians should be hard workers to the point where they can share their abundance with others in need as part of their Christian testimony!