

Textual Outline 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

- I. ¹ As for other matters, brothers and sisters,
 - A. we instructed you how to live
 - 1. in order to please God,
 - 2. as in fact you are living.
 - B. Now we
 - 1. ask you
 - 2. and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.
 - C. ² For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.
- II. ³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified:
 - A. that you should avoid sexual immorality;
 - B. ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body^[a] in a way that is
 - 1. holy
 - 2. and honorable,
 - 3. ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God;
 - C. ⁶ and that in this matter no one
 - 1. should wrong
 - 2. or take advantage of a brother or sister.^[b]
 - 3. The Lord will
 - a) punish all those who commit such sins,
 - b) as we
 - (1) told you
 - (2) and warned you before.
 - D. ⁷ For God
 - 1. did not call us to be impure,
 - 2. but to live a holy life.
 - E. ⁸ Therefore, anyone
 - 1. who rejects this instruction
 - 2. does not reject
 - a) a human being
 - b) but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

III. ⁹ Now about your love for one another

- A. we do not need to write to you,**
- B. for you yourselves**
 - 1. have been taught by God to love each other.**
 - 2. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia.**
 - 3. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more,**

IV. ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life:

- A. You should mind your own business**
- B. and work with your hands,**
- C. just as we told you,**
- D. ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders**
- E. and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**

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Conceptual Outline: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

- I. Instruction to live to please God
 - A. They are currently practicing
 - B. urged to do so more & more
- II. How to live sanctified lives
 - A. Avoid sexual immorality
 - B. control the body
 - C. not wronging others
 - 1. not taking advantage of others
 - 2. God will punish
 - D. Calling to live a holy life
- III. Love one another
 - A. taught by God
 - B. Current practice
 - C. urged to do so more & more
- IV. Lead a quiet life
 - A. mind your own business
 - B. work hard
 - C. win respect of outsiders
 - D. avoid becoming dependent on others

Theme:

Encouragement to pursue holiness, love, and hard work more and more.

Questions: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Having talked about the way of evangelism, the integrity of the missionaries' lives and ministry, and love for those they minister to, Paul moved on to handle several troubling issues reported by Timothy after his visit.

- 1) In this passage, what is Paul's tone? What are some of the words he used that lead you to the conclusion? What is his goal for the Thessalonians?
 - Positive - praising them for already practicing
 - Serious - instruct, ask, urge, instruction, authority (1-2), reject God (8)
 - Goal - Live in order to please God (1). In Ch 2 & 3, Paul clearly identified the missionaries' goal and prayer for the Thessalonians (2:10-12; 3:13) That is they will live lives worth of God being holy, righteous, and blameless. Now, he moves to the specifics.
- 2) How are the Thessalonians doing spiritually? If they're already practicing, why is Paul asking & urging them again? What does the notion of "more & more" reveal about Christian life?
 - They are practicing what they were instructed but needed to do more & more.
 - Christian life/pleasing God (in a relationship with God) is progressive and dynamic, ever growing and never filling. It cannot be stagnant, dull, sluggish, or inactive.
- 3) What is Paul's first instruction in vs. 3-8 for us to live lives pleasing to God? What does "sanctified" mean? What are some of Paul's practical directives in regarding sanctification?
 - Be sanctified - separated, holy. We're already consider in position as holy because of Jesus' redemptive work. However, from the time we believe till death, we engage in a process of being made holy so that more and more, we will conform to the image of Jesus Christ.
 - Avoid sexual immorality,
 - Control the body,
 - Not wrong/take advantage of other,
 - Be conscious of God's punishment,
 - Be mindful of His call to live a holy life.
- 4) What is considered sexual immorality? Why is avoidance (making a clean cut) important in regard to sexual immorality? In addition to avoiding, what are we to do more proactively? How is control the body different from avoid? In v. 5, Paul contrasts believers' behavior with the pagans'. What does he say should be the difference?
 - Avoidance, being on guard, admitting our weakness helps us prevent being tempted and avoid unnecessary battles. (II Tim 2:22 "flee"), avoiding the bad will free us to focus on being holy and honorable in marriage as we are not long slaves to sin and free to serve God and live in righteousness.
 - Sexual Immorality - impurity in marriage (Heb 13:4), extra-marital (Lev 20:10), prostitution (I Cor 6:15-20), homosexuality (I Cor 6:9, Rom 1:26-27), rape (Deut 22:25-30), lustful thought (Matt 5:27-29)
 - Control our body in a way that is holy and honorable. Control requires active discipline & denial. It's important also in situations that might be unavoidable. Both requires wisdom, motivation, and reliance on the Power of the Holy Spirit.

- Pagan do not know God: do not have His Power, don't know better because they do not know the truth, aren't called to be holy. They are slaves to sin. We're slaves to God.
- 5) Paul's next directive in the area of sexual immorality has to do with not wronging or taking advantage of others. In what way would we be wronging or taking advantage of other? How do you think Paul would answer our contemporary view on casual consensual sex that each party gets his/her needs met and "no harm is done"?
- We hurt ourselves, the person, and short change our spouses and the other person's future spouse. We take advantage of their weak moment for our own selfish gain/lust. We disrespect them and dehumanize them as object. Lust is self-seeking manipulation of others without regard to their dignity and humanity.
- 6) Why is this area of sexual immorality so serious? What are the consequences of not obeying this command? Why does Paul emphasize the rejection of "God who give you his Holy Spirit"?
- God will punish
 - It is a violation of His calling
 - The Spirit lives in us sees and grieves when we sin. In our rejection of the instruction, we reject His teaching, prompting, and guidance. When we ignore His call, we reject Him.
- 7) What would you do to avoid, control, and change your value of others? Let take a moment of self-examination. If there're areas needing correction, change, confession, let's come before God in repentance. Give everyone a few minutes of solitude. Then, close in prayer and encourage them to seek counsel of godly men/women in private.
- 8) The next instruction has to do with loving one another. Why does Paul say that he doesn't need to write to them? How does God teach them? If they are already loving "all of God's family," why then is it important for him to "urge" them to love all more and more? What would happen if we don't? Do you find some believers harder to love? What can help you learn to love all more and more?
- Christian love is the evidence of our faith. Motivation of our work and behaviors. Love as our relationship with God needs to be progressive, living, active, and dynamic.
- 9) The next instruction has to do with productivity. What are the specifics of the instruction? How is obeying instructions different from making it an "ambition"? What does it tell us about growth in Christian faith? Is the instruction to lead a quiet life minding own business in contradiction with love? Are we not to depend on one another when we love? Why/Why not?
- Learning and obedience of instructions are must but only beginning of our journey. "Ambition" is ownership of these instructions and being internally motivated. As young believers, we often need others to teach & urge us but as we continue to grow, we need to be more internally motivated as less relying on others to tell us.
 - Live a quiet life, mind own business, work with own hands. Some in their days had become idle meddlers just waiting for Christ's return and became burdens to other believers. Paul's instruction is for them to work for their own living, not meddle in unessential things, and use their work as a witness to outsiders. Notice also here, Paul moves from urging them to obey instructions to making it their "ambition."

10) What can we conclude from this passage about Christian love? In what way can you love more & more? If you're to live to please God more and more in this coming week, name 2 things you would do or not do?

- love freely, unconditionally, wholly, holy, progressively and dynamically.
- love vs. lust; interdependence vs. taking advantage/burden; quiet life vs. meddling