A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

**God’s Will and Jesus’s Return**

**I Thessalonians 4:1-12 (Lesson #4) (Part #1)**

**Chapter 4:1-12 – Main Idea:** Having been born again,

you and I should endeavor to live our lives in a manner that pleases God.

***4:1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.***

Having moved out of the introduction and into the heart of the letter, we will see that Paul deals with sexual purity, and then moves right into a very long discussion on the return of the Lord.

He has provided a couple of teasers, but now he is really going to begin to unpack, great and precious truths about the Lord’s return, his coming, his **παρουσία** (par-oo-see’-ah).

**Vs 1 - Brothers –** This is that term of family love. It is the reminder that we are more than acquittances or even friends, we are family.

**Urge** - **παρακαλέω** (par-ak-al-eh’-o), - this is the idea of **urging**, of **begging**, **intreating**, **encouraging**, and even **teaching**.

**As you received from us** *-* **παραλαμβάνω** (par-al-am-ban’-o) -This is to take or receive to one’s self. This word is used to describe that when Jesus comes, he will receive us unto himself (Mat 24:40).

**How you Ought** - **δεῖ (**die) – what is **right**, **proper**, **fitting**, even required and expected. How you ought to…

**Walk** - **περιπατέω** (per-ee-pat-eh’-o)how we conduct ourselves, how we live our lives, how we regulate our conduct.

**Walking in a manner than pleases God!**

**Just as you are doing**… Paul acknowledges that they are doing this now…

**That you do so more and more!** **Paul is encouraging them to abound and overflow in living in a manner that they had received from Paul, namely that they live their lives with the goal of “pleasing” God.**

**Some verses about walking with God, that we can immediately apply to our lives:**

*“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Ro 6:4 ESV)*

*“Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.” (Ro 13:13 ESV)*

*“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” (Ga 5:16 ESV)*

*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10 ESV)*

*“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Eph 5:2 ESV)*

*“so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col 1:10 ESV)*

*“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1Jo 1:7 ESV)*

There are more, but because we have been born again, we are to live our lives with the goal of pleasing our Father. That is Paul’s overarching point! You and I are to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel (Phi 1:27).

**If we want to sum this whole point up it might be like this:** *“...we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2Co 5:7 ESV)* **So keep walking like that!**

**Vs 2 -**Instructions - **παραγγελία** (par-ang-gel-ee’-ah),this is the word for commandments.

It seems that while Paul was with them he gave them many commands. Here Paul also reminds them that these commands were given (through or by) the Lord Jesus!

**Vs 3 - *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;***

**\*\*\* The will of God and knowing the will of God,**

**is the NUMBER 1 question that believers have. \*\*\***

The Bible speaks a great deal about the will of God, I do not want to devote all of our time to this topic, maybe we reserve that for another time, but I do want to provide some framework for your thoughts around this idea. **Three quick points around God’s will for your life.**

**Point #1 About the Will of God – It can be Known:**

*“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Eph 5:17 ESV)*

*“Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!” (Ps 143:10 ESV)*

Number #1, God’s will can be known and understood.

**Point #2 About the Will of God – It Starts with each Person Placing Faith in Jesus (Son of God):**

*“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2Pe 3:9 ESV)*

*“****1*** *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,* ***2*** *for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.* ***3*** *This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,* ***4*** *who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)*

**Point #3 About the Will of God – It is conveyed to us through the Scriptures:**

The will of God, for our lives is revealed to us in the Scriptures. This of course incapsulates these first two points, for they are declared to us from the Scriptures and reminds us that:

*“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.” (Ps 119:9 ESV)*

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Ps 119:105 ESV)*

*“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” (Ps 119:130 ESV)*

*“For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;” (Pr 2:6 ESV)*

It is within this third point, that I would include what Paul says here. As Paul writes to people who lived in a major Roman city, a major port city, a city that was located on a major Roman highway. He tells them: ***For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;***

This is God’s revealed will, this is God’s declarative will for your life. The Greek word is **θέλημα** (thel’-ay-mah), it means **desire**, **design**, **revealed will**. **This is God’s desire and design for our life.**

The Greek word is **ἁγιασμός** (hag-ee-as-mos’) - It means **set apart**, **dedicated to God**, or **holy**.

**Now the negative perspective:** That we abstain **(present tense)** and keep abstaining!

From… **πορνεία** (por-ni’-ah) – It literally means illicit sexual intercourse or prostitution, but obviously its application extends to all forms of illicit sexual behavior. It includes, but is not limited to, what we are viewing on the Internet, what we are watching from the comfort of our living rooms, or what we are reading.

The English word pornography comes from the Greek word **πόρνη** (por’-nay)(female prostitute) and **γράφω** (graf’-o) (to write).

**Jesus was clear at this point:**

*“****27*** *¶ "You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’* ***28*** *But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Mt 5:27-28 ESV)*

We live in a day and age where we are, throughout the day, being exposed to soft, **gateway forms** of this powerful drug. The goal of this exposure is evident.

***Vs 4 -* Control** (present tense) –

**Body** – It is actually the Greek word for vessel although most theologians believe Paul is using it as a metaphor for the body.

**Holiness** - **ἁγιασμός** (hag-ee-as-mos’) – We have discussed this word.

**Honor** - **τιμή** (tee-may’) *–* The idea of the word is dignity, worth, or respect. It reminds us that our bodies are now the temple of the Holy Spirit.

**Vs 5 -**Here Paul juxtaposes, the believer with the unbelieving Gentile world.NOT in the lust, the uncontrolled passion of lust (desire or craving).

**Not like that!** Heretwo methods of supervising our bodies are presented:

1. The right way: Controlling (through the power of the word and indwelling Holy Spirit) our bodies (fallen natures).

1. The wrong way: Uncontrolled deep and evil cravings for all the illicit things that is being driven by our fallen natural desires.

**Vs 6 -** **No one wrong his brother, in this matter.** For the Lord is the avenger in all these things.

*“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Heb 13:4 ESV)*

Paul is warning that we should not be eyeing one another’s spouses, do not defraud your brother or sister in this matter. We solemnly warned you beforehand

**Vs 7 - *God has not called us -* καλέω** (kal-eh’-o) *-* To call with a loud voice, to call us by name.

**God has called us, by name, into his kingdom:**

*“But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” (Isa 43:1 ESV)*

**He has called us by name into His kingdom, he has not called us to impurity (moral uncleaness), but he has called us to holiness! ἁγιασμός** (hag-ee-as-mos’).

If this is starting to feel a little repetitive, that is because Paul is being repetitive. In the Greek there are no mark-ups, highlighting, underlining, or bolding.

Paul has used the word **ἁγιασμός** (hag-ee-as-mos’) - sanctification or holiness three times in 5 verses:

*1Th 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;*

*1Th 4:4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,*

*1Th 4:7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.*

Step one is the reality that God’s will can be known. Step two is that we place faith in Jesus. He comes and cleans us up, the Spirit begins living within us, and Step 3 the Holy Spirit provides the power to overcome our fallen nature, the power of sin that dwells in our members. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. 9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 11 and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.***

**Vs 8 -**The Greek word disregard means to **throw away**, to **set aside**, to **make void**, or to **frustrate**.

The one who disregards this truth is not disregarding man, **but God**.

**When we disregard this, we are disregarding God and thus we should not be surprised that the “will of God” becomes elusive!**

Notice of God, the one who freely gives us the Holy Spirit. **Tons of references** (Eph 4:30, Eph 1:13, and II Cor 1:21-22)

*“****21*** *And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,* ***22*** *and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2Co 1:21-22 ESV)*

The Greek word that the ESV translators translate **“guarantee”** literally means “**earnest”**, it is a banking term. When you buy a house, you put down earnest money (a down payment), which indicates you are committed to the full payment.

**Vs 9 -**Now concerning ***brotherly love,*** you know, I do not even need to address this again. Here the Greek word is **φιλαδελφία** (fil-ad-el-fee’-ah) (brotherly love).

For you have been taught of God, so much so, that we truly need not even need to address this point.

Again, at the end of verse 9, the Greek word Paul chooses is **φιλαδελφία** (fil-ad-el-fee’-ah) (brotherly love).

**Vs 10 -** Notice, he commends them for doing it, and encourages them to do it all the more.

**Pause, let’s grab that for application. You are doing well at loving fellow Truth Seekers and fellow members of FB First, now let’s do it more and more!**

**Vs 11- *Stive to –*** This word is only used three times in the entire New Testament. It brings with it the idea of **main aim**, **overarching goal**, something we are **ambitiously striving** to do.**Paul then lists three things that they were to ambitiously strive to do:**

1. ***Ambitiously strive to live quietly, -*** Sometimes we are so busy talking we are not listening, but there is more here than simply being quiet. The idea is in opposition to restlessness. As believers we are not to be busybodies, in other people’s lives.

*“But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.” (1Pe 4:15 ESV)*

1. ***Ambitiously strive to mind your own affairs –*** Here Paul makes it clear, not busy in others affairs, but minding your own affairs.
2. ***Ambitiously strive to work with your hands –*** Here Paul reminds them, if they are able to work and provide for their own household they should.

Here is a sneak peek of something Paul says to these believers in his second epistle:

*“****10*** *For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.* ***11*** *For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.* ***12*** *Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.” (2Th 3:10-12 ESV)*

The Bible speaks a great deal about hard work and the honor of working hard. (Eph 4:28, Ps 90:17, Pro 12:1, Pro 12:24, Pro 14:23)

**Vs 12 -**So that (two reasons):

1. We may walk properly (honestly, without deceit) before outsiders

1. That you are dependent on no one.

**Mark Howell put it this way in his commentary**: *“A church that is a drain on a city is not going to make a positive impact in that city.”*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.” 5:1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 ¶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so th*at whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”**

**Observations:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 4:13 – 5:11 – Main Idea:** The Lord Jesus is coming again, when he comes, he is bringing the deceased saints with Him, and we (living saints) will meet them in the air and we will all receive our glorified bodies. These truths should bring us great comfort, peace, and joy.

**Vs 13 -Uninformed** – The Greek word is **ignorant,** to **lack knowledge** about something, thus the ESV translators settled on **“uninformed.”**

This word does not mean a person lacks cognitive ability, but rather they lack knowledge about a particular topic.

**Now first an overarching comment, Paul brings up the return of the Lord, not to instruct them in theological or eschatological truths, but rather, because confusion had crept in that has caused “grief” over what happens with those who were saved and die before the Lord returns.**

**Do you see their love for one another? Do you see Paul’s love?**

**I do not what you to be ignorant about:**

**Those who are asleep** – The word is being used metaphorically to describe believers who have died prior the Lord’s return, they are asleep.

**That you do not grieve as if you have no hope** **–** The idea seems to be that there were some who believed that since their loved ones had died, prior to the coming of Jesus. They had missed out.

**Vs 14 -Because we believe in the thing that brings hope:**

Namely that **Jesus died and rose again.** Because we believe in the literal death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, a fundamental of the faith, we can be sure that God will bring with Jesus, our saved loved ones who have **“fallen asleep.”**

In fact, Paul said this about the death and resurrection of Jesus:

*“****12*** *¶ Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* ***13*** *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.* ***14*** *And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.* ***15*** *We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.* ***16*** *For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.* ***17*** *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.* ***18*** *Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (1Co 15:12-18 ESV)*

**Vs 15 -So, this we declare** “by the word of the Lord”

Those who are left (alive) when he comes will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

The Greek word translated precede is **φθάνω** (*fthan’-o).* It means to go **before**, **reach first**, or **attain first**.

**Vs 16a -**Here is the glorious, triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ!

1. **He descends from heaven.** We should expect this, do you remember when he left?
   1. **This descent is accompanied with a cry of a command.**
   2. **With the voice of an archangel**
   3. **With the Trumpet of God**

**We saw the three things that accompany the Lord’s return, now let’s see what happens when He returns:**

1. **Vs 16b - *And the dead in Christ will rise first.***

So, those who have passed away (those who are asleep in Jesus, those who are the dead in Christ) are coming back with Jesus. Here we are told that they will “rise first.”

This is exactly what we just read in I Corinthians:

*“51 ¶ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*

1. **Vs 17a - *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,***

Those of us who are alive, when Jesus returns, are caught up together with them. It seems as we are being caught away to meet Jesus and them, we too receive our glorified bodies.

1. **Vs 17b - *and so we will always be with the Lord.***

Eternity that has begun in our heart, is brought to its grand conclusion in our bodies.

I am reading the book *“The Blessed Hope”,* George Eldon Ladd I the introduction he writes:

*“The Biblical Doctrine of the resurrection is a redemptive truth: it means the salvation of the body. This salvation will be realized only by the personal second coming of Christ.”*

**We saw three things that accompany His return, we then saw three things that will happen at his return.**

**Now because all of these things are true, I want to show you what this should do in our lives!**

**Vs 18 - *Therefore encourage one another with these words.***

**This truth should serve as a source of great encouragement to them** (believers in Thessalonica) **and us,** all believers as we consider what awaits us and who is coming to get us.

Imagine if, you were suffering persecution, and here Paul is reminding you, aJesus is coming back, with your loved ones, to receive you to Himself!

Regardless of what is happening in your life, the blessed hope is that Jesus is coming back one day. Jesus fully intends to make all things right!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_