

## ***Plea for Purity***

**4** *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; <sup>2</sup> for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. (infers authority) [this is not man's opinion, but this is God telling you what His commandments are]*

<sup>3</sup> *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup> Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*

## ***A Brotherly and Orderly Life***

<sup>9</sup> *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; <sup>10</sup> 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; <sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.<sup>1</sup>*

What is it that Paul is really getting at here? He is instructing us in how to live a life that is pleasing to God. But, I can't give you instruction to DESIRE to live a life that is worthy of the Lord. It has to be a work of the Holy Spirit coming forth from within you. I remember when I truly gave my life to the Lord, I was on fire about living a life that was pleasing to God. That was not something man taught me, but it was something that the Holy Spirit put within me.

This is another one of those passages that tells us clearly what God's will for our lives includes. Paul is clear here, that there is a way that we should walk, and if we do, it is pleasing to God. I don't know about you guys, but the thought of pleasing the God who made me is comforting to me. I want to please Him.

Paul includes this instruction because we each have a sin nature. We are not born with a nature that desires to please God. We are born at enmity with God. Paul spoke to them in

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<sup>1</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (1 Th 4:1–12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Chapter 2 about living lives "worthy of the calling that we have in Christ Jesus." Here in chapter 4, we'll look at some of the things that make our lives worthy of the calling.

**It is God's will that we should be sanctified.** So what does it mean to be sanctified. "No one should wrong his brother/sister and take advantage of them."

Paul is saying I realize you are all doing this, but I want you to do it more. Paul was always encouraging them to press forward, and to move on in working for the Lord. It is easy for us to let our faith become routine and to become complacent. We lose our freshness. I hope that I keep encouraging you all on to be ALL THAT YOU CAN BE IN CHRIST. We are here for a very short time. I've become so aware of this recently. Let's PRESS ON. Let's don't give up now. Let's love one another. Let's do this thing right. Let's play out the 4th quarter correctly. Let's don't grow cold. Let's inspire one another. Let's encourage one another to be God's best.

What God wills for me is SANCTIFICATION! He wants each and every part of me that is not Christ-like to be cut out and replaced with stuff that looks like Jesus. Some of you push me and challenge me to do the right thing. You challenge me to let God have all of me. I need that. I don't always like that, but I need that. It's easy without a challenge to sit on our hands and make excuses. I've been pushing some of our men to do better! It's like some don't come to Sunday School and they don't come to men's Bible Studies, and they always find something else to do to take up their time and eternity is at stake.

These are not instructions to be saved. Most of us are already born again. This is about your sanctification. When we come to the Lord we are saved by His grace and that alone, but it is the work that He does in us that pushes us to be all that we're supposed to be in Him. We are trying to please God because we've already been saved. I just want to emphasize that so many questions I get have to do with God's will for their lives. So, these things are helpful to us to know what God's will for us is.

"Sanctified" describes something that has been taken and SET APART for God's use. In the Old Testament, in Hebrew, that was called KODESH. It was HOLY. That means "SEPARATED TO GOD". That means for example when they had tables, utensils etc that were used in the temple, couldn't be used for normal common uses of those things. It's the same thing with us. When you've been set apart by God, your life is NO LONGER FOR COMMON USE. When can never say, "This is my body, and my life, and I'm going to do with it what I want to." Why? Because our bodies don't belong to us.

"Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit." He has purchased us and He has proof of that... the marks on His hands and His feet and His side. We must live our lives to honor Him and serve Him. THAT is sanctification. We must understand the difference between divine purpose and common purpose. In the Old Testament God gave orders that just had to do with obedience. (ex. Mr. Levy)

Why were these commandments given? In Leviticus 10: 10 *"10 that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,"* We must learn to distinguish between things that are clean and unclean.

Paul then talks about sexual immorality. Paul knew what these Thessalonians were working with. In Greek culture, sexuality was deified. There were temples everywhere with sex acts going on with temple prostitutes. It is estimated that there were 1,000 of these temple prostitutes up in acro-Corinth. We may not worship sex in church, but our culture still sort of worships it as a centerpiece of everything. I don't watch television, but people tell me that programs now just focus every single episode on sexual matters. In our day, things weren't available like they are now. Sexual immorality is now being piped into our computers and our homes. This is affecting the minds of of society.

This turns bodies and the sexual acts into objects of perversion and worship. Then in verse 4 it says that each of us is to learn to control our bodies in a holy way. We are not forced to be slaves of our bodies. Paul says we're to be holy and honorable. That means that it is possible. It is not the impossible being demanded of us. One of the fruits of the Spirit is "Self-control". When we reject that life we're rejecting the Holy Spirit.