

Living to Please God

First Thessalonians 4th Chapter. NIV

4 As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. **2** For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; **4** that each of you should learn to control your own body^[a] in a way that is holy and honorable, **5** not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; **6** and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.^[b] The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. **7** For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. **8** Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

The Thessalonian epistles were written to the church at Thessalonica. It was a church under persecution, but also a church that had a dynamic testimony and that had grown through the persecution.

When I look at this book, I thought about the theme and the purpose of the book. It warns us to keep our walk strong. The Thessalonians in view of their cultural background had come out of gross idolatry which had little or no restraint on their moral character especially in matters of sex. **In fact, prostitution was a very prominent part of their religious life** since the worship of the so called gods involved the use of temple prostitutes. The Christian message of holy living was new to that culture, and it was not easy for these young believers to fight the temptations around them.

In verse **one**, the Apostle speaks of "how you must live (literally, "walk")." The Greek word here is peri-pateo, from peri, "about, around,"

and patero, “to walk.” It portrays one walking about in all the various areas or arenas of life.

Verses 1 and 2 Paul writes concerning how they should live and please God. In the word “live” (literally, “walk”) the emphasis is on actions, ways to “please God” the emphasis is on motives.

The goal of Paul’s plea concerns the believer’s daily walk **in the pursuit of excellence and increase**, or progress in our daily walk of holiness, set apart living to the Lord.

This means being stretched and that means becoming uncomfortable. Too often we are simply concerned with keeping the status quo and we shrink from commitments that might stretch us.

the Apostle then turned to verse 5: “not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

Such behavior is a mark of heathenism. **A heathen is one who “does not know God.”** Here Paul put his finger on the key to overcoming sexual temptations. A Christian can overcome because he knows God; this makes all the difference!

The word porneia, translated “sexual immorality,” is broad and includes all forms of illegitimate sexual practices.

porneia means traffic with harlots prostitutes (pornai), ... also denotes any form of illicit sexual relationship.

⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

I noticed saints of God that many of us are slipping and some have even fallen and don’t know how to get back up. **Here is a pattern**, that we should be aware that happens in Christian lives:

1. Save----- we get saved, trying to live right.

2. Sanctified---- we start setting ourselves apart for God to use us.
Read our Bibles
3. Satisfied----- we get complacent, I know enough of that God stuff.
Miss church, barely read our Bibles or participate in church activities.
4. Stagnant--- not moving, backed up, smelling up your environment.
5. Sliding away--- missing church and the things of God, and it doesn't bother you.
6. Sinful--- Out of control, doing things you know are wrong, don't know how to get back.
7. Sell out--- Walked away from the faith, self-absorbed, self-indulged.

Let's get back to God and live to please God more than man or ourselves. God's benefits are the best around.