

# 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; "A Pleasing Walk" June 4, 2023

## I. Welcome

A. Good morning! Ohaiyou gozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. What a blessing it is to be here with you all as we gather to worship and honor our Lord and Savior; not only through the words we sing, but also through the study of His Word.

1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*

B. Before we dismiss the kids, I want to take just a moment to pray for the Medina family as this will be their last Sunday with us here in Iwakuni.

1. Isaac already took off on ship with the rest of the CAG, but Alicia and the kids will be flying out next weekend. This was the second time through Iwakuni for the Medina family and we want to simply pray for their safe travel back to the States and the new chapter that awaits them.

2. Before I ask the Medina family to rise to their feet, I want to ask if this is going to be the final Sunday for anyone else out there, so that we may pray for you as well. We're getting to that unpleasant time of year where we have to say see you later to a number of families and I don't want to miss out on an opportunity to pray for you and your new season.

3. On that note, if you know when your last Sunday will be, please let me know. Again, just so we can pray you out from here and in to the next season and all God has for you.

4. *Invite body to join in praying for one another by laying on of hands. Pray for the PCSing family(s).*

C. Well, as people make their way back to their seats, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class as well.

1. As well as the Bible English class (Second Service)

D. This morning we are going to be continuing in our study of the book of 1 Thessalonians.

1. Last week we finished off the first of two major sections in the book of 1 Thessalonians. The first part of the book, chapters 1-3 dealt primarily with past personal experiences of the church.
2. Today, we begin the second and final major section of the book dealing primarily with future practical exhortations. Chapters 1-3 were more informational, while chapters 4 & 5 will be more applicational, as Paul looks to further instruct them and to strengthen and establish them in their faith.

E. Our text this morning is going to be 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verses 1-12, so if you have your Bible with you this morning, go ahead and open them up to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4.

1. If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, feel free to reach down and borrow one of the Bibles located underneath some of the chairs around you.
2. Once you are there in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, I'd like to request that you rise to your feet in honor of God and His Holy Word.
3. I'm going to read our text today from my Bible, I'm reading from the NKJV. If you are reading from a different translation, do your best to follow along in your Bible, as I read from mine.
4. Paul transitions to the applicational portion of his letter to the church in Thessalonica with the following in chapter 4 verse 1... (*R & P*)

II. Intro;

A. The section before us is characterized by the word "walk". It begins and ends referencing our walk.

1. In the NKJV the word "walk" is used in verse 1 where Paul speaks of how we "ought to walk"

2. And then in our final verse Paul again uses the word when he talks about how we should “walk properly toward those who are outside”.

B. The word “walk” is a favorite word of Paul in describing our Christian life.

1. In the book of Romans chapter 6 Paul speaks about how we also should walk in the newness of life. (**Rom. 6:4**)

2. In chapter 8 of Romans he writes, “There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (**Rom. 8:1**)

3. Again in chapter 13 he writes, “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (**Rom. 13:13**)

4. In 1 Corinthians he writes, “But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk.” (**1 Co. 7:17**)

5. In 2 Corinthians he writes how we are to “walk by faith, not by sight.” (**2 Co. 5:7**)

6. In Galatians he exhorts, “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (**Gal. 5:16**)

7. In Ephesians he uses the term over and over again.

a. How we are to walk worthy of the calling in **Ephesians 4:1**.

b. How we are to no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles in **4:17**.

c. How we are to walk in love in **5:2**.

d. And walk as children of light in **5:8**.

e. We’re to walk circumspectly in **Ephesians 5:15**.

8. Over and over again, Paul uses this term to describe the kind of life we should be living as followers of the

Lord Jesus Christ. I'll spare you all the many other times he uses this term in Philippians, Colossians, & 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Suffice it to say, he uses it quite often.

- C. And the idea behind using this term to describe our Christian life is quite simple to understand.
1. For we started our Christian life with a step of faith. But after that initial step of faith, where we become saved by faith, we then must continue forward in our faith.
  2. That initial step of faith is followed up with a continual walk of faith, as we continue to seek after the Lord and follow His will for our lives.
  3. You see, God isn't just interested in us taking a step of faith and getting saved. No, He wants to see us continue to operate by faith, to continue to walk by faith, to grow in our faith, to mature in our faith.
  4. And so, Paul often refers to this continual growth in the Lord as part of our walk in the Lord. He is concerned with how we ought to walk, or how we ought to live our life as believers and followers of Jesus Christ.
  5. The fact that Paul brings this up in connection to his letter to the church in Thessalonica is interesting as well. For we've noted how the main theme of the book of 1 Thessalonians deals with the coming of Jesus Christ. Paul ends each chapter of the book with a reference to the coming of the Lord.
  6. And so putting these things together, as Paul turns toward the applicational portion of his letter, what he is really emphasizing is how the Thessalonians ought to walk in light of the coming of Jesus Christ.
  7. And seeing as how we are still awaiting the coming of Jesus Christ ourselves, it would seem that the application Paul speaks of here in 1 Thessalonians chapters 4 & 5 is just as much applicable to us as it

was to the Thessalonians. For we too need to know how we ought to walk in light of the coming of Jesus Christ.

D. For our time together this morning, I've decided to entitle our study "**A Pleasing Walk**".

1. Of course, I'm not talking about a nice stroll along the beach, or along the sea wall, or some other favorite place of yours, something that may be pleasing to us. No, what we're going to be looking at is having a pleasing walk before God. How can we please God in our walk of faith.
2. So, let's turn to our text and the opening verses again and we'll talk a little about what it means to have a pleasing walk. Read verses 1 & 2.

III. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2; Pleasing God

A. Paul starts off chapter 4 with the word "Finally then" and then proceeds to talk for another 2 chapters, another 46 verses, which is more than what he wrote in the first three chapters of the book.

1. Paul is your typical preacher, when he says "finally then" or "lastly", or "in conclusion" just know that he's only about half way through.
2. Just kidding...kind of. The emphasis here in Paul saying, "Finally then," is simply his way of transitioning to this final section of the letter. Remember the first part was informational in chapters 1-3 and the second and final part is applicational in chapters 4 & 5.
3. So Paul is simply transitioning into the applicational portion of his letter here in the opening of chapter 4.

B. Paul urges and exhorts the Thessalonians to abound more and more.

1. The church in Thessalonica was doing very well for themselves all things considered. Remember they didn't have a ton of time with Paul and his missionary

companions; they didn't have a lot of spiritual mentoring and discipleship or training. They were very new in their faith, and they were experiencing a lot of persecution.

2. But despite all of that they were doing well. And Paul urges and exhorts them to continue to do what they are doing. Paul starts off his applicational portion by encouraging them and giving them some positive reinforcements. They were doing well, but they needed to continue to do well, to continue to abound more and more.

C. Paul had instructed them and taught them about how they ought to walk and to please God when he was with them.

1. This brings us to our first point about our walk with the Lord. Our walk should be pleasing to the Lord. **As Christians our focus needs to be upon pleasing God.**
2. Everyone on this planet lives their life to please someone.
  - a. Many people live their lives to please themselves. They base their life on doing whatever makes them happy and whatever makes them feel good about themselves.
  - b. Other people live their lives to please other people; their spouse, their parents, their children, or someone else. There is a danger that comes with living to please others: we can become man-pleasers, or people-pleasers. We end up devoting our lives to trying to make someone else happy, which is an impossible task for true happiness and satisfaction can only come from the Lord.
  - c. Instead of living to please ourselves, or living to please others, we are to live our lives with the intent and purpose of pleasing God. This ought to be the

priority of every Christian; to live a life pleasing to God, to walk in a pleasing manner towards Him.

3. Which begs the question, “How do we please God?” Well, the Bible tells us a number of different ways we can please God.

a. **Psalm 19:14** states, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart Be acceptable [or pleasing; some translations read] in Your sight.”

i. So, we can please God with the words we speak and the thoughts we think.

b. **Romans 12:1** proclaims, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable [or pleasing] to God, which is your reasonable service.”

i. So, we please God by turning over our lives completely to Him and trusting Him to guide us in our service of Him.

c. In the book of Colossians Paul speaks of how we may “walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (**Col. 1:10**)

i. So, bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of God are ways that we can please God in our walk with Him.

d. **Hebrews 11:6** proclaims, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him [referring to God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

i. So, we can please God through our faith. Through believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

4. So the Bible speaks of many different ways that we can please God through our walk with Him. And in our

text this morning, we are going to highlight two specific ways we can please God in our walk.

a. In verses 3-8 we're going to see how we can please God by walking in holiness. And then in verses 9-12 we're going to see how we can please God by walking in love.

D. Let's dive into this first section dealing with walking in holiness by reading verses 3-8.

#### IV. 1 Thessalonians 2:3-8; Walking in Holiness

A. Paul starts off this section referencing the will of God and our sanctification.

1. Now the word "sanctification" in the Greek is the word "hagiasmos". The word is used 10 times in the NT; 5 of which the word is translated "sanctification", and the other 5 times it is translated as "holiness".

2. The word carries the idea of being set apart or dedicated to God.

3. Now the term sanctification in the English can refer to two different things. It can refer to the state of being sanctified; it speaks about our position in Christ. We are sanctified by our faith in Jesus Christ.

a. 1 Corinthians reads, "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (**1 Co. 6:11**)

i. When we came to faith in Jesus Christ we were sanctified, set apart from the rest of the world. The Holy Spirit came and took residence within us setting us apart to God. We became a new creation, completely different from who we once were.

b. But the word can also refer to a process of becoming more and more like Christ. Positionally we are in Christ; it is the result of our faith in Christ.



But practically we are still growing and being molded and shaped into the image of Christ; it is a process that will continue until the day we are called home to be with the Lord.

4. The way that it is used here, it is referencing the process, not the result.
5. God's will for our lives is that we would continue to be set apart, that we would continue to be molded and shaped into the image of Jesus Christ. This speaks of the process of our sanctification, our holiness.
6. **God wants us to walk in holiness**. He wants us to live a life that is set apart for Him, a life dedicated to Him. This is one of the ways we can please the Lord, through living a life dedicated to Him, by walking in holiness.

B. Now, part of that work of sanctification, part of walking in holiness and living a life set apart from the rest of the world involves moral purity.

1. Now, during that day and age, moral purity wasn't something that many considered to be of value. Morality was something that the philosophers talked and argued about amongst the Greeks and Romans, but it wasn't something most people bothered themselves with.
  - a. History tells us about how in Greek religion, prostitution was considered a priestly prerogative, and extramarital sex was sometimes viewed and considered as an act of worship to the various gods throughout the land.
  - b. The many idols worshiped in the regions across the Roman empire often had an emphasis on sex—some temples even employed prostitutes for the pleasure of “worshippers”.
  - c. The ancient Greek statesman and writer Demosthenes expressed the generally amoral view

of sex in the ancient Roman Empire. He wrote: “We keep prostitutes for pleasure, we keep mistresses for the day to day needs of the body; we keep wives for the faithful guardianship of our homes.” And this was from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and it had only gotten worse from that time.

- d. During this timeframe when Paul was writing, generally people regarded any kind of sexual activity as acceptable. It was quite common for a man not to limit his sexual relationship to his wife. Homosexuality was common. Incest was overlooked. Slaves were kept and used for sex.
  - e. The mindset towards sex was anything goes. We live in a similar world today where pretty much everything and anything goes. Not only is sexual immorality acceptable, it is celebrated and propagated in our culture today. Here we are in the month of June which for the United States and a few other countries is known as LGBTQ+ Pride Month.
  - f. Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders, Queers, and any others who don't necessarily fit into the other letters, are being celebrated and given a special month where schools and other forms of public educations advocate and commemorate people engaged in these practices.
  - g. You see it isn't just accepted now of days as something normal, it has to be celebrated and commemorated. The world today wants to advocate and celebrate any sort of sexual activity outside of God's will, while demeaning and ridiculing any views that are in line with God's will.
2. In encouraging the Thessalonians to live a morally upright life, to walk in holiness, he wrote telling them that they should abstain from sexual immorality.

- a. The word in the Greek for “sexual immorality” is the word “pornea”. Its where we get our English word pornography from.
- b. Sexual immorality is a very broad term that includes any sort of sexual activity outside of the confines of holy matrimony.
  - i. I say holy matrimony because the world today has come up with their own definition of what a marriage is and isn't. But God is the creator of marriage. He is the one that gets to define it and explain to us what it is.
  - ii. And according to God, marriage is one man and one woman uniting together in covenantal agreement to love each other and to serve one another for the rest of their lives.
  - iii. Jesus said in Mark 10, “from the beginning of creation, God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” (**Mk. 10:6-9**)
  - iv. If the world comes along and says that marriage between two men or two women is acceptable, or that you can be married to multiple people at the same time (referred to as polygamy) that doesn't all of a sudden change what God clearly says about marriage.
  - v. Again, marriage was instituted by God and His definition of marriage is what we must look to, not the world's definition of what they want to call marriage.
- c. So sexual immorality involves any sort of sexual sin outside of holy matrimony. Adultery, fornication, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, bestiality, extra-

marital sex, self-sex are all included. But also things like pornography and sexting are included in this term sexual immorality. Any sexual activity outside of marriage is immoral and not in accordance with God's word.

- d. Sex is a beautiful and wonderful gift from the Lord. It is something God gave to those in holy matrimony for pleasure and procreation and as an expression of love between a husband and wife. But sex outside of marriage is prohibited by God.
  - i. Not because God wants to make things difficult for us, or to deprive us of something wonderful.
  - ii. He puts up this border to protect us. Sexual immorality has the power to destroy us physically and spiritually. It should not be underestimated or belittled. It has devastated countless lives and destroyed families, churches, communities, and even nations.
  - iii. God limits sex to the marriage bed because He knows and understands the damage it will cause outside of the marriage bed.

3. This abstaining from sexual immorality was part of the sanctification process. It was something that would set them apart from the rest of the world and from what the rest of society believed and practiced.

C. So it is God's will for your life that you abstain from sexual immorality. And in verses 4-6 Paul gives some key details that are involved in abstaining from sexual immorality and its importance for us as believers.

- 1. To begin with we should know how to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust.
  - a. The exact meaning of this phrase is debated by some. Some believe that when Paul refers to his own vessel that he is referring to one's own body.

That we all should know how to possess or control our own body.

- i. Because we are believers, we should be able to exercise self-control and not give into the lust of the flesh. This is something that makes us different from the rest of the world.
  - ii. Galatians 5 speaks about the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 states, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (**Gal. 5:22-23**)
  - iii. Self-control is something that comes from having the Spirit of God dwelling within us.
- b. Now another way the word “vessel” is translated is in regard to one’s wife. Peter uses this same word to refer to the wife being given honor from her husband as the weaker vessel. (**1 Pt 3:7**).
- i. So when Paul writes how a person should know how to possess his own vessel it is speaking about how a person knows how to treat his wife in a sanctifying and honoring way. And that engaging in sexual immorality would not be a way to sanctify our honor your spouse.
- c. In my view, I think both could be true. As a believer we should be able to exercise self-control because of the Spirit that dwells inside of us. But also, as husband and wife you become one body, one flesh. So knowing how to possess your own body, your own vessel, could include knowing how to control or keep your spouse from sexual immorality.
- i. As husband and wife, you have a responsibility toward one another to meet each other’s needs.
  - ii. Paul alludes to this fact in 1 Corinthians 7 when he writes, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual

immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (1 Co. 7:1b-5)

2. Abstaining from sexual immorality not only involves possessing one’s own vessel, but it also involves knowing God.
  - a. Paul wrote how we are not to be like the Gentiles who do not know God. People that do not know God, who do not have an intimate personal relationship with God will obviously act contrary to God.
  - b. But because we do know God, because we have entered into a personal intimate relationship with God, we should be obedient to God. We should do as He says. We should obey His commandments.
  - c. This is what John wrote about in 1 John. He writes, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (1 Jn. 2:3-6)
  - d. Keeping God’s commandments is evidence of us knowing God. If we say we know God, but then

walk contrary to the way He walked, then we are not walking in truth, the truth is not in us and we are nothing more than liars.

- i. Now this doesn't mean that we will perfectly keep all of God's commandments. None of us can or will ever do that. But the idea here is that our life is characterized by a desire to walk as He walked, we desire to obey. We don't live a lifestyle that is contrary to what God's commands clearly state.

3. Another important aspect as to why we should abstain from sexual immorality has to do with our fellow brothers.

- a. In the previous two examples the emphasis was upon the individual himself not partaking in sexual immorality. But in verse 6 Paul alludes to the others that are often involved in sexual immorality.

- b. We should abstain from sexual immorality for the sake of our fellow brother. The word brother here can be understood in two different ways.

- i. It could be referring to a fellow believer in Christ; whether male or female.

- ii. Or it could be referring to a fellow countrymen or neighbor; again, whether male or female.

- c. When one engages in sexual immorality it is considered as taking advantage of others, and defrauding others. How so?

- i. Well, by engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage you are overstepping the boundaries set up by God, you are defrauding or robbing someone of being able to enjoy what God has established.

- ii. God intends that you save sexual activity for your spouse. So if you engage in sexual activity before then, you are robbing your spouse of the joy of fulfilling that command from God.

- iii. Sexual sin almost always involves someone else. Even pornography involves someone else. You are looking at and lusting over someone else's daughter, someone else's wife, or future wife, or someone else's son, or someone else's husband, or future husband.
  - iv. And according to Jesus, "whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (**Mt. 5:28**). And that goes for women lusting after men as well.
  - d. So we should abstain from sexual immorality for the sake of one another, knowing that sexual immorality defrauds the individual and the other person involved in their sexual immorality.
- D. In the second half of verse 6 through to verse 8 Paul gives us some reasons why we should abstain from sexual immorality.
1. Number 1 we see that we should abstain from sexual immorality because God will judge those who engage in such activity.
    - a. Paul writes, that "no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such."
    - b. The word "avenger" in the Greek speaks of God as the one who executes right and justice. It speaks of God as one who punishes sin, one who brings justice against those who break God's laws.
    - c. God will bring judgment against those who practice sexual immorality.
    - d. Hebrews 13:4 states, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (**Heb. 13:4**)
    - e. 1 Corinthians 6 states, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters,



nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Co. 6:9-10)

- f. Hey, this is pretty serious stuff here. Your inheritance in the kingdom of God is at stake. God’s word is clear that those who’s lives are characterized by these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
  - g. Paul says the same in Galatians. “Not the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. 5:19-21)
  - h. If you practice these things, if this is part of your normal pattern of life, then you will not inherit the kingdom of God.
  - i. The implication is obvious here. If you are a true believer in the Lord, you won’t practice these things. If you truly know God you will obey His commands and you will not live your life in opposition to His Word and His will for your life. Again I am reminded of what John wrote when He said, “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
2. So we should abstain from sexual immorality because we do not want to experience the judgment of God. But we also should abstain from sexual immorality because of our calling in the Lord.
- a. God has called us to holiness. He has called us to live a life that is honoring and glorifying of Himself.

He has not called us to uncleanness, or impurity, but to holiness, to right living.

b. He has called us to be set apart and dedicated to Him. Peter writes, “as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy for I am holy.’” (1 Pt. 1:15-16)

c. We are called to be imitators of the Lord, to walk as He walked.

3. Third we should abstain from sexual immorality because not to do so would be a rejection of God.

a. If we say to ourselves, I really don’t care what Paul says here about abstaining from sexual immorality. I’m ok with it and I’m going to continue practicing it, we are not rejecting Paul and his word, but God and His Word.

b. I’ve had discussion with people who don’t like the firm stance I take when it comes to sexual immorality and what it entails.

i. I’ve had people tell me that God made them a certain way and that God wants them to be happy and God wants them to know love like everyone else.

ii. I’ve had people tell me that God is ok with what they are doing. That God and them have an understanding, and all is good.

iii. I’ve had people tell me that they believe living in sexual immorality was what God wanted for them. That they had prayed about it and God gave them peace about their particular situation.

iv. I’ve had people tell me that I have misinterpreted the Scripture and that God really didn’t mean certain things when it came to sexual immorality and what it encompasses. That it only is speaking about prostitution and that is it.

- c. And when I have those conversations, it really doesn't bother me so much. Because I know that their beef is not with me, but it is with God. I'm just telling them what God's word says.
  - i. When they reject me and get made at me for telling them the truth, I have to be able to let those things go and understand that they aren't rejecting me, but God. That their problem is not with me, but it is with God and His Word.
  - ii. That is what Paul is saying here. If you reject this command to abstain from sexual immorality, you are rejecting God, not man.
- 4. The fourth thing worth noting here in regard to why we should abstain from sexual immorality has to do with God's Holy Spirit.
  - a. God's Holy Spirit has been given to us, to empower us and for us to walk in victory.
  - b. Paul gives us a very bold promise in Galatians when it comes to walking in the Spirit. He writes, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (**Gal 5:16**)
  - c. How do we abstain from sexual immorality in our lives? We do so by walking in the Spirit.
  - d. Paul writes in Romans, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." (**Rom. 8:5**)
  - e. We must set our minds upon the things of the Spirit and in so doing we will live according to the Spirit. God has given us the resources that we need in order to have the victory.
  - f. His Spirit is more than enough. If we will simply walk in the Spirit, set our minds on the things of the Spirit, we will not walk in the flesh, we will not live in sexual immorality.

g. As we are led by the Spirit of God, He will lead us to Christ and remind us of what Christ did and spoke, that we may be conformed into the image of Christ. And so, God has given us His Spirit as a resource to live a holy life. That we may walk in holiness.

E. Well, that concludes the first section about how we can please God through walking in holiness. Now, let's turn to the second and final part of our study dealing with how we can please God through walking in love. And don't worry, I'm more than halfway through. Read with me verses 9-12.

## V. 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Walking in Love

A. Here in these verses, Paul speaks about the need for the Thessalonians to continue to walk in love.

1. This wasn't necessarily a problem area for them. We've already noted on a few different occasions how the church was known for its love, how they labored in love, and how they persevered through affliction and continued to love one another.
2. So Paul starts off by saying, "Hey, I really don't need to tell you to love one another because you're already doing it."
3. Paul mentioned how their love was known and felt by all the brethren that were in the region of Macedonia and how they had been taught by God to love one another.
  - a. How were they taught by God Himself you may be wondering? Well most likely it was through God's Holy Spirit that took residence within them when they came to faith in Jesus Christ.
  - b. One of the many things the Holy Spirit does is remind us of the words of Christ. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will

“speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (Jn. 16:13-14)

- c. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will take what is His and declare it to us. So the Holy Spirit takes Jesus’ words and declares them to us, He reminds us of what He said and what He taught.
  - d. The Holy Spirit testifies of Christ and what Jesus taught.
  - e. Jesus commanded his followers to love one another. In John 15:12 Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (Jn. 15:12)
  - f. Jesus taught that the greatest commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Mt. 22:37-38)
4. So it would seem that God’s Holy Spirit taught them to love one another, just as Christ had taught His followers during His earthly ministry.
  5. Though they had been taught to love one another, and they were doing well at loving one another, Paul still exhorted and encouraged them to increase more and more in their love.
    - a. Loving one another isn’t something we just do a few times and then stop doing it. It’s not like a checklist of things to do. “*Well, I showed love towards someone this morning, good thing I got it done and over with early on in the day, now I don’t have to love anyone else.*”
    - b. No, of course not. **We must continue in love**. We must increase our love more and more. In Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians that we looked at last

week, Paul prayed that they would abound in their love toward one another. (**1 Thes. 3:12**).

i. That word abound speaks of an overflowing of love; an excess of love, to have more than enough.

c. So Paul commends them for their love, but at the same time encourages them to continue to cultivate the love they have for one another.

B. Now in verses 11 & 12, Paul mentions a few things that they could be doing to increase their love.

1. They had a great amount of love for one another, but walking in love doesn't entail only walking in love toward our fellow believers, but that we would walk in love towards all people.

2. In verses 11 & 12, Paul mentions things that could be done to walk properly toward those who were outside the faith. Let's note them real quick before we wrap up our study.

a. Paul encourages them to aspire to lead a quiet life.

i. The idea is that they were to hold their peace. To live in a quiet and peaceful manner towards others.

ii. They weren't to be fighting with one another, nor fighting against non-believers. They were to live peaceably with one another.

iii. Romans 12:18 states, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." (**Rom. 12:18**)

iv. Hebrews 12:14 affirms, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." (**Heb. 12:14**)

v. And there it is. That is the target. We want people to see the Lord in our life. We want people to see the peace we have in the Lord. We want

people to look at our lives and the peace that we have in the midst of all sorts of crazy situations and circumstances, and think to themselves, “I want what they have. I want that peace.” And then when they ask about how we can have such peace in all the chaos, we can tell them about the Lord and how He gives us His perfect peace, how He gives to us a peace that surpasses all understanding.

- b. Not only did he encourage them to lead a quiet life, but Paul also urged them to mind their own business.
  - i. Now some of you didn't know that “mind your own business” was in the Bible. You've probably heard this phrase a number of times, maybe you've even used it a few times yourself without even knowing that you were quoting from scripture.
  - ii. 1 Thessalonians 4:11 “mind your own business”. The next time you feel like telling someone to mind their own business, you can simply just tell them, “Hey, 1 Thessalonians 4:11!” Don't tell them what it says, just let them look it up for themselves.
  - iii. All kidding aside, what does Paul mean here by telling them to mind their own business? Paul was warning them against being a busybody. About going around getting involved in everyone else's business and spreading gossip.
  - iv. Now evidently this was something that Timothy may have picked up on during his time with them. Perhaps there were some that were starting to show signs of being a busybody, of getting up into everyone else's business.
  - v. For in his second letter to the Thessalonians Paul will bring this topic back up and state, “For we hear that there are some who walk among you in

a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.” (2 Thes. 3:11-12)

- c. This leads us to the third thing Paul spoke about in verse 11, how they were to work with their own hands.
  - i. Manual labor wasn't something that the Greek prided themselves upon. They believed that manual labor was fit only for slaves. And they would try to get away with doing as little as possible.
  - ii. But Paul encourages them all to work with their hands, the idea here is to put in a good, honest day's labor.
  - iii. That they would not cheat their employer, or be lazy and leave everything else for others to do.
  - iv. As Christians we are not walking in love if we go to work and we cut corners, and we slack off, and we show up late and leave early. That is not a good witness to the world around us and remember that is at the heart of what Paul is encouraging them towards here.
  - v. He wants them to have a good solid reputation amongst those outside the faith. He wants them to live their lives in such a way that their lives are attractive to the unbeliever.
  - vi. When a Christian worker comes in and works as unto the Lord, and gives his best effort, shows up on time and is willing to give extra in order to please their employer, it represents Christ to others. People see your work ethic and how you have integrity and work diligently and it makes



them want to know what makes you so different, and what makes you such a great worker.

vii. And then you get the opportunity to share Christ with them. You get to tell them how you work as unto the Lord. And want to be a good example in all you do. That others may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.

3. Paul concludes this section by affirming that if they would walk this way towards those outside the faith, if they would see to it that they lead a quiet life, mind their own business, and work hard, that they would be showing love towards them and would be lacking in nothing.

a. Remember that in chapter 3 Paul spoke of his desire to perfect what was lacking in their faith. This was one of those things. They were walking in love toward one another, but Paul say the need for them to walk toward all people in love, to live a live that would draw the unbeliever to Christ and that by doing so they would lack nothing.

4. Let's pray.

VI. Conclusion / Communion

*A. Distribute the communion elements and have them partake on their own.*