

## 1 Thessalonians

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### Lesson 5: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

In the first three chapters, we saw how Paul prays for the church at Thessalonica and reminds them of his ministry to them. In chapter four, there is a shift in his letter as he begins to give instruction. Back in 2:7 and 11, Paul described his ministry to them using the illustration of a mother and a father. Paul is now going to put his father hat on and begin to exhort, encourage, and implore the Thessalonians to grow in sanctification. Let's dive in and see what Paul says to this growing church.

➤ **Context**

Reading 1 Thessalonians 3:1-8. As Paul begins to give instructions in chapter 4, how does Paul know what to teach them?

➤ **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:13. In what ways does 1 Thessalonians 4:1 relate to 3:13?
2. Notice Paul calls them “brethren” in verse 1. This is the seventh time he has to them as “brethren” in the letter. Why would Paul refer to them as “brethren” so often?
3. What was Paul’s comprehensive exhortation to the Thessalonians in verse 1?
4. How do the phrases “ought to walk” and “please God” relate to one another?
5. What is Paul reminding the Thessalonians about in verse 2, and who is the source?

**Application:** Paul encourages the Thessalonians that they have been walking well but need to “excel still more.” What are ways you can grow in holiness in your life?

➤ **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8**

6. What does Paul say is God’s will for the Thessalonians?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Paul demands sanctification in three areas of their moral life in verses 3–6? What are they? (Hint: they start with the word “that.”)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What is the warning Paul gives in verse 6 to those who don’t practice purity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What is God’s calling for every believer? When did this calling happen?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What is the “impurity” Paul is referring to in verse 7?

**Application:** We live distracted lives that sidetrack us from sanctification. What are common distractions—personal or cultural—that sidetrack you from growing in sanctification?

**Application:** What are steps you can take to maintain purity? How can you be an encouragement to others who struggle in this area?

**Application:** Notice Paul gives a lot of ink to the topic of sexual purity. What does that tell you about the Thessalonian church? How is this message equally (or even more) appropriate for the church today?

**Application:** Paul reminds the Thessalonians in verse 8 that God has given us His Holy Spirit to help us grow in godliness. What steps can you take this week to depend more on the Holy Spirit?

➤ **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12**

11. How does Paul offer encouragement to the Thessalonians in verses 9-10?

12. In verse 10, what does Paul urge the Thessalonians to do?

13. In verse 11, what are the three commands Paul gives the Thessalonians?

14. Are these commands new to the Thessalonians? How do you know this?

15. According to verse 12, what are the results of those who heed the commands of verse 11?

**Application:** What are things you can do today to abound in love toward other believers?

**Application:** What are some practical ways you can know that you are gradually growing in sanctification?

**Application:** As you read the commands of verse 11, what does that look like in our modern culture and church?

**Application:** What one verse in chapter 4:1-12 impacted you the most? Why?