

Approximately 35 minutes



“Living Ready for His Return”

1Thessalonians Chapter 4:

Opening Prayer:

Father God, we come before You in the name of Jesus. Thank You for Your Word... living, powerful, and true. Lord God, as we open 1Thessalonians chapter 4, teach us how to live in a way that pleases You. Purify our hearts. Strengthen our hope. Fix our eyes on eternity. And if there is anyone listening who does not yet know You, draw them today. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Historical Setting:

The city of Thessalonica was a busy Roman seaport in Macedonia. 🙌 **Mass-uh-DOH-nee-uh** It was prosperous, influential, and deeply pagan. Idolatry filled the streets. Sexual immorality was common and culturally accepted. Roman and Greek society did not view purity the way Scripture does.

Paul had planted this church during his second missionary journey (Acts chp.17). He preached Christ, and people were radically saved. But persecution quickly forced Paul to leave. These believers were young in the faith surrounded by pressure, confusion, and cultural corruption.

In chapter 4, Paul answers two major concerns:

1. How should Christians live in a morally corrupt world?

2. What happens to believers who die before Jesus returns?

This chapter teaches us how to live pure and how to live ready.

Part 1: Living to Please God (Verses 1-2):

1Thessalonians 4:1-2(NIV) ***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.***

Okay.... Let us brake this down....

“As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God... Now we ask you

and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.” (v.1)

Notice the phrase: **“to please God.”** (v.1)

- Christianity is not about pleasing culture.
- It is not about pleasing self.
- 👉 It is about pleasing God.

Paul says, **“You’re already walking in obedience ... now do it more and more.”**

- Spiritual growth happens little by little. In the Christian life, we are meant to keep moving forward, not stand still.

Part 2: God’s Will ... Your Sanctification (Verses 3-8):

Here is God’s Word....

1Thessalonians 4:3-8(NIV) **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 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. 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.

So what is being said here.... Verse 3 says...

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.” (v.3)

- People often ask, “What is God’s will for my life?”

Here is one clear answer: Your sanctification.

- **Sanctification means being set apart for God and gradually being made more holy in the way we live.**
- The moment a person truly trusts in Jesus, he belongs to God. He is set apart from the world in position. But from that point on, God also begins a **lifelong** work of changing that person from the inside out. It is a slow process.
- Sanctification is not just trying harder to be good. It is the work of God in us by the Holy Spirit, teaching us to turn away from sin and to live in a way that pleases Him.
- It is the process of becoming more like Jesus in our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions.

So sanctification includes things like:

- . learning to hate sin instead of excusing it.... Remember our flesh loves sin. So there is a war going on in our bodies.

- growing in purity, obedience, love, and humbleness
- replacing old habits with godly ones
- becoming more sensitive to what pleases the Lord
- letting God shape our character through His Word and His Spirit

It is important to understand this: **The sanctification process is progressive.**

👉 We do not become mature overnight.

👉 God works in us step by step.

There will be growth, correction, conviction, repentance, and eventually change over time.

- In Thessalonica, sexual immorality was normal.
- Temple prostitution was common.
- Purity was rare.

But Christians are called to live differently.

Look at God's Word.... Verse 7.

“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.” (v.7)

- Holiness is not outdated.
- It is not optional.
 - 👉 It is God's will.

Paul says:

- . Control your body (v.4)
- . Don't live in passionate lust like those who don't know God (v.5)
- . Don't wrong or take advantage of others (v.6)

👉 Sexual sin is serious because it distorts God's design.

In a culture that says, “Follow your desires,” Scripture says, **“Follow Christ.”**

Holiness is **not** God trying to take something good from us.

👉 It is God setting us free from the things that enslave us.

And Paul adds a strong warning: Verse 8...

“Anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God.”

(v.8)

- This is not Paul’s opinion.
- This is God’s command.

But remember God never commands something without empowering us through His Spirit.

- I promise... in our Christian walk we will fail at this... a lot.

👉 Let God slowly do the work in you.

👉 Brothers and Sisters, you will fail if you try to do this on your own human will.

Part 3: Increasing in Love (Verses 9-12):

1Thessalonians 4:9-12(NIV) ⁹ Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia.

 **Mass-uh-DOH-nee-uh**

Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

So Paul turns in verses 9-10 to another mark of a healthy Christian life...love for other believers. He writes, **“Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you... Yet we urge you... to do so more and more.”** (v.9-10)

Paul is saying, **“You are already showing real love, but do not stop there. Keep growing.”**

- Holiness and love belong together. Christian maturity is not only seen in the sins we turn away from, but also **in the love we show toward others**. It is not just about what we avoid; **it is about how we treat people**.

Paul encourages them to:

- Love increasingly
- Live quietly
- Mind their own business
- Work with their hands

Why?

“So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.” (v.12)

👉 Christian testimony matters.

Your everyday life preaches a sermon.

- Faithfulness at work.
- Integrity in relationships.
- Quiet strength in trials.

👉 Holiness and responsibility shine in a dark world.

Part 4: The Blessed Hope (Verses 13-18):

1Thessalonians 4:13-18(NIV) ¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not

precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Now Paul shifts to one of the most powerful passages in the New Testament.

- Some believers in Thessalonica had died. The church was grieving. They feared their loved ones might miss Christ's return.

Paul writes to comfort them.

“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who

sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.” (v.13)

Christians grieve but not without hope.

Why?

“For we believe that Jesus died and rose again...” (v.14)

👉 The resurrection changes everything.

“If” Jesus rose, death is not final.

👉 **Guess what??? Jesus our Lord did rise for the dead!!!**

👉 **The resurrection! That is the heart of Christianity.**

My Mother and Father have both passed away. Yes, my sister and I were both hurt when it happened but we were also happy that we knew they both were in a much better place than we are here on earth in

this earthly body. My sister and I both knew they were believers in Christ...and they are with Jesus right now...

Verse 16 ... Paul reveals a beautiful promise:

“The Lord himself will come down from heaven... and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (v.16)

This describes what many call the **Rapture** or **Harpazō** (ἄρπάζω) Greek... Also other terms...

- Caught up
- Snatch away
- Gathered
- Taken
- Received by the Lord

👉 All meaning ... when Christ gathers His church.

Notice the details:

- . The Lord Himself descends
- . A loud command
- . The voice of the archangel
- . The trumpet call of God
- . The dead in Christ rise first
- . Then living believers are caught up

“....And so we will be with the Lord forever.” (v.17)

👉 That is our hope.

- Not temporary relief.
- Not earthly security.
- 👉 But eternal presence with Jesus.

Paul ends with:

“Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (v.18)

Prophecy is not meant to create fear.
It is meant to create comfort and readiness.

Living in Light of His Return:

👉 What does this mean for us?

If Jesus could come at any moment, then the way we live should reflect that reality.

- We should pursue holiness, love one another deeply, live with faithfulness and responsibility, and hold loosely to the things of this world.

The return of Christ has a way of clearing our vision and putting life back into proper focus.

- It purifies our priorities.
- It changes how we look at temptation, because we want to be found walking in obedience when He comes.
- It changes how we look at suffering, because we know this present pain is not the end of the story.
- It changes how we look at death, because for the believer, death is not

defeat but **the doorway** into the **presence of Christ**.

- We are not merely waiting for a prophetic event on a calendar.
- We are waiting for our Savior, our King, and our Bridegroom.
- We are waiting for a Person.
👉 And His name is **Jesus!!!**

Personal Application:

Brothers and Sisters....Are you living to please God?

Are you pursuing holiness or flirting with compromise?

Are you increasing in love?

Are you living ready?

👉 If Jesus returned today would you be ready?

Invitation Be Born Again:

Maybe you're listening, and you realize you are not ready.

- You've been religious but not transformed.
- You are Interested but not surrendered.
- You might think you are Moral but not born again.
 - Listen....Jesus died for your sins.
 - He rose from the grave.
 - He is coming again...very soon.

The only way to be ready is to belong to Him.

 Salvation is not earned.

 It is received by faith.

Romans 10:9 says:

“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

God made this simple for us.... Just believe.....

Pray something like this from your heart:

Let us Pray....

“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner..... I believe You died for me and rose again..... Forgive me..... Cleanse me..... I turn from my sin and trust You as my Lord and Savior..... Fill me with Your Spirit..... Make me ready for Your return..... Save me..... I love you... In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

“If” you prayed this sincerely with faith in Jesus you belong to Him.... Welcome to the family of God!!!

Now....

- Go tell someone what happened to you.
- Grow... Pray all the time and read the bible at least (4) times a week.
- Walk in love.
- Live ready..... Jesus is coming soon!!!

Closing Encouragement:

Brothers and Sisters, this world is not our home. We are just passing through.

- Holiness matters.
- Love matters.
- Hope matters.

Jesus is coming soon!

- Let's live in a way that pleases Him.
- Let us live ready.

Closing Prayer:

Father God, thank You for the promise of Christ's return. Thank You that death is not the end. Strengthen us to live holy lives in our everyday culture. Help us to increase in love. Guard us from compromise. Fix our eyes on eternity.

For anyone who received your gift of salvation today, seal them by Your Spirit. Protect them. Grow them. Establish them.

Lord Jesus, we look for You to come soon. We long for You. Help us live ready until the day we see You face to face.

**In Your mighty name we pray,
Amen.**



Matthew 28:19-20