

Lessons From I Thessalonians

How You Ought To Live

(I Th 4:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Thessalonians.”
 - a. Last week we looked at “Supplying What Is Lacking.”
 - i. **I Th 3:9-10** “For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, 10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?”¹
 - b. This week we are looking at “How You Ought To Live.”
 - i. **I Th 4:1-12** “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more... 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”
3. Things to remember.
 - a. Paul had just got done writing them...
 - i. That he wanted to come to them.
 - ii. That he wanted them to abound in brotherly love.
 - iii. That he wanted them their hearts to be blameless in holiness before God at the coming of Christ.
 - b. That brings Paul to write...
 - i. Finally, then, brothers...
 1. This shows Paul is about to connect what he is about to write with what he just wrote.
 - ii. Paul wrote he desired to come to them to teach them “How They Ought To Live.”
 1. Until he could get there he is going to give them some daily living guides to stay faithful until that time.
4. That brings us to our text today, these are the guides Paul wrote about.
 - a. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to...

I. Desire Holiness Over Impurity

- A. The word sanctification means holy or set apart
 1. God’s will for the Thessalonians was that they abounded in staying set apart from the world.
 - i. The idea here is continually putting more distance between you and the world.
 - a. **Ja 4:4** “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- B. Paul knew the moral level of Thessalonica
 - 1. This city was known from its immorality especially its fornication.
 - i. Many pagan aspects of worship involved fornication.
 - a. Fornication is any physical sexual sin outside of biblical marriage.
 - 2. Knowing the Thessalonians background he urged them not to fall back into those immoral behaviors but rather elevate themselves more and more out of it.
 - i. The standard of biblical morality is set very high and Paul wanted them to live up to it.
- C. God wants us to do the same
 - 1. We live in a world much like then as far as fornication acceptance is concerned.
 - i. You hear things like “Young people are going to do it anyway, so let’s just give them protection from disease.” (Notes on I Thessalonians by Parrish, Eddie pg. 19)
 - ii. Even in the church sexual immorality has become accepted as “normal” kid behavior.
 - a. Example: I knew a man that said he could no longer serve the Lord’s Supper at the congregation because there were simply too many women with revealing cloths as he handed the plates down.
 - b. Example: I knew a young girl whose mom told her she could buy a certain dress and wear it in public but that she couldn’t wear it to services because it was too immodest for such.
- D. Thus...
 - 1. God expects us to rise above the world and live up to God’s standard of morality not the worlds.

II. Desire Brotherly Love

- A. I find it interesting that right after dealing with lust & fornication he turns to love
 - 1. Remember one reason Paul warned against fornication was “that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter” (**I Th 4:6**).
- B. The Greek word for “brotherly love” is not “agape”
 - 1. The word here is “philadelphia” or sibling love.
 - i. This is the love that siblings such as brothers and sisters share.
 - 2. It is better translated brotherly affection as it deals with the “affect” one has on another.
- C. Paul felt he needed to instruct the Thessalonians on fornication however brotherly affection he had no need
 - 1. The brethren at Thessalonica were doing well in this area having a great, positive, spiritual effect on each other that affected one another.
- D. God wants us to do the same
 - 1. He wants us to have an impact on the lives of others through love.
 - i. This is the idea behind what Paul wrote in Romans.
 - a. **Ro 12:10** “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

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- E. Thus...
 - 1. God expects us to have an impact on each other's life outdoing each other in love.

III. Desire A Quiet Life

- A. Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to aspire to live quietly
 - 1. Does this not stand in contrast to the apostles and disciples?
 - i. Were they not speaking and preaching everywhere, causing much discord amongst the world?
- B. Paul was not saying stay quiet in the world he is saying do not be fanatics
 - 1. Philips wrote, "Make it your ambition to have no ambition" (from Coffman's Bible Commentary, Copyright © 1971-1993 by ACU Press, Abilene Christian University. All rights reserved.)
 - i. In other words don't "strive for attention."
- C. God wants us to remember this as well
 - 1. We are not to teach and preach to get people to "pay attention to us."
 - i. Our teaching should be done to bring attention to God that He gets the glory.
 - a. **Mt 5:16** "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."
- D. Thus...
 - 1. Thus God expects us to not be attention grabbers but rather gospel proclaimers.

IV. Desire Independence

- A. Paul told the Thessalonian brethren to mind their own affairs
 - 1. Once again this does not mean "do not speak to others."
 - i. We are a responsibility to "speak/teach" others about God's Word.
 - 2. Paul is saying do not be people that "meddle" in the affairs of others
 - i. In other words they were not to be busybodies.
 - ii. They were not to be "snooping" into people's business.
 - a. **I Pt 4:15** "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler."
- B. Paul told the brethren to also "work with their hands"
 - 1. The Thessalonians were not to rely on their neighbors or be beggars at the corner.
 - i. They were to strive to rely on no one.
 - 2. This does not suggest that this is always possible.
 - i. Remember later Paul was gather funds to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem.
 - 3. However whenever possible we are to work so we are not a burden on the church or our neighbors.
- C. God expects these same things of us today
 - 1. We are not to be meddling in other people's business.
 - i. There is far too much work to do to be snooping into other peoples business.

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2. We are also to work hard.
 - i. The hardest working people in the world ought to be Christians.
 - a. **Ec 9:10** "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might..."
- D. Thus...
 1. God expects us to be busy about His business working as hard as we can about the work He has given us.

V. Never Let These Desires Be Content

- A. Paul begins by writing...
 1. **I Th 4:1** "Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more."
- B. Paul wanted the brethren at Thessalonica to increase their maturity
 1. They were to increase in their separation from the world.
 2. They were to increase in brotherly affection.
 3. They were to increase in living peaceable lives.
 4. They were to increase in hard dedicated work.
- C. God wants us to never be content with our spiritual growth
 1. We are to desire to constantly mature more and more.
 - i. As one brother put it "If we are not moving forward we are moving backwards."
 - a. There is no middle or stagnate ground.

CONCLUSION

1. Brothers and sisters the Thessalonians were encourage in these areas for a specific purpose.
 - a. By being moral and "abounding more in brotherly affection, by maintaining a calm (satisfied, tranquil, peaceful) disposition, by minding their own business, and by consistently working hard at their jobs, the Thessalonians would win the respect of their neighbors....They would be dependent on nobody, and would be viewed as respectable citizens in the community instead of parasites that fed off others." (Notes on I Thessalonians by Parrish, Eddie pg. 22)
2. Question: Are you abounding in these areas constantly putting distance between you and the world?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
- i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**