



STANDING FAST IN THE LORD

Standing Fast Leads to Walking Faithfully in the Lord

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

The will of God is your sanctification, growing in holiness in the Holy Spirit (1-8).

- *More and more, walk to please God (1).*
- *Control your body in holiness and honor (2-8).*
 - *Abstain from sexual immorality (3).*
 - *Flee from lust (5).*
 - *Reject impurity (7).*
- *Regard the Holy Spirit in you (8)!*

As Paul moves to the application of faith in the life of believers, the Lord provides a couple of critical truths for understanding his will and command for our lives as his church. The first revelation is important. It's one of the passages that states clearly the will of God for the lives of his children. The will of God is your sanctification, growing in holiness in the Holy Spirit. Paul urged the Thessalonians to continue to walk to please God and to do so more and more every day in their lives. Why? Because this is God's will! A life that's walking in faith to please God is a life that's displaying the presence of the Holy Spirit and the work of sanctification. On a practical level, one of the things that sanctification includes – and one of the things that's so often ignored and disregarded – is abstinence from sexual immorality. God calls his children to control their bodies in holiness and honor, and he doesn't leave us to wonder or to wrongly interpret what that means. Paul listed several things that were the opposite of controlling your body in holiness and honor. First, he mentioned abstaining from sexual immorality. This term isn't hard to define. Its clear use throughout Scripture is simple: Sexual immorality is any sexual activity that is outside God's design for sex within the confines of a covenantal marriage between one man and one woman. Second, Paul urged believers to flee from lust. Lust includes the desire for sex outside of God's design within marriage, and third, Paul called believers to reject impurity. Paul focused on sexual sin because sexual immorality is what so often entangles the heart and damages the witness of the church. These words weren't just the words of Paul, they were the command of God: His will! To disregard these things is to disregard God himself, and the plea of Paul to the church was to regard the Holy Spirit in you!

1. What does it mean to walk to please God? Discuss specifics we've covered so far connected to the book of Thessalonians. How do you walk to please God more and more? What does that mean, and how is it pursued?
2. How does a believer control his or her body in holiness and honor? Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies on holiness and honor. What are some practical ways that believers walk in holiness and honor?
3. Why does the Lord emphasize sexual immorality so much as a threat to sanctification in a believer's life? What is sexual immorality? What is lust? What is impurity? Are these struggles for believers? Why, or why not? How do we abstain and flee from these things?
4. What does the presence of the Holy Spirit have to do with overcoming sexual immorality and with growing in sanctification in your life? Who are you regarding today: The flesh or the Spirit? Discuss, and pray for one another.



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The command of God is to love one another (9-12).

- *Live quietly (11).*
- *Mind your own affairs (11).*
- *Work with your hands (11).*
- *Walk properly before outsiders (12).*
- *Be dependent on no one (12).*

The second revelation was the reminder of God's command to love one another. Paul urged the Thessalonians to love each other. This was critical to their oneness in Christ and their witness for Christ. Again, the Lord didn't leave us to try to figure out what loving one another looks like, instead, he provided us with a list of simple characteristics that reflect a life of faithfulness to the Lord and love for one another. First, live quietly. Our goal isn't to be heard above everyone else and seen before anyone else. Our goal isn't to put ourselves out there and make a name for ourselves. Our goal is to live in a manner that's above reproach and to draw any attention we have to gain to the Lord and not to ourselves. Second, mind your own affairs. This isn't about keeping to ourselves as much as it's about taking care of our own business. One way we love one another is to take care of our own business so that others don't have to take care of it for us. Third, work with your hands. In other words, use what the Lord has given you to do work that God has created you to do in this world. Loving others means not being lazy and dependent but working to be productive and helpful. Fourth, walk properly before outsiders. This command is critical to our witness and connected to our love for the lost outside of the church. Believers must walk in a way that's different and reflects God. Our behavior before outsiders (those outside of the church) must be proper: Matching the message of the gospel that we proclaim. Fifth, be dependent on no one. The principle again is to do all we can to not be a burden on others. There will always be situations where dependency is required: Age related, health related, etc., and there is biblical responsibility in familial relationships (parents to young children and children to aging parents). However, in love for others, we don't want sinfulness and selfishness to make our needs become someone else's burden. This is not loving.

1. Where in the New Testament does Jesus command us to love one another? Research, and discuss. Why is this command so important?
2. In verse 11, there are three characteristics that Paul shares. What are they? Discuss what these things look like in life today. How do these things reflect love for one another in the church? Are you doing these things, or do you struggle with any of these? Share, and encourage one another.
3. In verse 12, there are two characteristics that Paul shares. What are they? Discuss what these things look like in life today. How do these things reflect love for one another in the church as well as an extension of that love to others outside of the church? Are you doing these things, or do you struggle with any of these? Share, and encourage one another.
4. How can your group help each other weekly to grow in God's will and follow God's command as revealed in this lesson today?