

1 Thessalonians 4 New American Standard Bible

Sanctification and Love

Finally then, brothers *and sisters*, we request and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received *instruction* from us as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel *even* more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you by *the authority of* the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ *and* that no one violate the rights and take advantage of his brother *or sister* in the matter, because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you previously and solemnly warned *you*. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in sanctification. ⁸ Therefore, the one who rejects *this* is not rejecting man, but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. ⁹ Now as to the love of the brothers *and sisters*, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; ¹⁰ for indeed you practice it toward all the brothers *and sisters* who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers *and sisters*, to excel *even* more, ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own *business* and work with your hands, just as we instructed you, ¹² so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

Those Who Died in Christ

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers *and sisters*, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest *of mankind do*, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose *from the dead*, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. ¹⁵ For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Pauls Observations and insights

1. 'Finally' says Paul. Life is full of endings, proverbs chapter 3 tells us there is a time for everything that happens in life.
2. So we should embrace everything to its fullest measure in whatever we do. Do it with everything you have got.
3. Teaching is to reveal truth to those who don't know, admonish is to encourage those who do know the truth to do it.
4. Paul wants the Thessalonian church to implement the truth they now know, the things he has already revealed.
5. How much do you know that is true and have yet to still apply?
6. Paul says these believers are actually doing the walk well, but he wants them to do even more.
7. There is a danger of being driven by a fat controller like the one we see in Thomas the Tank Engine, who is never satisfied and always wants more from you, like barking dogs.
8. Paul uses a word - 'sanctification' it means letting go of the old ways and applying God's new ways to your life.
9. Jesus put it like this 'we need to deny self, take up our cross daily and live for God'.
10. I have found over the years that change in who we are takes place first in our hearts before it takes place in our lives.
11. Heart change happens when we surrender to God's word and God's ways.
12. Taking charge of our bodies and what it does happens when we let the Holy Spirit teach our spirit God's ways, so that we trust and believe God more than we do ourselves.
13. Being empowered in our spirit with God's truth we then set about bringing change to our soul, our mind, our emotions and our will, so that we think right, we feel right and we do right.
14. Although God reaches towards us while we are sinners, He loves us too much to leave us there. His intention is to rid us of our old ways of life so that we take up His ways.
15. He is a Holy God and He is making for Himself a Holy people who reflect His character.
16. We should never think that God wants to be with unholy beings, we must understand He wants to make us holy. He does that through the gift of His Son.
17. God gave up the best that He had to save us from all that is evil, to not change is to insult the cost of the salvation He provided.
18. The Holy Spirit in us is how we change when He brings us to conviction of the truth.

19. Paul preached to the Thessalonians regarding their love for all the saints, they had held each other in high regard. He says they must have been taught by God.
20. Being taught by God is letting the Holy Spirit teach your spirit God's ways.
21. When we try to change by any other means, it will not be real change, but suppression or denial.
22. Having a right attitude about the life we have is important as it lays a foundation for real community in society.
23. To work is a gift of God, it enhances our well-being and gives us the opportunity to express ourselves. Finding the right job is important because you will be doing it for a long time.
24. People who won't work are lazy and it does not reflect the character of God.
25. Paul uses a term 'those who are asleep', he is talking about people who have died. There are two worlds, the natural and the spiritual, they exist alongside each other, a Christian never dies they just leave the natural and exist in the spiritual.
26. Those who have no hope, Paul is talking about everyone who dies without repentance to God, those who have not received the gift of God – Jesus, those who have not received the gift of forgiveness and sanctification – the Holy Spirit.
27. When a Christian dies there is a sadness at the loss of connection but there is no grief because they are now in the presence of God almighty.
28. When a non-Christian dies there is the sadness at the loss of connection but there is grief that there eternal existence is separation from God.
29. Jesus dying and rising again defeated death and sin, that victory released us from the consequences of all the wrong we have ever done.
30. As forgiven sinners when Jesus comes again we will be with Him if we have died (fallen asleep).
31. To have no hope is to know it is too late to receive.
32. If we are still alive when Jesus comes, He is coming to get us to be with Him in eternity.
33. The word 'Maranatha' – 'come Lord Jesus, come' means Jesus is coming again to bring us to the Father.
34. Paul says 'the angel will shout and He will come, the trumpet will blast and the dead in Christ will rise first, then all those alive will rise and meet Him in the air. We will always be with the Lord, never again to be apart, Paul wants this truth to comfort you.