

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4

August 17, 2025

1. The first 3 chapters Paul expresses his love and appreciation to the church
 - a. He also commends them for the love they have
 - i. For each other
 - ii. And for Christians travelling through Thessalonica from other places
 - b. Before he left for Athens, he left them with instructions
 - i. How they should conduct themselves
 1. personally
 2. And as a collective body / church

Vs. 1 *"Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living."*

2. In this chapter Paul is attempting to supply what is lacking in their faith

2:10

"Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith."

- a. The next two chapters he gives additional instructions
- b. Supplemental instruction to what Timothy had told them

3. **Vs. 3-7**

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life."

- a. The word 'sanctified' is the same root word used in Chapter 3:11 for 'holy'
 - i. The difference is the word 'holy' in Chapter 3 describes a lifestyle.
 - ii. Whereas the word here means "to be made holy" or holiness is a **process** that you are going through.
- b. This process Paul is describing specifically relates to Sexual Purity
- c. Greek word for Sexual immorality is
 - i. **Porneia**
 - ii. Get the words for:
 1. Pornography
 2. Prostitute
 - iii. Any form of sex or sexual activity outside the boundaries of marriage
 1. Premarital sex
 2. Adultery

3. Masturbation
4. Phone sex
5. Snuggling, cuddling

Hebrews 13:4

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

6. Marriage, the marriage bed, and sexual activity are sacred
 - a. A violation of anything holy
 - b. is an act of treason before God
 - c. this will come before God as He **judges** the perpetrators
- d. The word: ‘avoid’ **poorly** translated
 - i. **ἀπέχομαι: a-pecho-mai**
 1. Abstain,
 2. to sever ties with,
 - e. *“holy and honorable”*
 - i. **Holy** here is the noun form
 - ii. It is a state of being/ a matter of fact
 1. what you are and
 2. not a process of becoming
 - iii. **Honorable:** τιμή - timē - means
 1. the **“worth”** one ascribes to a person
 - a. the value of a thing,
 - b. worthy of the purchase price.
 - f. When someone violates this holy instruction that God has instituted
 - i. **Not only** do they violate God
 - ii. They violate their brother or sister

Vs. 6 *“that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him”*

 1. It becomes a family matter
 2. Hurts the church
 - g. Just as God has called us
 - i. to become disciples
 - ii. To follow Jesus
 - iii. To learn from the scriptures
 - iv. To pray
 - v. To love the brotherhood/church

- vi. God has called us to be holy.
 - 1. To be set apart for Him
 - 2. To be his children
- 4. **Vs. 8** *“Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.”*
 - a. To be impure is to reject God
 - b. It’s not a man thing
 - c. It’s a God thing
 - d. It’s a contamination of the Holy Spirit that lives within us
- 5. **Vs. 4:9–10**

“Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.”

 - a. This is a continuation of Paul’s encouragement
 - b. carried over from the first 3 chapters
 - c. Once again, he encourages them to continue to grow in their love for each other
- 6. **Vs. 11-12** *“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”*
 - a. Ambition – φιλοτιμέομαι – philo-timeo-mai
 - i. Philo – beloved, dear, friendly
 - ii. Tim-ē; a valuing, a price:—honor, marks of respect, precious valued price,
 - iii. to love or seek after honor, aspire
 - b. Quiet life - ἡσυχάζω hē-su-chazō;
 - i. to be still, be silent
 - ii. means quiet in the sense of restfulness - peaceful
 - iii. as opposed to talkativeness
 - iv. Paul was telling the Thessalonians to be **less frantic**,
 - v. **Not** less exuberant.
 - 1. A person who is restless and talkative
 - a. Is a bother to other people
 - b. as well as somewhat distracted
 - c. from his own walk with God
 - c. Second, Paul recommended *“minding one’s **own business**.”*
 - i. The connection with love for the brethren is obvious

1. Prov 25:17

*“Seldom set foot in your neighbor’s house—
too much of you, and he will hate you.”*

d. Thirdly, *“Work with your hands”*

i. a self-supporting person is not a burden to others.

ii. Paul himself set the example by working **with** his **hands** when he was in Thessalonica (**1 Thes. 2:9**)

7. This seems to be **a real problem in this church**. Something that Paul was aware of when he first visited Thessalonica.

a. After receiving Timothy’s report,

i. this became increasingly obvious

ii. as need that had to be addressed

b. Which Paul writes about in his second letter:

2 Thessalonians 3:6–15

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”

We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.”

PAUL SHIFTS GEARS NOW

1 Thessalonians 4:13

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.”

8. A concern for the church about “what happens to someone once they die.”

a. With the onslaught of persecution and

b. the fore-warning that more is likely to come

c. The threat of dying was a concern for the church

d. Certainly, word has circulated about **Christians being killed**

i. in other parts of the Roman Empire

- ii. The reign of Caligula and Claudius

1 Thessalonians 4:14

"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."

- 9. Paul here reminds them of the basis for which their faith was based on.
 - a. Whenever doubts cross my mind, I always refer back to the fundamentals of my faith.
 - i. I believe Jesus was real
 - ii. I believe he fulfilled all the OT scriptures predicting the 'Messiah'
 - iii. He died on the cross for my sins
 - iv. He rose from the dead as evidence that he was who he said he was
 - b. These truths ground me against any **doubts Satan puts in my head**
 - c. Likewise, Paul does the same with the Thessalonian church

1 Thessalonians 4:15

"According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep."

- 10. When Paul says that *"according to the Lord's own words"*

- a. Where did he hear that?

2 Corinthians 12:1–4

"I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell."

- b. The future and what happens once we die
 - i. Words from Jesus
 - ii. **Not** his personal opinion
- c. It was Paul's belief that Jesus' coming was
 - i. imminent
 - ii. going to come during his lifetime
 - iii. That was how it was communicated to Thessalonians
 - iv. He references this in each of the previous 3 chapters

1. 1 Thess 1:10

2. 1 Thess 2:19

3. 1 Thess 3:13

- d. Those who have already died
 - i. Have been asleep

- ii. Not fully dead

Luke 23:43

“Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

2 Corinthians 12:4

“was caught up to paradise.”

Revelation 2:7

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

- e. **Paradise** – Greek word ‘para-deisos’ – meaning orchard, garden

1 Samuel 28:8–15

“So, Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. “Consult a spirit for me,” he said, “and bring up for me the one I name.”

But the woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?”

Saul swore to her by the LORD, “As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this.”

Then the woman asked, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” “Bring up Samuel,” he said.

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!” The king said to her, “Don’t be afraid. What do you see?”

The woman said, “I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.” “What does he look like?” he asked. “An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?”

Luke 9:28–31

“About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.”

MY INTERPRETATION OF THIS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE:

- a. We fall asleep

11. PARADISE is like a dream world of the Garden of Eden

- a. A PLACE where we go “**fully conscious**” in our sleep
- b. It’s **not** heaven
- c. We stay there until Jesus returns
- d. Those who are asleep will rise to be with God in heaven

12. **HADES** is also a dream world

- a. Unlike the Garden of Eden
- b. It is a place of suffering and agony

Luke 16:19–24

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So, he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’”

1 Peter 3:18–20

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.”

13. When Jesus returns, Paul tells us what will happen:

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

“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. 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.”

- a. Judgment Day will arrive
- b. Jesus will come **“with thunder!!!”**
 - i. a loud command from the Archangel’s voice
 - ii. The trumpet call of God

14. **Both** those in ‘PARADISE’ and those in “HELL” will **rise**

Revelation 20:11–13

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

15. To those in ‘HELL’ the scripture says:

Revelation 20:14–15

“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the

lake of fire. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

- a. The Devil
- b. And those 'in hell' will be destroyed
- c. The **second death** or
- d. the **final death**.

16. To those in '**PARADISE**' the scripture says:

- a. **1 Thess 4:17** says that
 - i. the Lord Jesus will meet us in the air
 - ii. and accompany us to the Judgment Seat
 - iii. He will be our advocate
 - iv. Because we belong to him

1 Corinthians 15:50–54

"I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

- b. Paul says: at the trumpet sound announcing Jesus' return
 - i. *"We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed."*
 - ii. He is anticipating that Jesus
 - 1. would come during their lifetime
 - 2. so, some won't actually die (sleep)
 - iii. But, immediately taken up with Jesus
- c. Upon our redemption
 - i. **All** will be changed
 - ii. We will be clothed with immortality

Revelation 21:1–4

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

- a. They will enter the very place where God is
- b. Heaven
- c. Eternity

1 Thessalonians 4:18

“Therefore encourage each other with these words.”

17. Are you encouraged about these words?

- a. Doesn't this inspire you
- b. When you get persecuted
 - i. Remember these words
 - ii. There will be a Judgment Day
 - iii. We will be rewarded for
 - 1. our perseverance
 - 2. and faith

18. Every book I autograph, I quote **Revelation 22:20** – *“Come, Lord Jesus”*