

1 THESSALONIANS

4:1-18 | STUDY GUIDE

Self Control

1 THESSALONIANS 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." (ESV)

- "Finally" = λοιπός
 - Transition word
 - Paul is now moving into more instructional tone
 - This is not a conclusion

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-4, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor..." (ESV)

- Sexual morality was not a virtue emphasized in ancient Rome
 - Fertility cults from ancient Macedonian cultures as well as Greek and Roman were rampant
 - Chastity was expected of women, but not men
 - "...not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God."
 - Basically: we should look different.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:7, "For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness." (ESV)

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- It's not about restriction, but rather for freedom.
- Paul points to the emptiness of a life lived for "instant gratification"
 - He encourages the believers that they are meant for more

1 THESSALONIANS 4:12, "...so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one." (ESV)

- Christianity is most disruptive when Christians strive for peace.
 - When we center our lives on things of God, a supernatural peace invades; a peace that is not reliant on happiness.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:15, "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep." (ESV)

- These Christians are facing severe persecution—death is a very real reality they're facing.
- Apparently, these Christians feared for those who had died before Jesus returns—as though they would miss eternity.
 - Paul clarifies that death for a believer is only temporary

1 THESSALONIANS 4:17, "Then we who are alive, who are left, 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." (ESV)

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- This assurance is back by what Paul states in verse 14: “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.”
 - Though Paul’s verbiage softens death for Christians with “sleep,” Paul makes clear that Jesus defeated death in all its grim reality.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Fant, Clyde E, and Mitchell G Reddish, A Guide to Biblical Sites in Greece and Turkey, Jung Unchan, A Tale of Two Churches