

## WEEK 2 – A Life Pleasing to God

### MONDAY – Paul, the Worried Spiritual Parent



**1 Thessalonians 3:1&2** *Finally, we could not bear it any longer. So, we decided to stay on alone in Athens while we sent Timothy, our brother who works with us for God in preaching the Good News about Christ. We sent him to strengthen you and help your faith.*

**1 Thessalonians 3:3** *so that none of you should turn back because of these persecutions. You yourselves know that such persecutions are part of God's will for us.*

**1 Thessalonians 3:4** *For while we were still with you, we told you ahead of time that we were going to be persecuted; and as you well know, that is exactly what happened.*

Paul expresses his parental love for the Thessalonica Christians in 2: 7 and 2: 11 and despite the prospect of having to remain alone in Athens, he sends Timothy.

Verse 3 and 4 enlighten us to the cause of their need for help; persecution of the 'when' and not of the 'if' type. Some believe that Christians shouldn't suffer afflictions; that God should teach us only by His Word and not through trials. While it is true that we can be spared a great deal of

suffering by simply obeying His Word, and He likewise wants to spare us that anguish, suffering was good enough to teach Jesus as seen in Hebrews 2: 10 "...should make Jesus perfect through suffering..." and 5: 8 "...he learned through his sufferings to be obedient ...".

God does teach the believer perseverance, obedience, how to comfort others and deeper fellowship with Jesus in trials. Romans 5: 3- 5a paints a clear path of how our trials lead to hope.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your almighty presence with us as we journey through this life. We know that You are always with us and travel alongside us; You have travelled this road Yourself in your selfless suffering on the cross. We pray for strength, peace, and endurance as we go through trials. AMEN

**Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRaFdFkOVyY>

## TUESDAY – Happiness and Encouraging Others



**1 Thessalonians 3:6** *But now when Timothy came from you to us and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you have good remembrance of us always, desiring to see us (as we also you),...*

**1 Thessalonians 3:&10** *For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sakes before our God, night and day praying exceedingly for me to see your face and to perfect the things lacking in your faith?*

Having sent Timothy to Thessalonica alone to encourage the newly formed church, which was experiencing persecution as they had been warned, Paul's happiness knows no bounds and we can learn three important aspects about truly caring for one another from him:

He shows his **joy** when he hears of their stability in the faith and commitment to **pray** for their continued spiritual growth.

**JOY:** Timothy's "good news" is the Greek word used almost always elsewhere for gospel, so it's like hearing the gospel to Paul. Their 'faith and love'; these two are the entire sum of true piety according to John Calvin and aiming at these goals "are beyond all risk of erring". According to the commentary on Bible.org, when

God's people are walking in faith and love, they are spiritually stable, and joy over someone's stability in the faith can bring encouragement when we are going through affliction.

**PRAYER:** We note Paul's fervency of prayer "night and day" by which he meant frequently and repeatedly. While "exceedingly" (or "most earnestly" in other versions), this reflects his heart, and like Paul, if we truly care for one another we will pray for others' continued spiritual growth. Bible.org notes that we shouldn't turn our fervency or earnestness in prayer into a basis that God should grant them, we need to come to Him based on the merit of Jesus and His grace, never on any worthiness in us.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your principles of faith and love and the perfect example we have in Jesus. We pray for wisdom and guidance to always be seeking the interests of others in their journey with You to encourage their faith and love, leading them to spiritual stability. AMEN

## WEDNESDAY – Sexual Immorality



**1 Thessalonians 4:1-4** *Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk, - that ye abound more and more. For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honour.*

Having received such joyous news from Timothy in Chapter 3 as to the stability of their faith in the face of afflictions they had encountered due to their belief, Paul immediately begins with encouragement to walk true to what Jesus would do and what Paul and his group displayed; reminding them that not only had they been taught the truth but also how they should walk this truth. Knowing that one of the biggest issues prevalent at that time in history was a lack of sexual morality, he addresses that first. This issue has not diminished since then, and the priority still applies. We can listen as Christianity.com comments that they (Thessalonians) knew the

Master's will and could not plead ignorance as an excuse; and further, as faith, so knowledge, is dead without practice. That the design of the Gospel is to teach everyone not only what they should **believe**, but also how they should **live**:" ...for the character of those who are in Christ Jesus is this: *They walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*". Paul did certainly not write that God forbade all sexual expression, as articulated in 1 Corinthians 7: 1-9.

### **Reflection:**

Perhaps we can ponder in what ways is it as harmful to treat all sexual activity as wrong as it is to treat no sexual activity as wrong?



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank You for the wonder of our bodies that You have created so beautifully, and You observe as we are knitted together in our mothers' womb. We pray for guidance and wisdom in our deliberations and survey of our own and other's bodies in the light of Your principles of respect and pleasure. AMEN

## THURSDAY – Sexual Purity



**1 Thessalonians 4:5-8** *not with a lustful desire, like the heathen who do not know God. In this matter, then, none of you should do wrong to other Christians or take advantage of them. We have told you this before, and we strongly warned you that the Lord will punish those who do that. God did not call us to live in immorality, but in holiness. So then, whoever rejects this teaching is not rejecting a human being, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

Continuing with his encouragement to the Thessalonians initiated in Chapter 4, Paul highlights their divine call that must make them act differently to the unbelievers around them and points out that the adulterer defrauds the unsuspecting partner and children, the fornicator, the future partner and children. Leviticus 18 points out that The Lord's Law deems the nakedness of an individual the property of their spouse and is a violation of that law if given to or taken by anyone else. Four reasons for sexual purity are found in the scriptures Thessalonians 6b-8:

1. We can know that God will punish sexual immorality.
2. We have a call, and that not to uncleanness but to holiness; it is simply inconsistent with who we are in Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians

6: 12-20 shows us that we glorify The Lord in our body and spirit.

3. By rejecting God's call, we are not rejecting man but God Himself.
4. We have been given The Holy Spirit, who empowers those willing, by His Spirit. God has given us the resources for victory, we are responsible to use those resources. (Enduringword.com)

### Reflection:

Perhaps we can ponder: if someone says, "It's my body – I can do what I want with it", then how would Paul's teaching that "God didn't call us to be immoral" challenge that statement?

Remember how different the teachings of Jesus are. Over and over, it is the most scandalized sinners, sexual included, who are drawn to Him.



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank You for the fulness of body and spirit that You have measured out to each of us. Grant us the determination, guidance and strength to remain faithful to Your call for morality in spirit, mind and body. AMEN

## FRIDAY – Quiet, hard-working example



**1 Thessalonians 4:9-12** *There is no need to write you about love for each other. You yourselves have been taught by God how you should love one another. And you have, in fact, behaved like this toward all the believers in all of Macedonia. So we beg you, our friends, to do even more. Make it your aim to live a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to earn your own living, just as we told you before. In this way you will win the respect of those who are not believers, and you will not have to depend on anyone for what you need.*

Paul sets out a strong basic set of building blocks to the Thessalonians; ones we can certainly use. He does however remind them, of the importance of not just loving one another, but continually working at it. In verse 11 he points out the need to have an ambition in life and an aspiration to lead a quiet life, one that contradicts the modern addiction to entertainment and excitement – which becomes a religion for some today:

The self is the god, the priests are the celebrities, perpetual entertainment is the prophet, and the scriptures are the tabloids, news and information programs.

The quiet life affords the time to give attention and listen to God and get to know Him better. Paul recognises the dignity and honour of work. He was a tentmaker (Acts 18: 3), and that work is God’s plan for progress of society and the Church. We fall into Satan’ snare when we expect things to always come easily, or regard God’s blessing as an opportunity for laziness. God gave us a carpenter King, fisherman apostles, and tent-making missionaries (Enduringword.com)

### **Reflection:**

In what ways are you included in God’s family not just a church “corporation”? How can you extend that to other family members you may not yet know?



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank You for the strength and wisdom of the building blocks of life that You have given us in Your Word and showed us in Jesus. We pray for a constant reminder of those principles in our everyday lives. AMEN