

Future Hope

Living for God's Pleasure in View of Christ's Coming

WEEK 4

WARM-UP

- If you have a few extra minutes before a phone call, meeting, class, or event, what do you do to pass the time?
- What is your dream job? What about it do you think you would like so much?
- Recall a friend or family member who encouraged you recently. What did he or she say?

WORD *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.* **1 THESSALONIANS 4:1**

While the first part of this letter recounts all that had happened so far, the rest focuses on instructions for the believers, especially as they waited in hope for Christ's glorious return. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy urged the church to walk in holiness, love, and peace, fueled by a desire to please God alone.

1 | Walk in God's holiness.

⁷For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. **1 THESSALONIANS 4:7-8**

(Read also **1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-6.**)

In contrast to the impure and immoral practices at that time, the Thessalonian church was to live in holiness. The authors of the letter did not mince words when explaining that the church should live pure and holy before God. In fact, those who disregard these instructions are disregarding God, who already gave believers His Holy Spirit to empower us to live a holy life. How does our culture tempt us to disregard God? Why do you think these instructions had to be so specific?

2 | Walk in God's love.

⁹Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, ¹⁰for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more . . . **1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-10**

The Thessalonian church was already an example of *brotherly love*, but Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy still reminded them to do this *more and more*. Loving others is not one event or a box we can check off our to-do list. It's something we do in obedience to God *more and more*. And as we experience God's love in greater ways, we can love others too. According to Jesus, how will the world know that we are His disciples (John 13:35)?

3 | Walk in God's peace.

¹¹. . . and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹²so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11-12

Because the Thessalonian believers thought that Christ's return was very imminent, some of them stopped working. They became idle, and were even like parasites, totally relying on others for their daily needs. Some became busybodies, minding others' business instead of their own. But, even if we are waiting for our future hope, we are called to live in peace by working and living our lives so as not to be a burden and annoyance to others. This hard work and dependence on God becomes a testimony to those who don't know Him yet. How have you learned to apply the instructions in this passage to your own life?

APPLICATION

- Knowing that Christ will return one day, how do you think you ought to live? What did you learn today and how will you apply it in your life?
- How can you walk in God's holiness, love, and peace? Which of the three do you need God's grace and strength for the most? Why?
- How can your life be a reflection of Christ? What's one thing you can do starting this week *so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one* (1 Thessalonians 4:12)?

