

# STANDING FIRM

Part Four: *please God*

September 24, 2023

This fall, we're studying the Apostle Paul's letters to the Thessalonians to learn how to stand firm in the Lord. Today, we're going to examine the first twelve verses in chapter four, where Paul encourages the Thessalonians to continue to live in a way that pleases God.

## **In 4:1, Paul introduces the final section in 1 Thessalonians.**

From 4:1 to the end of the body of this letter (5:22), Paul teaches the Thessalonians how to live in a way that pleases God (3:10). Paul's instructions in chapters 4 & 5 were not intended to correct the Thessalonians but to encourage them to keep striving to please God.

## **In 4:3-12, Paul gives the Thessalonians two ways to please God.**

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Paul instructs the Thessalonians to stay away from sexual sin. Vs. 3-8**

*What is sexual sin?*

- Sexual sin is any sexual thoughts and actions outside God's will.

*What is God's will for sex?*

- The Bible says God created sex for a husband and his wife (Mark 10:6-9).

God created sex for three reasons: to give husbands and wives pleasure, to allow them to procreate, and to promote oneness in their relationship. So, God considers any sexual thoughts or actions outside of the husband-and-wife relationship to be immoral, and He promises to judge those who engage in sexual immorality (Col. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 6:18-19; 7:1-5; Eph. 5:3; Heb. 13:4).

*What do you need to know to stay away from sexual sin?*

- You must submit to the will of God. Vs. 3

*What does it mean to submit to God's will?* It means presenting yourself to God as a living sacrifice and transforming your wrong beliefs, values, thoughts, and feelings using the Word of God (Romans 12:1-2).

- You must take responsibility for controlling your body. Vs. 4

The Apostle Paul, in several other letters, makes it plain that we must learn to submit to the desires of the Holy Spirit instead of the desires of our flesh (Galatians 5:16; Eph. 5:17-18).

- You must not sin habitually. Vs. 5

A Christian is not supposed to be controlled by their fleshly desires like a person who does not know God. A Christian is supposed to be controlled by the Holy Spirit of God (Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5-10; 1 John 3:9-10)!

- You must not take advantage of others. Vs. 6a

Christians are not to take advantage sexually of other believers. Believers should never be stumbling blocks for fellow believers (Matt. 5:23-24; Romans 14:13; 1 Cor. 10:32-33; Col. 2:18).

- You must fear the Lord. Vs. 6b-8

*After he instructs the Thessalonians not to engage in sexual sin...*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> – Paul instructs the Thessalonians to excel at loving others. Vs. 9-12**

*What do you need to do to increase your love for others?*

- Live a quiet life. Vs. 11a

*“Live a quiet life”* does not mean to be silent. It means to rest in the Lord (Psalm 37:7; 2 Thes. 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:2, 11). People who rest in the Lord do not stress out everyone around them.

- Mind your own business. Vs. 11b

*“Mind your own business”* means not to be a busybody who meddles in everyone’s business (2 Thess 3:11-12).

- Work with your hands. Vs. 11c-12

*“Work with your hands”* means to be self-supported. Self-supported people do not burden others (1 Thess. 2:9).

### ***Takeaways...***

1. God wants us to live in a way that pleases Him.
2. To please God, we must stay away from sexual sin and keep loving others.
3. We must listen to the Holy Spirit instead of our flesh to stay away from sexual sin and keep loving others.