

I THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

V. PAUL'S EXHORTATIONS TO THE THESSALONIANS (4:1-12)

- A. Were for them to have a walk that would abound more and more in pleasing God (1-8).
1. Such a walk involved following the Lord's commands (1-2). This is what Paul and his fellow-workers had given the Thessalonian believers .
  2. Such a walk Involved conducting themselves properly in sensual matters (3-8).
    - a. God's will in such matters was that they should abstain from fornication. This was also their sanctification or a thing from which they must be "set apart". There can be no pleasing God when a Christian's walk involves fornication because that is against God's will (3).
    - b. God's will in this matter was for them to know how to possess their vessels in sanctification and honor (4-5). Note this meant they were not to conduct themselves like the unsaved using their bodies in the lust of sensuality.
    - c. God's will in these matters was that no man defraud his brother in not "**any**" but "**the**" matter(6) . The defrauding or wronging a brother meant having his wife through a yieldedness to sensual lust and covetousness. Paul said the Lord will avenge those who do so.
    - d. The reason for conducting themselves properly in these matters was related to God's call for them. He had called them to a holy life not an unclean life.
- e. Paul said he therefore that "**despiset**" or rather "**rejecteth**" this counsel was not rejecting the message of men but God whose will they had made known by the Holy Spirit (8).
- B. Were for them to have a love that would increase more and more toward the Brethren (9-10).

1. Paul said this is something that you already know - to love the brethren - because God has taught you that ( 9 ) .

2. From what Paul says here about their love for the brethren in all Macedonia, we see that their love was not confined to some little group or even their own church folks (10). Note their exhortation was not to stop or remain the same but to increase more and more.

C. Were for them to have a good testimony before those unsaved (11,12)

1. To have a good testimony meant they needed to study to be quiet. In other words they needed to be "**ambitious**" for a quiet and peaceful life which would magnify Christ rather than trying to keep up with the ambitions of the world. Note I Tim. 2:2; Phil. 1:20.
2. To have a good testimony meant they needed to do their own business. This means to stay out of the affairs of others. The Christian cannot have a good testimony if he goes about as a busy-body trying to attend to other people's business. Most who do, don't take care of their own! We all have enough business of our own to Keep us busy if we will do it.
3. To have a good testimony meant they had to work with their own hands. There was no doubt a misunderstanding among the Thessalonians about Christ's return. A number of them thought because of their trials they were in the tribulation, so they had quit their jobs and were waiting for the coming of the Lord. These were then living off others in the Church. To work is what Paul had commanded them (II Thes. 3:10). That this is necessary for a good testimony is substantiated in Col. 3:22-25; 4:5.
4. Note the reason for having a quiet life, tending to one's own business and working with his own hands is so the Christian might walk, honestly not "**toward**" but "**face to face with**" the unsaved.(12). Another reason is so he won't be lacking. In other words he'll be able to provide for his own.
5. This exhortation to have a good testimony cannot be over-emphasized. Lack of a good testimony before the unsaved is no doubt one of the biggest hindrances to one's own church and the work of the Lord. When Christians can't honestly face those unsaved great detriment is done. How many are there who hold the excuse of hypocrites in the churches as their reason for not responding to the claims of Christ?