

1 Thessalonians 4:1 -12

Making Sure We are Prepared for the Rapture

“Paul transitions into the heart of his letter by providing the Thessalonians with a series of exhortations... Already you can observe in Paul’s letter that for him Christianity means something. Implicit in his teaching is his conviction that an external transformation is the evidence of an internal regeneration. Stated another way, it’s one thing to say that you are saved, but the proof of your salvation will be revealed by the way you live (James 2:14-17). This, of course, is one of the main reasons for Paul’s rejoicing over Timothy’s report. The Thessalonians’ conduct pointed in the genuineness of their faith (1:9). As Paul begins the second half of his letter, he will return to this theme repeatedly.

Thus Paul turns his attention toward the Thessalonian’s continued spiritual growth. In essence, he is challenging them to continue building their lives on a theological foundation. God’s truth touches every key on the keyboard of your life. When you allow God to speak into your life, your life will be different. “ Howell

I. *“Progressive sanctification takes place over a lifetime and in all aspects of our lives. It is ultimately a work of God in our hearts. It also requires us to actively obey God, abiding in Christ and willingly putting our sin to death to instead live out the life He has given us (John 15:1–11; Ephesians 4:17–32). We may give up sinful habits in one area. Then God may work on another area in our lives. Then perhaps return and do even deeper work in that first area.*

Our job in sanctification is to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit and be obedient to the things we know of God. When we sin, we seek His forgiveness (1 John 1:9), knowing that we are already secure in Christ. We also ask Him to continually renew and refine us. We long to be molded into His image to the praise of His glory. God is the one who does the work of sanctification. It is only by His grace and through His power that we can become righteous and be truly pleasing to our Father. Second Corinthians 3:18 describes progressive sanctification well: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." compellingtruth.org

1 Thess. 4:1-3a

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Phil. 3:12

1 Thess. 9:9-10

Eph. 1:4-5

James 1:22-25

1 Thess. 2:19-20

1 Cor. 6:9-11

1 Thess. 3:12-13

John 15:1-4

Peripateō = to walk, to make one’s way, progress; to make due use of opportunities.
Hebrew for, to live, to regulate one’s life, to conduct one’s self, to pass one’s life

ἁγιασμός* *hagiasmós, consecration, purification, the effect of consecration, sanctification of heart and life.

II. We have been called to live our positional standing of holiness before God based on the faith, love and hope we've been given through Christ. Therefore, it is extremely important that we understand what holiness is. It's our responsibility to do so in order to please God. *God's holiness pervades His entire being and shapes all His attributes. His love is a holy love, His mercy is holy mercy, and even His anger and wrath are holy anger and holy wrath. These concepts are difficult for humans to grasp, just as God is difficult for us to understand in His entirety... what does it mean for us to be holy?... As believers, we need to be "set apart" from the world unto the Lord. We need to be living by God's standards, not the world's. God isn't calling us to be perfect, but to be distinct from the world. First Peter 2:9 describes believers as "a holy nation." It is a fact! We are separated from the world; we need to live out that reality in our day-to-day lives, which Peter tells us how to do in 1 Peter 1:13-16.* gotquestons.org

Within the importance of living a holy life pleasing to the Lord, is the understanding that in so doing, we keep ourselves sensitive to the fact that we, at any moment, could be in His presence either through the rapture or upon our death. We live in the tension and the hope, of His coming. It's going to happen! That's why the Apostle John says, *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.* 1 Jn. 2:28

1 Thess. 4:3b-8

1 Cor. 6:18

2 Peter 1:3-4

1 Peter 1:13-16 *"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"*

III. Paul felt it necessary to remind the Thessalonian believers to keep on loving one another more and more. It was a good reminder knowing how the pressure they were under to live godly lives in a godless, hateful, divisive world could cause their love to grow indifferent toward one another if they were not careful. It's a good reminder for us too, as we see worldly people, devoid of the Spirit causing divisions through its progressive woke agenda meant to destroy the moral fiber of the family, the church and our great nation. In an indirect way, Paul also exhorted them to not lash out at those who were persecuting them because it could turn people off to their need for the gospel. Paul's point in giving the directives of leading a quiet life, minding our own business, and working with our hands is meant to show the disquieted, in your face political and social opportunists, as well as others, that we will not be shaken from standing firm in the faith. The opposite, is to be shaken, lash out, invite persecution, or cause unnecessary trouble by how we respond to the culture and its ways. It doesn't mean that we don't speak out or take a stand against immorality, we must, but only through the wisdom that the truth of God's Word provides.

1 Thess. 4:9-12

Jude Vss. 17-21

φιλαδέλφια philadelphia, love of brothers or sisters, brotherly love, in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren.

ἀγαπάω agapáō, to love in a social or moral sense. i.e., to look out for the better interests of others.

"you yourselves have been taught by God" This unusual expression is used only here in the New Testament and conveys the idea of an innate knowledge made available by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit." Howell