

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **How to Walk Pleasing to the Lord 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 Part 4**

These last several weeks as we have been examining **1 Thess. 4:1-12** we have been considering how we can walk pleasing to the Lord. And the very first subject that Paul tackles is the subject of purity in **VV. 3-8**. In addressing this subject Paul gives us three different commands.

The first command was “**abstain from all sexual immorality.**” We saw this clearly stated in **V.3**. The word “**immorality**” is the word “**PORNEIA**.” This is a very broad term that refers to any sexual activity with anyone other than your spouse. This certainly would include “**adultery**” which is extramarital sexual encounters. And it would also include “**fornication**” which is premarital sexual encounters. When we considered this particular command we took some time to give some suggestions to married people on how they might avoid falling into this sin.

The second command was “**that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.**” The word “**vessel**” is the word “**SKEUOS**.” This word can either refer to a “**wife**” or to our “**physical body**.” The interpretation which is supported by the NIV translation would be “**body**.” If we are going to abstain from “**sexual immorality**” each of us certainly must know how to “**possess his own body in sanctification and honor.**”

The third command was “**that no man transgress and defraud his brother in this matter.**” Sexual sin is not done in a vacuum. It is a sin against another person. And as such if we go beyond the bonds of what is right and we transgress in this area of sexual immorality we have defrauded our brother. We have defrauded them in the sense that we have desired or sought for something that was not ours to take or theirs to give.

For us to sin against our brother in this matter of sexual transgression we saw last week is no small matter. The verse goes to explain why, “**because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.**”

Paul will now go on to another subject that is also very important if we are going to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord. We will be moving on to a subject that we are certainly not unfamiliar with. **IF WE ARE TO WALK PLEASING TO THE LORD WE MUST LEARN TO WALK IN LOVE.**

#### WALK IN LOVE

Let us read **VV. 9-10** “**Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another (10) for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.**”

Paul is certainly moving on to another subject which we see when he uses the words in **V. 9** “**Now as to.**” But though this is a new subject it very naturally flows from the subject of sexual immorality.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

As I mentioned last week sex out of Marriage is never an act of giving. It is an act of taking. Whether that is on the part of the girl or the boy. Whether that is on the part of the man or the woman. They are not doing what they do in order to serve but to be served. And if there is any question about this we now come to **V.9** and Paul says, **“Now as to love of the brethren.”** Paul is drawing a contrast between what we are to avoid in **VV. 3-8** with what we are to embrace in **VV. 9-12.** And these two things are clearly poles apart.

And what does Paul say concerning **“love?”**. He says, **“you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another (10) for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.”**

Paul reemphasizes, by this statement, how impressed he is with the Thessalonians in this area of their love for the brethren not only in Thessalonica but throughout Macedonia. Hopefully you remember how Paul began the Epistle. In **1 Thess. 1:2-3.** in his introductory comments he said concerning the Thessalonians **“We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; (3) constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love.”** But even though they were already excellent in this area of love for the brethren, Paul was not satisfied. We find him praying for them that they might continue to **“increase and abound in love for one another”** And not just for one another but **“for all men.”** in **1 Thess. 3:12.** Now we see Paul again acknowledging how well they are doing in this area of love but again expressing his desire to see them grow even more. He does this not by a prayer as he does in **1 Thess. 3:12** but rather through direct exhortation calling them to **“excel still more.”**

We can never focus too much on loving others and certainly we cannot focus too much on loving the brethren. And even though as a church we are doing well we can still do better.

If you are here this morning and find yourself only able to attend church sporadically I would challenge you to bring this sporadic attendance to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to give you whatever grace that would be necessary to attend more regularly and even to arrive early that you might be able to visit. It might be that you simply need the grace to get your priorities in line, it might be that you need the grace to find additional physical strength, it might be that you need grace to get a new work schedule no matter what the grace you might personally need make this your prayer. Why? As a demonstration of your love for the brethren.

If you are here this morning and are a regular attender but have not found your way into one of our growth groups I would challenge you to bring this lack of involvement before the Lord in prayer and ask Him to give you the grace that would be necessary to get involved. It might be that you simply need the grace to get your priorities in line. It might be that you simply need the grace to find additional strength. It might be that you simply need to get a new work schedule. No matter what the grace you might personally need make this your prayer. Why? As an act of love for the brethren.

It might be that you are here this morning and you are a regular attender on Sat/Sun. and also an active member of a growth group but you know that you have more that you could give in terms of time, talents, and treasures. I would challenge you to bring this perceived shortcoming before the

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

Lord and ask Him to give you the grace necessary to make the changes that you feel He would have you to make. Why? As an act of love for the brethren.

We are doing well as a church in these matters but we can do better. How hopeful am I that we will continue to grow in this area of love? I am extremely hopeful. I am extremely hopeful because of the extraordinary and powerful teaching that you are receiving. Certainly I am not speaking of myself I am speaking of another. Let us read **V.9** again “**Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.**” If you are truly born again, if you truly are a part of God’s family you cannot help but grow in this area because the Lord is your teacher.

How does the Lord do this? He does this through the Holy Spirit. **Romans 5:5** tells us that the “**love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit.**” Someone might ask, “What if a Christian does not love? This is impossible. Christians will love Christians.

**1 John 2:9-10** “**The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. (11) But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.**”

**1 John 3:14** “**We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.**”

**1 John 4:7-8** “**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (8) The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**”

Why am I so hopeful that we will continue to increase and abound in love? Why am I so confident that we will excel still more? It is because Christians are taught by the Lord to love one another. I am confident in the Lord that if you are here this evening/morning and are truly a born again Christian that you will not be satisfied with sporadic attendance, I am confident in the Lord that if you are here this evening/morning and are truly born again you will not be satisfied with regular attendance, I am confident in the Lord that if you are this evening/morning and are truly born again you will not be satisfied with wherever you might be in respect to loving the brethren. You will want to love them even more.

If we are going to walk pleasing to the Lord not only do we need to walk in sexual purity but we must walk in love. HOW ELSE SHOULD WE WALK?

### IN INTEGRITY

Let us look at **V. 11-12** “**and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you. (12) so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.**” Not only should our love express itself to the church but also to the world in behaving properly toward them. And how should that be?

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

Paul has an answer to that question. And his answer contains three specific instructions.

**“to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life”** The Greek word for “ambition” (PHILOTIMENEOMAI) acquired the sense of “to seek restlessly after one’s objective.” Or in other words Paul is telling the Thessalonians to seek restlessly to be quite.”

Let me ask you a question on the basis of what Paul clearly states in this passage. Should Christians be involved in stirring up trouble? The answer would have to be “absolutely not.” Wherever we might see a conflict taking place in the world hopefully the one person you will not find in the middle of it would be a Christian. A Christian is to seek restlessly after the objective of leading a quiet life and certainly that would include avoiding conflict.

I have shared with you in the past and will continue to share with you that I am afraid for the Church. I believe that the church of Christ in the 20th century is becoming much more militant in respect to issues that they have no business being a part of. In fact they are at times not only found involved in the conflict but they are in fact creating the conflict.

The church is not here to clean up the fish pond. Or in other words the church is not here to make sinners act better. If we are not here for that then why is the church here? We are here to fish fish. In other words we are to bring the light of the gospel of Christ into the world that people might be saved. This is the work of the church. And if we allow ourselves to be embroiled in any conflict that is not the direct result of sharing the Gospel then we violated I believe the truth that Paul lays down in this passage.

The only fishpond that we should be seeking to clean up is our own and that is Paul’s point. Look at what Paul says next **“and attend to your own business, and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; (12) so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.”**