

Study Notes for 1 Thessalonians 4: (Part 1) :1-12

As always, begin by reading 4:1-12 aloud to get a sense for what Paul is saying to the Thessalonians.

- In **verses 1 and 2** Paul mentions the instructions that had been given to the Thessalonians while Paul and his team were with them. According to **verse 3** what is the main topic of that instruction?
- In **verse 2** the word "instruction" was often used by the Greeks in a military context for the commands given by an officer to his men. What does that tell you about the importance of Paul's communication?
- Paul tells the believers that God's will for their sanctification. The word (synonymous with "holy") literally means "set apart" as belonging to God and exclusively for His use. Since we have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20) how should we view living our lives in this world?
- What is sexual immorality?
- What is God's will regarding the Christian's use of his body (4:4)?
- What does it mean to control your body in holiness and honor?
- To gain a better understanding of Paul's teachings on how the Christian is to use his body, examine the following passages: Romans 6:19, Romans 12:1, 1 Cor. 6:13-20, Phil. 1:20-24.
- Paul describes "the Gentiles" (another word for "heathen") in **verse 5** as those "who do not know God." What does "knowing God" mean?
- Explain why it is inconsistent for someone to "know God" as these passages indicate and at the same time engage in sexual immorality.
- Read **4:6**. In what ways is it possible to "wrong" a brother in regard to the issue of sexual immorality?
- In **verse 7** Paul reminds us that we've been called to holiness, or literally to live within the sphere of sanctification. This phrase conveys the thought of atmosphere. In what ways can a believer control their atmosphere so that it more reflects God's holiness?
- **Verse 8** gives a warning to believers about rejecting this warning. The word **reject** means "to hold as null and void," or "to treat with utter indifference." Read **1 Corinthians 5:11**. How does Paul tell us to respond to someone who has rejected God's warnings on sexual immorality?
- There are three different references to God in **4:6-8**. These verses indicate that each Person in the Trinity is involved in the lives of the Thessalonians. Keeping in mind that God is normally used to refer to the Father while Lord normally is used for Jesus Christ, summarize how each Person of the Trinity relates to Paul's command about holy living.
 - Jesus Christ (4:6)
 - The Father (4:7)
 - The Holy Spirit (4:8)
- What do you think Paul means when he says that the Thessalonians have been "**taught by God**" to love each other in **verse 9**?
- A present tense verb in the Greek language indicates a continuous, perpetual activity. This is the form of the word love in **verse 10**. How would it be possible continually, perpetually, and actively to love all the brothers and sisters in Macedonia? What might that look like in practice?
- What is the Apostle Paul's evangelism strategy for the people in **verses 11-12**?
- What can you do this week to love "more and more" (4:10)?

- Read **Verse 1 and verse 10**. What do the phrases "**do this more and more**" and "**do so more and more**" tell you about Paul's primary purpose in writing these instructions to the Thessalonians?