

1 Thessalonians 4

1. Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

A. Finally then,

1. Paul was a preacher. He is closing here, but he goes on for two more chapters before he stops.

B. brethren- Gr. **adelphos**

C. we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more,

1. **urge-** Gr. **erotao-** *ask, request, beg, beseech*

2. **exhort-** Gr. **parakaleo-** *to encourage*

a. The NT is based upon loving exhortation, not harsh and inflexible commands. Grace beseeches and exhorts, it does not demand.

3. **abound-** Gr. **perisseuo**

a. This is not to be accomplished by the effort of the flesh, but by a greater focus and drawing upon Christ.

D. just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.

1. **received-** Gr. **paralambano-** *to receive a transmitted message*

2. **ought-** Gr. **dei**

3. **walk-** Gr. **peripateo**

4. **please-** Gr. **aresko**

a. We know this is a walk of faith, because without faith it is impossible to please God.

2. for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

A. know- Gr. **eido-** *a full, abiding, or permanent knowledge*

B. commandments- Gr. **paraggelia-** *announcement, a proclaiming or giving a message to, a charge*

1. This is during His earthly ministry. He taught very clearly on the sin of adultery.

C. gave- Gr. **didomi**

3. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from

sexual immorality;

A. For this is the will of God,

1. will- Gr. *thelema*

a. Many are seeking what the will of God for them personally, but they are neglecting the general will for them laid out in the Bible. If you will not do the general will of God what makes you think you will walk in the specific will of God?

B. your sanctification

1. **sanctification**- Gr. *hagiasmos*- *the state of being set apart, holification*

C. that you should abstain from sexual immorality

1. **abstain**- Gr. *apechomai*- *to hold off from*

a. We are told here to abstain from sexual immorality. In the next verse we are told that we are to **KNOW** how to do it. This means that this is not something everyone knows and there is a God given way to do it. In the book of Romans we see that it is not done by fleshly will-power, but by the Spirit. [Rom. 8:4-6, 13](#)

2. **sexual immorality**- Gr. *porneia*- *adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals*

a. We get our English word porn and pornography from this Greek word. We should know who to abstain from sexual immorality of all types including pornography.

4. that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

A. **know**- Gr. *eido*- *to have full or permanent knowledge*

1. We are to KNOW how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor. This means this is not common knowledge that every person possesses. This knowing takes revelation knowledge of God's way. This way is by His Spirit and not by the energy or effort of the flesh. The way God has ordained we do this is by setting your mind on things of the Spirit, which is also called- walking in the Spirit. [Rom. 8:4-6, Gal. 5:16](#)

B. **possess**- Gr. *ktaomai*- *to possess, acquire, purchase*

1. This Greek word can mean to possess or acquire. [Luke 21:19](#), [Acts 22:28](#)

C. vessel- Gr. skeuos

1. This Greek word is used for the body and also a wife in the NT. [2 Cor. 4:7](#), [1 Pet. 3:7](#) Commentators are mixed on which Paul is referring to here. It depends on how you translate the Greek word **ptaomai**. Some translate this verse that you should know how to acquire your own wife... Some translate this that you should know how to possess your body...

2. I favor translating it that you should know how to possess your body. The word **ptaomai** is in the present tense here. You would not be constantly acquiring a wife. You would be constantly possessing your body in sanctification.

3. Also, knowing how to acquire a wife does not make much sense with this verse, however, it does accord with having to know how to possess your body in sanctification. This takes revelation knowledge to do it. The normal instinct would be to try to do it by will-power but this does not work and it is not God's way. God's way we are to do this is by the Spirit.

D. sanctification- Gr. hagasmos

1. This is the horizontal working out of our vertical righteousness and sanctification we have before God in our reborn spirit. This is for the purpose that we would be a witness and billboard for Jesus to those we come in contact with. People can't see our righteous spirit, but they can see our sanctified life!

E. honor- Gr. time

1. How do we show honor to God or others. It is by giving them our **TIME**.

2. The Gentiles did not retain God in their thinking and were given over to shameful lusts. [Rom. 1:24-28](#) If we retain God in our thinking then we will be kept in sanctification and honor.

5. not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

A. not in passion of lust,

1. **passion- Gr. pathos- an affection, passion, especially sexual, desire**

2. **lust-** Gr. **epithumia-** *strong desire*

a. We put to death the lusts of the flesh by setting our minds on the spiritual things above. [Col. 1:1-2, 5](#)

B. like the Gentiles who do not know God

1. **Gentiles-** Gr. **ethnos-** *nations*

2. **know-** Gr. **eido**

a. This lack of knowledge is a willful putting God out of their thinking and knowledge and the result of being enslaved by the lusts of the flesh. [Rom. 1:24-28](#), [Eph. 4:17-18](#)

6. that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

A. That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter,

1. **take advantage-** Gr. **huperbaino-** *overstep, "to make to go over," as, e. g., a wall or mountain; then, to overpass, to wit, certain limits, to transgress; and then to go too far*

2. **defraud-** Gr. **pleonekteo-** *to have more than another; to take advantage of; to overreach, make gain of, to get the better of*

3. **matter-** Gr. **pragma-** *a thing done, fact, deed, work, transaction, business, a commercial transaction, a matter, question, affair, a euphemism for unlawful sexual conduct*

a. Some take this to mean that one should not defraud others in **business**, which is a possible meaning of this Greek word. However, in the context Paul is saying that no one should overreach and defraud his brother in this matter brought out in verse 5- having sex with their wife.

B. because the Lord is the avenger of all such,

1. **avenger-** Gr. **ekdikos-** *one who carries out justice, one who rights a wrong*

a. One way God avenges wrong is by His law of sowing and reaping He has put in the earth. If you sow to the flesh you will reap from the flesh corruption or ruin. [Gal. 6:7](#)

b. Also, God will remove his protection off of a believer and

hand them over to Satan if they don't repent of grievous sin. We have an example of this being done to a believer in Corinth who was committing adultery with his step-mother. [1 Cor. 5](#), [Heb 13:4](#)

C. as we also forewarned you and testified.

1. forewarned- Gr. **proepo-** *to say in advance*

a. Paul was either aware of this kind of sin in the church when he was with them, or by a gift of the Spirit knew it would crop up.

2. testified- Gr. **diamarturomai**

a. Usually this word implies making statements with witnesses present.

7. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

A. For God did not call us to uncleanness,

1. call- Gr. **kaleo**

2. uncleanness- Gr. **akatharsia-** *impurity, lewdness*

a. We are called with a holy calling. [2Ti 1:9](#)

B. but in holiness

1. holiness- Gr. **hagiasmos-** *sanctification, holification*

a. We are called **in** holiness. When we were born again we were placed in the holiness of Christ. We are called to draw from that holiness through the Spirit by faith.

b. As Christ is holy, we should be holy, being branches in the vine. [1Pe 1:15](#), [John 15:5](#)

8. Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

A. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man,

1. reject[s]- Gr. **atheteo-** *to displace, set aside; to abrogate, annul, violate, swerve from; reject, condemn, nullify*

a. Some in our current "Grace Movement" reject the idea that Christians are expected to live holy lives and to avoid sexual sin. Grace however teaches us to deny ungodliness and to live

righteously. [Titus 2:12](#)

2. **man-** Gr. **anthropos**

B. but God,

1. I think the Scripture is pretty clear that it is not good thing to reject God.

C. who has also given us His Holy Spirit

1. **given-** Gr. **didomi**

2. **Holy Spirit**

a. The character of God's Spirit is in His name- the **HOLY** Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an unclean spirit. Demons are unclean spirits. Therefore demons are behind and promote sexual sin.

9. But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

A. But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you,

1. **brotherly love-** Gr. **philadelphia-** *fondness of brothers*

a. The church is one big family.

2. **need-** Gr. **echo chreia-** *have need*

3. **write-** Gr. **grapho**

a. It was good for Paul to write it because some Christians aren't listening to God's teaching.

B. for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another

1. **taught by God-** Gr. **theodidaktos**

a. Men can teach information, but only the Holy Spirit can impart revelation to the heart.

b. In the OT and during the gospels men and women were taught externally. In the NT we are taught internally by the Spirit through the Word of God. [Joh 6:45](#), [1Jn 2:27](#)

2. **love-** Gr. **agape**

a. God is love. To love someone is to express God to them.

10. and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But

we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

A. and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia

1. do- Gr. **poieo**

a. Loving others is something we do. It is not a passive internal thing just in our heart. It has tangible outworkings toward others.

2. brethren- Gr. **adelphos**

3. Macedonia

a. This is the region where Philippi and Thessalonica were.

B. But we urge you,

1. urge- Gr. **parakaleo-** *to exhort, encourage*

a. The NT is based upon loving exhortations not harsh inflexible commands and laws.

C. brethren-

D. that you increase more and more

1. increase- Gr. **perisseuo**

11. that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

A. that you also aspire to lead a quiet life,

1. aspire- Gr. **philotimeomai-** *fond or love of honor, to be actuated by love of honor, to be ambitious, to strive earnestly, make it one's aim.*
It is honorable to work with your own hands and stay out of other people's personal business.

2. lead a quiet life- Gr. **hesuchazo-** *to be still, at rest; to live peaceably, be quiet*

a. There was a problem in this church. Some were not working and were living off of handouts. They went beyond this and were just hanging around people's homes and meddling into areas they had no business meddling in.

B. to mind your own business,

1. mind own business- Gr. **prasso idiou-** *to occupy one's self with, be engaged in, busy one's self about*

C. and to work with your hands,

1. **work**- Gr. **ergon**

2. **own**

a. Some were not working and depended on other people's hands to work for them. [2Th 3:11](#) These type of people tend to be hyper-spiritual. They are too spiritual to work or they have a revelation that they don't need to work. This goes against the Word of God. [2Th 3:12](#)

3. **hands**- Gr. **cheir**

D. and we commanded you

1. **commanded**- Gr. **paraggello**- *to pass along instructions*

12. that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

A. that you may walk properly toward those who are outside,

1. **walk**- Gr. **peripateo**

2. **properly**- Gr. **euschemonos**- *having a good outward appearance, in a becoming manner, with propriety, decently, gracefully*

3. **outside**- Gr. **exo**

a. This refers to unbelievers. It is a terrible testimony to not work and live off other's people's hard work and do it in the name of the Lord!

b. It is a bad witness to the world to not to pay our bills as a Christian. This will inevitably happen if we refuse to work.

B. and that you may lack nothing.

1. **lack**- Gr. **chreia**

a. If we lack material things it is usually caused by bad stewardship and/or a lack of giving.

13. But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

A. But I do not want you to be ignorant,

1. **want**- Gr. **thelo**

2. **ignorant**- Gr. **agnoeo**

a. Whenever Paul uses this phrase in his writings it is because

they are presently ignorant about what he is talking about.

B. brethren- Gr. adelphos

1. fellow believers

C. concerning those who have fallen asleep,

1. fallen asleep- Gr. koimao

a. This phrase is only used of believers. Death for a believer is like sleep where you will rise again soon to activity. The resurrection for believers who have died is very soon. They will rise invigorated by new life!

b. The word sleep is always connected with a believer's body, not their soul or spirit. When a Christian dies their spirit and soul goes to heaven to be with Christ. The body rests until it will rise with new life in the resurrection.

D. lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

1. sorrow- Gr. lupeo

2. hope- Gr. elpis

a. There is no hope for an unbeliever who has died having rejected Jesus Christ. A believer has a living hope through Jesus who died and rose again. [1 Pet. 1:3](#) We will rise with Him!

b. We will see our loved ones again who had received Christ. What a family reunion it will be!

c. Our English word cemetery is from a Greek word which means "a sleeping place".

d. Apparently, there was a teaching going around this church that only those who were alive when Jesus came back would be resurrected and enter His kingdom reign. This brought great anxiety over those who had already died before the Lord's return. Paul debunks this in the next verse.

14. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

A. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord,

1. say- Gr. lego

2. word- Gr. logos

a. The phrase "by the word of the Lord" usually means this is something Jesus said during His earthly ministry. However, we have no record of him saying this in any of the gospels. Paul either got this from direct revelation of Jesus or from an unrecorded saying of Jesus during His earthly ministry.

B. that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep

1. alive- Gr. zao

2. remain- Gr. perileipo- *left around*

a. Hopefully I am in the generation that is the fulfillment of this verse. I would love to be alive and see the return of the Lord!

b. This Greek word which means "left around" might imply that there may not be a lot of believers left at the return of the Lord. We know that there will be a great falling away from the faith before the return of the Lord. [2 Thess. 2:3](#)

3. coming- Gr. parousia- *arrival*

4. Lord- Gr. kurios

5. precede- Gr. phthano- *come before, precede*

6. asleep- Gr. koimao

a. Here Paul plainly teaches that those who have died will be resurrected first and then those who are alive and remain will join them. To the eye this will be instantaneous however. Paul says this will happen in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.

b. Paul debunks the idea that only those who are alive when Jesus returns will enter His kingdom.

16. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

A. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout,

1. descend- Gr. katabaino- *to step down*

a. Just as He ascended from the Mount of Olives so he will descend to the same mountain.

2. **heaven-** Gr. **ouranos**

3. **shout-** Gr. **keleuma-** *a cry of incitement*

a. Jesus will shout out in excitement about coming and getting us His Church!

B. with the voice of the archangel,

1. **voice-** Gr. **phone**

2. **archangel-** Gr. **archaggelos**

a. Michael is the archangel. He is heavily involved with the nation of Israel. [Dan. 12:1](#) The rapture of the church is a demarcation in time in which God moves from working through the church in the earth, to moving to work with the nation of Israel during the Tribulation. Michael's voice will signify it is time for the focus to be on the nation of Israel during the Tribulation.

C. and with the trumpet of God

1. **trumpet-** Gr. **salpigx**

a. This is the trumpet of God. This is not the same as the trumpet blown by an angel in the book of Revelation. This trumpet Jesus will blow when he comes back for His Church. [Rev. 4:1](#) It is the trumpet of GOD. Jesus is God in the flesh.

2. **God-** Gr. **theos**

D. And the dead in Christ will rise first

1. **dead-** Gr. **nekros**

2. **in Christ**

a. This is the Church. The dead believing saints of the OT will be raised at the end of the Tribulation and all unbelievers will be resurrected at the end of the Millennium and be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment.

3. **rise-** Gr. **anistemi-** *to stand up again*

4. **first-** Gr. **proton**

a. Those believers who have died will not miss out on the Millennial reign of Jesus on the earth.

17. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in

the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

A. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

1. **alive-** Gr. **zao**

2. **remain-** Gr. **perileipo-** *to leave around*

3. **caught up-** Gr. **harpazo-** *to seize, take away by force, snatch away, to convey away suddenly, transport hastily*

a. The word rapture is not found in the New Testament but caught up is however. The word rapture comes from the Latin word, *rapturo*, which means to be caught up or away. The concept is clearly taught in the Scriptures.

b. This will end the dispensation of the church age and usher in the last seven years of Jewish time called Jacob's trouble or the Tribulation. The church was a mystery inserted in between the 69th week and 70th week of Jewish time according to Daniel's prophecy of 70 weeks. [Dan. 9:24](#) Each week stands for seven years. There still awaits seven more years of Jewish time to go before the Millennial reign of Jesus.

4. **clouds-** Gr. **nephele**

a. It will be cool to fly without the use of an airplane! We will be delivered from the fear of heights!

5. **meet-** Gr. **eis pantesis-** *unto a meeting, encounter*

a. This is one meeting I look forward to attending!

6. **air-** Gr. **aer**

B. And thus we shall always be with the Lord

1. This is a very comforting thought that forever we will be with the Lord, never to leave His sight and Him out of our sight.

18. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

A. comfort- Gr. **parakaleo-** *to encourage, exhort*

1. The saints in Thessalonica had become alarmed and troubled by teaching that those who had passed away would miss the coming of the Lord and His reign on earth. Paul brought comfort to them

through the truth. The truth will comfort us in every area when we hear it and believe it.

B. words- Gr. logos