



# The Will of God

## Series: Living in the Last Days Part 6

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 (ESV) Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. <sup>7</sup> For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup> Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. <sup>9</sup> Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, <sup>10</sup> for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, <sup>11</sup> and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, <sup>12</sup> so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

This passage a more practical part of the letter in which Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to live sanctified lives at all times and before all people. His instructions are based on the report he had received from Timothy of their being were established in their faith in Christ as well as their love for each other. (3:6)

- **Encouragement**

Notice that Paul isn't correcting them for not walking in holiness but encouraging them to continue to please God in the way they live.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 (NLT) Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. <sup>2</sup>For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

- **The will of God**

So many people throughout the years have asked the question, "what is the will of God for my life?" Most of the times we would like God to speak audibly to us, "It's my will for you to take this job", "It's my will that you marry this woman", "it's my will you buy this house".

### **What is the will of God? Our sanctification or holiness**

Notice that for emphasis Paul uses the word three times.

- Verse 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification
- Verse 4 That each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness
- Verse 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

Living a life of sanctification or holiness pleases God.

Sanctification means "holiness". Which means to be set apart unto God. The bible uses this term in two senses:

- **Positional sanctification (justification)**

Every believer when they are born again are sanctified or set apart in Christ for a holy purpose.

As humans we cannot make ourselves holy because of our sin nature; only a perfect God can make us holy. Only a perfect God can change a sinful heart.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (ESV) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(NLT) Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NLT) I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

God saved us by changing our sinful hearts to a sanctified heart after Him. He pulled us out of the kingdom of darkness into His kingdom of light and placed us under His reign. This is a new positional sanctification.

After a Christian receives saving grace, they now have a heart to seek to live a life that looks more and more like Jesus.

- **Progressive sanctification or holiness**

1 Thessalonians 4:1 (ESV) Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

Sanctification is both a gift and a demand, and those who follow Christ must turn from all that is impure and polluted, renounce the fleshly desires of the sinful nature, and honor God with their bodies.

1 Peter 1:14-16 (ESV) As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Holiness is positional but it is also progressive.

- **The will of God about the body**

In this passage Paul makes clear to the believer's in Thessalonica and to us what the will of God concerning holiness is in two important areas. How we use our bodies and how we treat His body, the members of His church.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (NLT) God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NLT) But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another.

The message is clear. The will of God is that we be morally pure and that we treat each other with love.

- **Our bodies**

I don't need to quote a lot of stats to prove the point that we have a pandemic of sexual immorality in our world today. Because of popular entertainment and the many tools available, even to the young, such as smartphones and the internet many people struggle to keep themselves from falling into the traps of the enemy when it comes to moral purity.

But this isn't new to our time. The Thessalonian believers had to deal with the pressure of culture in their time also.

Granted, they didn't have smart phones and the internet to tempt them. But they did live in a sexually promiscuous culture, where the goddess Aphrodite, who was among the most popular deities in Thessalonica, was the symbol of sexual license and the patroness of prostitutes (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* [Eerdmans/Apollos], p. 35).

So, Paul's commandments for sexual purity were as countercultural in that day as they are in ours.

The will of God is that we use our bodies in a way that brings glory to Him and sexual immorality is a misuse of our bodies, which belong to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NLT) Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. <sup>19</sup> Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, <sup>20</sup> for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 (NLT)

- **The Body of Christ**

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 (ESV) Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, <sup>10</sup> for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more.

Notice again the term "more and more". It's about growing and developing in living with purity and loving each other.

The will of God in these last days is that you and I live a life of holiness. His desire is that we, as followers of Christ, use our physical bodies in a way that glorifies Him and treat His body, the church, with His kind of love.