

## **“This Is The Will Of God”**

“Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you, in the Lord Jesus, that as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk, — that ye abound more and more. For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication, that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who know not God; that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned and testified. For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you” (1 Thess. 4:1-8).

In these verses the apostle dealt with an issue that was such a common practice among Gentiles — and was still a strong temptation to them after they had renounced those carnal sins. The apostle does not charge them with the sin (he said they walked and pleased God), but because of the temptation to lapse back into their former life, he warns them again of the attitude God has toward the sin.

Paul’s concern for these brethren was for them to maintain the sanctification they had in Christ. Like the Corinthians who had been idolaters and fornicators before, when they obeyed the gospel they had been washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11), so also had been these Thessalonians. But, having been washed and sanctified applied to their past life. They were to continue to maintain their abstinence from sexual impurities — to maintain their sanctification.

To maintain sanctification, they must exercise self-control over their passions. Each one of them was to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor (v. 4). For each to walk in purity, they had to discipline self and avoid temptation that would lead them back to their former life.

The Thessalonians were to avoid transgressing and “wronging his brother in the matter,” a reminder that fornicators and adulterers commit several sins in their failure to bridle their lusts — not only do they sin against their own body; they sin against the person with whom they commit fornication, and if that person is married, they sin against that person’s spouse. Like ripples in an ever-widening circle from a pebble cast into a pool, many are grievously affected and wronged by the unrestrained passions of lust.

And, the Thessalonians were reminded that God is an Avenger in all those things. When God executes His wrath is not stated by the apostle, but while there is uncertainty about “when” or how long before it transpires, there is no uncertainty that God will. Certainly, if not before, we will meet that Avenger at His great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Christians are a “called people.” We are called from darkness to light (1 Pet. 2:9). Jesus is the light of the world and He came to bring understanding and knowledge to those who are in darkness. We must, once we are in the light, continue to walk in it.

Christians are called to “come out from among them and be separate saith the Lord. And touch not the unclean things and I will receive ye and I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17-18). We are called to be separate; to touch not unclean things. The Thessalonians were reminded they were called to sanctification.

And, the Thessalonians were reminded just how grave their failure to maintain sanctification was — those who rejected the call to control passions and lusts did not reject men, they rejected God. Men should give serious thought to a rejection of God’s instructions. Who is he that can withstand God? Who is he that can withstand God’s will?

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