

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
1 Thessalonians: Discipling Afflicted New Christians
Part V: Directing Afflicted New Believers In A Comprehensively Ordered Life
(1 Thessalonians 4:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. New believers afflicted by the angelic conflict can find it hard to maintain order in the realms of their personal, church and world lives since angelic conflict often brings disorder, James 3:14-16 NIV, ESV.
- B. Accordingly, it is necessary to instruct them on living a comprehensively orderly life, something the Apostle Paul did in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. We view this passage for appropriate applications as follows:

II. Directing Afflicted New Believers In A Comprehensively Ordered Life, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12.

- A. As we have learned in our study of 1 Thessalonians thus far, Paul's readers were new converts to Christ who faced great opposition from Satanically-fueled opponents, 1 Thess. 2:18; 3:1-5 with Acts 17:1-15.
- B. One mark of such oppression is disorder in one's life, a fact revealed in James 3:14-16 NIV, ESV.
- C. Accordingly, Paul directed a comprehensively orderly life in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12, one that dealt with righteous order in one's personal life, righteous order in Church life and righteous order before the world:
 - 1. On the **personal** level, God wants the believer to **abound in moral excellence**, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8:
 - a. Paul noted that to please God, his readers should abound in what he had taught them, 1 Thess. 4:1-2.
 - b. On the personal level, this meant his readers were to live holy lives free of immorality, 1 Thess. 4:3.
 - c. Specifically, Paul's readers were to "possess" either the vessel of one's own body (1 Cor. 9:24-27) or that of one's spouse (1 Peter 3:7) in separation from sin and in honor, 1 Thessalonians 4:4.
 - d. Either way we interpret the word "vessel" here, the meaning is clear: the believer is not to act in the passion of lust so as to violate another believer sexually, and this could refer to immorality outside of wedlock or taking abusive sexual advantage of one's spouse in the marital bond, 1 Thess. 4:5-6a.
 - e. Either way, such sin was one of defrauding the other believer, a sin God avenged, 1 Thess. 4:6b.
 - f. Accordingly, since God had called the believer to separate from sin and not be unclean, to treat lightly such commands on sexual conduct was to treat God lightly, the God Who had given the believer His Holy Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Thess. 4:8.
 - g. Paul thus implied it was a serious offense to violate another party in this realm, be it a spouse in marriage or a non-spouse outside marriage, that one is to be careful to be upright in his walk.
 - 2. On the **church** level, God wants the believer to **abound in Christian love**, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10:
 - a. Paul noted that to please God, his readers should abound in what he had taught them, 1 Thess. 4:1-2.
 - b. On the level of one's relationships in the local church, this meant the Christian was to abound more and more in his Christian love, 1 Thessalonians 4:9.
 - c. Paul mentioned such love had been expressed to all the brethren in Macedonia (1 Thess. 4:10a), so we can infer this included material gifts to Macedonian believers, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 702.
 - d. Thus, it was imperative that the new believer view his need to expand his attitude of loving care for the welfare of other believers around him.
 - 3. On the **world** level, God wants the believer to **abound in quiet independence**, 1 Thess. 4:11-12:
 - a. Paul noted that to please God, his readers should abound in what he had taught them, 1 Thess. 4:1-2.
 - b. In relationship to the world, this involved a life of quiet independence: (1) they were to make it their ambition in life to live an honorably civil, quiet life, 1 Thessalonians 4:11a NIV; (2) they were also to mind their own affairs and to work with their own hands opposite depending lazily on the charity of others, 1 Thess. 4:11b NIV in light of the problem addressed by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12. (3) In so doing, they would win the respect of the unsaved community about them (1 Thessalonians 4:12a) and [as a rule] not suffer any financial need, 1 Thessalonians 4:12b.

Lesson: *Guiding new believers afflicted by angelic conflicts, Paul taught them (1) to excel in private in moral excellence, (2) to excel in the church in love and (3) to excel in the world in quiet independence.*

Application: *(1) May we point new believers afflicted by unsettling angelic conflicts to moral excellence, growth in brotherly love and to a life of quiet independence before the lost world. (2) Carnal and weak believers act like new converts (1 Corinthians 3:3), so may we direct them as well to the same focuses.*