

MORE: Jesus from beginning to end.

a study of 1 Thessalonians

Series Intro "MORE: Jesus from beginning to end" is a study of First Thessalonians to see MORE Jesus IN you. [God is working through the gospel of Jesus Christ for more in your life. To know God is to long for more Jesus.](#)

INTRO [Who wants to know God's will for their life?](#) God wants you to KNOW! There is only one way that you can know. This is what we consider today as we look at the more God gives in Jesus by more and more in our life.

More, by more and more

1 Thess 4:1-12

MPS: God gives more when Christians live with the one priority to please Him in all of life.

OBJ: Every person can understand how to pursue God's more for life by one priority in two practices.

READ 1 Thes 4:1-12

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. ²For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that 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. ⁷For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

*⁹Now 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, ¹⁰for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹²so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. **1 Thes 4:1-12***

TRANS Maybe more than anything else, our passage today confronts us to consider that for which we most live today. Everyone wants more of something. **Do you know what you are living for more of?**

APPL **THIS is how you know what you are living for, or living for more of.** Look at your life to find the one, common thread that strings it all together. Not just what you say, but in all things; how you spend your time, money, energy and talents, and relationships. The common thread that links all these identify that which you are living for, or for more of.

[God gives more when Christians live with the one priority to please Him in all of life.](#)

READ 1 Thes 4:1-2

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.

In 4:1 Paul turns to help the Thessalonians apply all he has taught them. Paul stands at the apex of recognizing all God has done and shouts, "MORE! God has more for you!" He urges them to receive His teaching and walk to please God, and to live this way more and more. Victories and celebrations have a way of lulling us into apathy, complacency and passivity. With all the strength and force he can muster to span the distance and time separating them, [Paul urges them to live to please God more and more with their lives.](#)

You may be thinking, "how can I possibly do this?" Paul does not simply pile "more and more" on them. Rather, his instruction is given "*through the Lord Jesus*".(.2) This means that because of all God has done for us through Jesus Christ, we can live by His commands and instructions. Jesus tells Satan (citing Deut 8:3), "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*"(Matt 4:4) "*Give us this day our daily bread,*" Jesus teaches the disciples to



pray. (Matt 6:11) Today's grace from God, His MORE for you to live, is His "daily bread" for today's trials and temptations. And God's daily bread is Jesus. [More Jesus is God's grace for each day for every Christian.](#)

The greatest and highest commandment defines the Christian's [one priority](#) for life; "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" (Matt 22:37) This is the priority Paul urges for the Thessalonians to live out in all of life. **Do you know how to live with one priority?**

OBJ [Christians live to please God as the one priority of life by two practices.](#)

Practices in the Christian life are important because until you've obeyed you have not yet truly believed. To believe is far more than only comprehending or understanding. We are called to live by faith. Faith begins when we act on what we know. Paul is applying what it looks like to live by faith. [Ritual and routine of actions may be a false front for many, but only obedience in the Christian life proves that belief in God's truth is fueling life.](#)

Practice #1: [You live with one priority to please God when you live more and more by His call to holiness.](#) **4:3-8**

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification". (.3a) Paul begins by answering the biggest question of the Christian life, "**What is God's will for my life?**" And the answer is even larger than the question, sanctification. The most asked question in Christianity is given the most direct answer, but not what most expect. [Holiness is the will of God for every Christian.](#)

Paul applies his instruction with this directive, "*that you abstain from sexual immorality*". Sexual immorality was a major, cultural characteristic in the first century world. Most people think modern-day America has very little similarity to first century world. Turns out, we're a lot like them, and in the worst kind of way. And against today's prevailing ideology that there is no consequential, moral standard for sexual activity or sexuality in our contemporary context, we must ask, "**Why is sexual purity so important for the Christian?**" [Purity is essential for holiness because sexuality entwines body and soul by activity that engages the parts of our body identified as organs or instruments of our sexuality / gender.](#)

Sexual immorality is sin with a distinct effect, damaging one's own self. (1 Cor 6:18) Sexual immorality damages in the depths of a person's being as it roots the effects of sin deeper within. It's direct link with our identity and being drive the condemnation, shame, guilt and deception deeper so that it affects us in far greater ways than we know or imagine. This occurs even by the simplest acts. And not only for the individual who participates, but for the culture that propagates sexual immorality the effects are compounded. What is tolerated, then accepted becomes normalized so that it becomes wrong to oppose or speak against it. [The effect of sexual immorality in a culture give voice to champion, celebrate and guard evil as right and good.](#)

APPL Some refuse to believe that sexual sin affects anyone other than the participant. But today's reality is that the whole world is darkened by the confusion sexual immorality of every form has created. The problems we face today are extensive and complex. Some are guilty of sin by their participation. Many more suffer under the influence of compounded effects from sexual immorality that lead to even more sin. Every argument against Biblical sexuality and gender compounds this issue to increase confusion and condemnation, and compound wickedness. [Juxtaposed to sexual immorality, God's will for every person is sexual purity to guard the depths of our being from sin's damage and deception.](#)

And, unless you've told yourself your form is not that bad, hear me. The Bible says that not just one or only a few forms of 'more advanced practices' of sexual immorality damage a person in this way. All sexual activity outside of the marriage covenant is immorality, regardless of whether it includes two people, or more, or less; whether natural or unnatural. ALL sexual immorality damages deeply against the soul of a person. [When you practice acts of sexual immorality with your body, you give sin control over your soul.](#)

Listen to Romans explain our pursuit of MORE in holiness. [READ Romans 6:16-19, 22-23](#)



Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 6:16-19, 22-23

Participation is how you present the members of your body for enslavement. What you participate, you normalize the act. This compounds the effect of sinful condemnation, specifically in one's thinking. Romans says you are enslaved. Once enslaved, you begin to think that the inside of that prison cell is normal. ILLUS At first you see your sin as "not a big deal" because it is only a "little dot on the screen". But soon, and long before you recognize it, your sin becomes the tunnel through which you view all things. And what you think you "see clearly" by microscope is a cheap kaleidoscope entertaining your selfish desires and propensities. [Impurity leads to lawlessness and death.](#) [Purity leads to holiness and life in Jesus.](#)

The answer to sexual immorality is this: *"that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that 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."*

This first practice of pursuing holiness identifies where you root your identity. Your practice reveals what you believe about you and about Jesus. [Christians identify with Jesus Christ in all.](#) Paul's strongest words are directed for sexual immorality. *"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire"*(Col 3:5) He warns to never forget that the Lord is an avenger of His holiness. It may seem for a time that you escape the consequences of sexual immorality, though that too is deception. The Lord knows and will avenge every injustice according to His holiness.

Defeating sexual immorality begins by filling your life with a greater glory. *"God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness."* Faith begins here, by asking in the face of every situation, temptation and circumstance, **"What has God called me to?"** God calls us to holiness because He created you to bear His image. And as long as you bear a lesser image, you propagate a life of misery, shame and suffering. [Purity for the honor of Jesus Christ is a worthy glory and effective practical strategy.](#)

APPL The more you walk in darkness by the practices of your life, the darker your patterns of thinking become, and the deeper and more deceiving your life becomes. You become, in increasing ways, more like the sin you practice, the idol you adore, the lie you believe, the wrong you serve or the evil you follow. With every temptation, remind yourself, Christian, "This is NOT the life God has called me to, NOT His will for my life! This is Satan working to deceive and destroy me. And, this is NOT what I want! I live for Jesus and His holiness." Then, go pursue it. [The ONE way we live to experience God's "more" abundant life is to practice holiness more and more.](#)

One final word of instruction. (.8) *"Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you."* You may not be enslaved to sexual sin, but do not dismiss how you may be enslaved to its effects on your life, specifically in your thinking. Ask Holy Spirit to illumine God's Word to convict, correct, instruct and guide you as you pursue holiness. [Live with one priority to please God more and more by living according to the way He has called you, for holiness.](#)

Practice #2: [You live with the one priority to please God when you live more and more to love one another.](#) **4:9-12**

⁹Now 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, ¹⁰for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you,



brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹²so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

The second practice Paul provides is to continue what God has taught them, to live in love for one another. These two practices go hand in hand. It is much easier to fight temptation toward sexual sin when you live to love other people as God loves them. You have to make people something less than human in order to desire to use them for sexual sin. *When you live to love others as God has loved you, you are practicing one more intentional strategy to pursue your own holiness.*

“But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more”. *We live in God’s MORE abundant life by the way we bring the priority of honoring Jesus to our life through our practice, as we strive to excel in loving others.*

TRANS HOW, though, because loving others can seem so hard? Paul also provides very practical ways to love one another. These are not earth-shattering, never-before heard of tactics. Rather, they are simple and straight-forward.

and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹²so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

The simplest acts of how we conduct our lives produce the greatest expression of love toward others. These descriptive phrases Paul uses form the greatest contrast to how we are encouraged to act today in the age of social media.

ILLUS Social Media subliminal influence “Wake up and tell the world your first thought. Be the first to ‘speak the final word’ on every issue. Be bold and confident in stating your position, and careful not to backdown or let others run over you. Be sure to be funny, compelling, helpful and right, so you can benefit us and not bore us by littering our news feed. Keep it short and simple so we can remember it.” Surely the influence of our social media age exploits, as much as anything, our great ‘privilege and presumption of position’ to speak incessantly with little concern for others or accountability.

Likely, Paul understood the trouble they were going to bring on themselves just for confessing the name of Jesus. And behind the scenes of all things, against the accusations that any might make, the proof of their life would demonstrate a love that stood as evidence against any false attack that was made. Then, they would be strengthened and ready to stand against any persecution that came from the faithful witness of Jesus Christ.

The Christian’s greatest influence begins by how we live to honor Jesus, in trust and rest of all affairs, especially to know His joy in their own, and to produce more good in the world with our labors so others can be blessed as well. *The world becomes a more lovely place when Christians live to honor Jesus as the priority of life.*

APPL *How do you live to love one another? Is “loving others” always an act that requires you to step outside the normal flow of life? OR, are you striving to practice love toward others in the normal, everyday routine and activity of your life?*

You will have to slow down, consider others with your time, energy and attention if you strive to love them in the way Paul instructs. But as you do God will be glorified through your life and many will be blessed because the world will have more true good filling it! *Christian, live with one priority to please God by loving others more and more in the normal, everyday routine and activity of your life.*

APPL Beloved Outreach Strategy: Pray – Invest – Engage

God gives more when Christians live with the one priority to please Him in all of life.

