

Beginning next major section, 4:1-12.

In this ¶, Paul wrote to remind them & us of God's expectations for our lifestyle.

➤ It is important for us to know that God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son.

➤ But this rescue & transfer is also a privilege, a lifelong response & responsibility.

▷ As citizens of heaven, believers must live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Jesus.

➤ TPID, being citizens of Christ's kingdom, we are called to live according to kingdom standards. ☞ His word.

Paul's discussion of God's expectations for our lifestyle, 4:1-12 ÷ into 4 parts.

➤ 4:1-2, a general call to live lives that are pleasing to God.

➤ Parts 2, 3, & 4 cover 3 specific topics regarding what's involved in living lives that are pleasing to God.

▷ 2<sup>nd</sup> part, 4:3-8, holiness.

▷ 3<sup>rd</sup> part, 4:9-10, brotherly love.

▷ And the 4<sup>th</sup> part, 4:11-12, integrity. 1/9

4:1-2, Today, A call to live lives that are pleasing to God.

➤<sup>1a</sup> As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you <sup>1b</sup> in the name of the Lord Jesus, <sup>1c</sup> Just as you received from us teaching on how you must conduct your lives in a manner pleasing to God, <sup>1d</sup> as in fact you are living, <sup>1e</sup> that you progress more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what commands we gave to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Main exhortation.

➤ We ask you and urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus that you progress more and more in conducting your lives in a manner pleasing to God.

Paul writes in 1a, we ask and urge you.

➤ Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians to progress in godly living is meant very seriously.

➤ And it is meant to be taken very seriously by all believers.

➤ The 2 vbs are virtually synonymous here.

▷ Together they emphasize the seriousness of what Paul is exhorting them to do.

➤ Translated: *We ask you most seriously.*

➤ Furthermore, ask & urge contain the idea of imploring believers to proper conduct.

▷ Idea: *We ask you most seriously that, as Christians, you conduct yourselves properly.*

➤ Again, being citizens of Christ's kingdom, we are called to live according to kingdom standards. 2/9

➤Peter points this out very clearly.

▷1 Pet. 1:14-17

In 1b, Paul states that it's in the name of the Lord Jesus that they ask most seriously that, as Christians, we conduct ourselves properly.

➤The prepositional phrase 'in the Lord Jesus' serves to emphasize Paul's position as an authoritative representative of Jesus.

➤But more than that, the authority of the Lord of the universe is behind this exhortation.

▷I.e., to progress more & more in conducting our lives in a manner that is pleasing to God.

▷Paul clearly wants us to understand how central and critical Christ-centered authority is for the Christian life.

▷It is not to be taken lightly but is at the heart of virtually everything.

▷In fact, this Christ-centered authority will come up again in vs 2, & several more times in succeeding verses to anchor it firmly in our consciousness.

▷Therefore, we, believers, are ultimately responsible to Jesus for our conduct.

➤2 Cor. 5:10 (NIV), For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

In v 1c, Paul adds the comment that they were instructed already in this matter.

➤Just as you received from us teaching on how you must conduct your lives in a manner pleasing to God. 3/9

▷ Could express it as a question.

› How should believers conduct their lives?

→ Ans, in a way that pleases God.

▶ The Grk wd for "must" rules out the notion that God's commands are merely optional.

▷ Rather, they are obligatory. ☞ It must be done.

▶ Why must we live in a way that pleases God?

▷ For at least 3 reasons besides the obvious reason, because God commands it.

▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, it's important for our spiritual welfare & growth.

▷ 2<sup>nd</sup> reason we must live in a way that pleases God.

› It's to keep us in the place of experiencing God's love in abundance.

› Jude 21, keep yourselves in God's love.

→ While nothing can separate a believer from the love of God, the experience of God's love can be either scanty or abundant, depending on sinful choices.

→ Jude was praying that believers' experience of God's love would be abundant.

→ & Obeying God's word keeps us in that place of experiencing that abundance. 4/9

▷ & 3<sup>rd</sup> reason.

▷ Conducting our lives in a manner pleasing to God keeps the lines of communication open between him & us.

▷ Is. 59:1-2, Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

▷ Moving on, the idea of pleasing God is central to both testaments.

▷ E.g., Ps. 104:34 (NLT), May all my thoughts be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.

▷ And Eph. 5:10 (NLT), Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.

▷ Earlier in the letter, we saw that Paul, Silas, & Timothy made it their aim to please not men but to please God.

▷ Such an aim for the believer's life is the logical outcome of their love for their Lord.

▷ It is also the logical outcome of all that the Lord has done for us.

▷ 2 Cor. 7:1 (NIV), Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

▷ Furthermore, **how we must conduct our lives**, in a manner pleasing to God, encompasses every aspect of our lifestyle at all times.

▷ Not just at church, etc. 5/9

▷Note again the wds of Peter, *As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.*

➤Plus, conducting our lives in a manner pleasing to God points to consistent behavior, not occasional acts of obedience.

### In 1d, Paul sought to be encouraging

➤We ask and urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus, Just as you received from us teaching on how you must conduct your lives in a manner pleasing to God, <sup>1d</sup>as in fact you are living

➤This is a comment that is characteristic of Paul.

➤It is an instance of his eagerness to give recognition to the good work that had already begun in the Thessalonian church.

▷Recognition of the good work is found throughout 1 Thess.

➤It seems Paul loved to give praise wherever praise was due.

➤He fully appreciated what had already been attained by them.

▷& he would not grieve them by any apparent suggestion that they had failed to heed his former instructions.

➤In giving them these exhortations he is not complaining or finding fault with them.

➤Paul practiced both commendation & exhortation.

▷A model for all believers to follow. 6/9

Now we come to the main exhortation.

➤1e, We ask you and urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus that you progress more and more in conducting your lives in a manner pleasing to God.

➤Having gladly acknowledged that they are walking as he instructed them, Paul's admonition can only be "to progress more and more."

▷Believers must never be satisfied with what we have already achieved.

▷There can be no finality in practical holiness in this life for the believer.

▷There is always room for growth, no matter how spiritually mature we become.

➤Prōgress more and more implies a process of active & continual spiritual growth.

▷And this active & steady spiritual growth has a goal, total Christlikeness.

▷Paul tells us in Romans that God the Father predestined believers to be conformed to the image of his Son.

▷But he doesn't do it all at once at conversion.

➤Sanctification.

▷And in Philippians Paul tells us when this process will be complete.

➤When Jesus returns, he will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own.

▷Until then, we are to progress more and more toward full Christlikeness. 7/9

➤ To sum up, Paul is exhorting us to keep on growing more and more like Jesus.

▷ Each day we should be becoming more and more like our Savior.

In vs 2, Paul reminds them of things they already knew.

➤ For you know what commands we gave to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

➤ Once again, Paul notes the Christ-centered authority of the Bible's commands.

➤ In ancient letters, occasionally an author would remind the recipient of things the person already knew.

▷ And at times indicating that such things should be put into practice.

▷ Reminders and repetition of what people had learned were considered essential for moral progress.

➤ In the same way, once more Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the teaching they had received.

▷ Throughout the letter he urges them to recall what they already knew.

▷ And most likely, it was his hope that they would not ignore the teaching review but would put the teaching into practice.

➤ Reminding believers of God's truth is a pattern in the NT.

▷ E.g., in Romans, But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder.

▷ Paul told both Timothy and Titus to remind believers of certain things. 8/9



▷Jude wrote, Now I want to remind you, though you know all these things.

▷In 2 Peter, Peter said, it is only right that I should keep on reminding you as long as I live.

▷& when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he said, Do this in remembrance of me.

➤Obviously, God wants us to be reminded of his truth over and over.

➤Most likely primarily because it is essential for our spiritual progress.

➤But there may be other reasons as well.

▷Perhaps it's because we forget so easily.

▷Or because we're so prone to wander from the truth.

▷And related to that, reminders of biblical teaching will help shield us from false teachers.

➤So it's extremely important to listen to the reminders and to apply the teaching to our lives.

As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus, Just as you received from us teaching on how you must conduct your lives in a manner pleasing to God, as in fact you are living, that you progress more and more. For you know what commands we gave to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 9/9