

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

September 14, 2025

### Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

### Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

**Icebreaker:** What is one of awkward encounter you've had in recent memory?

### Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

#### 1. Pleasing God is What We've Been Made For

V1 — *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*

**Question:** What is Paul's overall attitude towards the church in Thessalonica? How does he "urge" them?

**Discussion:** Why do you think many Christians doubt that their lives can be pleasing to God?

**Discussion:** In your experience, what have been some of the most important practices, relationships, etc. that have helped you grow in living a life that is pleasing to God?

#### 2. Pleasing God Doesn't Come Naturally

**Question:** In the original context, your typical Roman citizen would not have considered lust to be that big of a deal. What was the general attitude towards sexual conduct and how is Paul's perspective so unique?

*The 4 major challenges to Christians in the early church, according to Justin Martyr were sexual immorality, wealth, sorcery, and ethnic hatred. One pastor said that if you substitute sorcery with "technology," virtually nothing has changed in 2000 years*

**Discussion:** In what ways does this still ring true? Is the church exempt from these challenges?

**Discussion:** Why would God care about the sex-lives of the Thessalonians or about anyone else for that matter?

*"Sex is not sin, but it's not salvation either... Like nitroglycerin, it can be used to destroy bridges or to heal hearts." (Beuchner)*

**Discussion:** How does a culture of "me-first" develop into a culture of putting other people first?

### 3. God Is Involved in Our Process

*V8 — Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*

**Discussion:** What is the danger if we put more emphasis on the first part of v8 and not the last part? How do we often disregard God by disregarding the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

*V4 — v4 — For this is the will of God, your sanctification*

**Question:** What is sanctification? How is it different from justification?

**Discussion:** What difference does it make hearing that THE will of God in your life is that He would do a work to sanctify you? What does that say about His goals for us?

### 4. Making God Our Greatest Pleasure

*For pleasure to stop being your god, God must become your pleasure*

**Question:** What are some of the commands that Paul gives to the community in Thessalonica (vv9-12)? If everyone did this, what would it be like to live in that kind of community?

**Discussion:** Which part of Paul's description in vv9-12 challenges you the most?

**Discussion:** The work of Jesus and the Spirit's presence in our lives tells us that experiencing God's pleasure is possible — what are some of the things that often get in the way of enjoying Him?