



## Holy Walking Before a Holy God

### 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

#### KEEP WALKING

Verse 1 begins with an encouragement to live out their faith in holy living. "We ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus ...to walk and to please God....that you do so more and more."

*For Paul, the free gift of new life in Messiah Jesus automatically entails a new set of personal and social standards under the Lordship of Jesus. The idea behind "walking" ....is that the religious life is lived at all times, not just in temples and religious meetings (Deut 6:4–12). (Nijay Gupta, 1-2 Thessalonians : A New Covenant Commentary)*

The Hebrew people saw all of life as a walk.

Godly people walked with God (e.g. Enoch and Noah in Genesis 5:24 and 6:9).

Deuteronomy 5:33 - "You shall walk in all the ways the Lord your God has commanded us."

#### HOW SHOULD WE WALK?

In holiness and sexual purity (verses 1-8)

In brotherly love and responsibility (verses 9-12)

The background to this passage is the decadence and debauchery of the ancient Greco-Roman world versus biblical covenantal love and fidelity in marriage (Genesis 2:24).

#### LISTEN UP!

What they taught and instructed was by authority of the Lord Jesus (vs 2).

#### BE HOLY

God's will is for our sanctification (vs 3a).

"When we become Christians, we do not drop all [the habits of sin] overnight. In fact, we will spend the rest of our lives putting off these habits and putting on habits of holiness." (Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness.*)

2 things we must do: 1) avoid sexual immorality and 2) control our own bodies. (vs 3b-4).

#### **How to Stay Pure in an immoral world?**

1. Flee from sexual temptation (1 Corinthians 6:18). Take God's way out (1 Corinthians 10:13).
2. Find freedom in Christ and fellowship with his people (2 Timothy 2:22).
3. Follow God's plan for rightful sexual intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:2)

### BE DIFFERENT

"In holiness and honour" (vs 4) – living in a counter-cultural way.

The Lord will avenge those who sin against others in this way (vs 6).

We are called to holiness, not impurity (vs 7).

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HOLY?**

God is holy. Meaning he is separate from everything that is sinful or impure.

Because God is holy, we are also called to be holy (1 Peter 1:16 quoting Leviticus 11:44). It is a work of God by which we participate through obedience to His Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

### **WHAT DO WE DO IF WE ARE CAUGHT IN SEXUAL OR OTHER SINS?**

John 8:1-11 - Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery is neither condemnation (legalism) nor excusing her without responsibility (licence). Instead, his Gospel response included taking her place on the cross as Saviour, so that she was not condemned but calling her to leave her life of sin and to take him as Lord.