

“Live To Please God”
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
Sunday, October 3, 2021

Introduction: I think most of us want to live our life in the will of God. This is easier said than done! Once we become a Christian there is always the battle between flesh and Spirit---God’s will vs our will. The apostle Paul admitted the battle in his own life. He said what he wanted to do was not what he did and what he did not want to do was what he did (Romans 7:15,19). In the next chapter (Romans 8), Paul reminded us that because the Holy Spirit dwells in us that we have help.

Knowing the will of God in many things is easy. The Bible contains God’s will---both in affirmations and prohibitions. In addition, the Bible clearly names things that are “the will of God.

1. It is God’s will that people would be saved.
 - The Bible says, “God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:4 ESV).
2. It is God’s will that Christians are not conformed to this world (Romans 12:1-2).
3. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is God’s will (Ephesians 5:18).
4. Submissions to human authorities is God’s will (1 Peter 2:13-15).

T.S. Today, I want us to see something else the Bible clearly says is the will of God---our sanctification.

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Background: Acts 17 records Paul founding the church in Thessalonica. The church quickly flourished. Thessalonica was the capital city of Macedonia with a population of 200,000 people. It was a major port and commercial center. Writing from Corinth, Paul wrote this letter to encourage them, to emphasize the return of Christ, and the practical effect it should have on their lives.

- Paul knew believers need to be sanctified in a lot of ways, but he started with sexual purity.
- Paul knew if they could win this battle, they could win all other battles.
- Sexual impurity is the worship of pleasure over God.
- It is not just a mistake. It proves we are like the Gentiles who do not know God. Gentiles here is used in a spiritual sense referring to non-Christians.

Application: Worship of pleasure over God, whatever the pleasure, is like a blocked artery and hinders our sanctification.

When became a Christian, you transferred your faith from yourself, religion, your church, your good life, your anything to the blood of Jesus. **Instantaneously** three things happened.

1. You experienced what the Bible calls regeneration. Regeneration is a Bible word that simply means that God imparted new life in you (Galatians 4:19). Regeneration is sometimes called “being born again” (John 3:8).
 2. You experienced what the Bible calls justification. Justification simply means that God thought of your sins as forgiven and declared you righteous in His sight.
 3. You experienced what the Bible calls adoption. Adoption simply means that you became a member of God’s family.
- Regeneration, justification, and adoption occur at the beginning of our Christian life. The remainder of our Christian life the Bible calls sanctification.
 - Sanctification simply means growth in likeness to Christ. It is not instantaneous. Sanctification is a process whereby we grow to be more like Jesus in our decisions and lifestyle. It will never be complete until the return of Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

God’s Role in Sanctification: All three parts of the Trinity are involved in Sanctification.

1. God the Father: 1 Thess. 5:23
2. God the Son: 1 Peter 2:21
3. God the Spirit: 2 Thess. 2:13

Illustration: Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie calls this the “The Glory Circle.”

Application: We have God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit all to help us to grow to be more like Jesus so that our decisions and our lifestyle will be more Christlike.

Our Role in Sanctification: **There** are no short cuts to grow and be more like Jesus. The New Testament encourages us repeatedly to the old-fashioned, time-honored steps to sanctification. I mention three.

1. Bible reading and meditation (Psalm 1:2; Matthew 4:4; John 17:17)
2. Prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6)
3. Self-discipline (Galatians 5:23; Titus 1:8)

Conclusion: Missions and evangelism are without question God’s will. Jesus said that He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) and gave His church orders to get the gospel message to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:19-20). Sanctification is also God’s will. In missions and evangelism, God does

something through Christians. In sanctification, God does some to Christians. He makes them more like Jesus in their decisions and lifestyle.

When you stand at the Bema judgment seat, you will be accountable for your progress in sanctification or lack thereof.

Invitation: Let me close with a question. Would you say that since you became a Christian that you are making progress in becoming more like Jesus in your decisions and your lifestyle?

I think most of us would say we could have done better. Rather than live with that guilt you can draw a line in the sand today and with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit helping you do your part in the process of sanctification---growing to be more like Jesus.

Some of you have never been saved. Others are not sure. This morning what you can do is place your faith in Jesus alone and trust Him for your salvation.