

Living A Life Conscious of Christ's Return

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We are exhorted in John 9:4 to 'WORK WHILE IT IS DAY'. To be an effective worker, one needs to live right. We have a heavy responsibility to be a testimony to unbelievers through our lifestyle. 1 Thessalonians 4:12 says, 'so that your daily life may win the respect with outsiders.'

The whole of 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 deals with the hope of Jesus' Second Coming – how we must live in the light of His coming. Paul describes three distinctive walks of a Christian: the walk of HOLINESS, the walk of LOVE and the walk of AMBITION.

Paul uses the word 'WALK' to illustrate the Christian life because of several reasons:

- **Walking suggest progress** – as believers we must be progressive, we must leave behind our yesterdays and move on to a new level of faith. Hebrews 6:1 says, 'Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...'
- **Walking suggests strength** – we can observe this by looking at a child who is learning to walk. He has to have strength to and before he can walk. Walking also needs determination. The child may stumble and fall but he has to get up again and again so that he can learn to walk. We will not faint when walking, if we walk in His strength (Isaiah 40:31).
- **Walking suggests a destination** – we are walking with Jesus and Jesus is someone who did not walk aimlessly. He always had a destination. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years and he walked straight into the presence of God (Genesis 5:24).
- **Walking also suggests danger** – walking can be dangerous because we have an enemy who seeks to destroy us. 1 John 1:5 tells us there is darkness out there is darkness out there. A Christian walk is not always free from danger. We have to be alert while walking – there may be traps. The enemy plans for our fall and we must be wary of his schemes.

THE WALK OF HOLINESS (v3)

'It is God's will that you should be holy.'

Paul gave us three reasons why we must live a holy life. Firstly, by leading holy lives we please God (v1). Everybody lives to please somebody but many live to please themselves. Romans 15:1-4 tells us that,

'We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves... for even Christ did not please Himself...'

The Bible warns us about living to please ourselves. We are called to please God above everyone else. Pleasing God should be the supreme motive of every believer.

Jesus was an example of a life that was pleasing to God. God declared this in Matthew 3:17 when he said, 'This is my SON, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

Hebrews 11:5 has this to say about Enoch. 'Enoch was commended as one who pleased God.'

Pleasing God is more than just doing the will of God. Jonah obeyed God but his heart was not in it and therefore failed to please God (Jonah 4). It is possible to do what God wants us to do without our doing it to please Him. This is contrary to Ephesians 6:6 where we are encouraged to do the will of God from our heart.

'Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.'

Secondly, we are to obey the instructions of God (v.2). The commands from God are militant. Soldiers do not question instructions given to them. 2 Timothy 2:4 says 'No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civil affairs, he wants to please his commanding officers.' We are all soldiers of God. When we receive a command, we are expected to obey without question. As soldiers, we do not live like civilians. God has commanded us to live holy lives and so we must obey Him.

Thirdly, by leading holy lives we glorify God (v4 & 5). We are instructed to 'control our body in a way that is holy and honorable.' Our body is like an earthen vessel and within it is the preciousness of God. God has put His life within us so while this earthly vessel appears significant, it becomes powerful under the influence of God. 'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Corinthians 4:7). If we glorify God in our bodies, then we can glorify Him in the Body, which is the Church.

THE WALK OF LOVE (v9-10)

‘Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers through Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.’

The walk of holiness leads to a walk of love. It is not implied that the Thessalonians were not walking in brotherly love, but Paul is reminding the people to continue to walk in love and to do even more (v 10). Romans 5:5 tells us that the Holy Spirit gives us God’s love. That is why we can love one another. If we are born again, we can experience God’s love and in the same way we can share God’s love with others.

THE WALK OF AMBITION (v11-12)

‘Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so you will not be dependant on anybody.’

It seems contradictory to be ambitious and lead a quiet life. The emphasis here is the inner life. Paul exhorts us to work hard but to ensure our mind and heart are at peace. To be ambitious is to have a dream or a vision from the Lord. The Bible says, “... your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams” (Acts 2”17). They are not vain imaginations – God wants to fulfill them in our life but it is to be done with your mind and heart at peace. This is a life free from anxiety and from “burn-out.”

We are also told to “mind our own business” and concentrate on what God has for us to do. Most of our problems arise in this area. This is good advice and it will keep us from trouble.

If we are born-again and truly believe in the Second Coming of Christ, let us seek God earnestly for His vision for our life personally and as a Christian to see the salvation of the lost. Then let us determine to obey the Lord’s vision which the Bible declares to all of us in John 4:35 – “Do not say, four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

Let us ‘WORK WHILE IT IS DAY.’ I know the Lord will not fail you!

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