

First Thessalonians

VERSE-BY-VERSE

Letter	Date of Writing	Place of Writing
1st Thessalonians	54 A.D.	Corinth

The letter to the Thessalonians is not difficult to understand as are some of Paul's writings (2 Peter 3:16,17). We should keep the theme of the book in mind as we read it:

1. Paul confirms to the young believers the *foundational* truths he had already taught them (Acts 17).
2. Paul exhorted them (encouraged them/charged them) to go on in holiness.
3. In today's study, Paul comforts them concerning those who had died (euphemism: asleep).

From Session 11: God has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. The Greek word for holiness is **ἁγιασμός** | *hagiasmos*. Paul has used it three times, in verses 3, 4, and 7. KJV and NKJV translate it sanctification twice and holiness once (vs. 7).

Verse 8–

He therefore that despiseth. To despise is to reject. Reject what? God's call to holiness. Those who continue to reject a life of holiness are ultimately rejecting God. The one who despiseth is forgetting he has God's holy Spirit living within him.

Paul really lays out a case that fornication is powerful, but because we have the holy Spirit we have the ability to live our lives in holiness.

Verse 9–

But as touching (concerning) **brotherly love.**

The word for love here is not *agape*, but **φιλαδελφία** *philadelphia*, from the root word *phileo*. How do these two kinds of love, *agape* and *phileo*, differ?

- *Agape* is an *attitude* of love for anyone. It's just human love toward everyone. But it is more than just showing love. It is also giving someone the "love of the truth." The truth we can give as believers is that Jesus died for sins and was resurrected and all that a person must do is believe to have everlasting life. That is *agape*. Some will reject that *agape* ([2 Thessalonians 2:10](#)).
- *Philadelphia* is in the literal sense, love for blood brothers or sisters. Putting others above ourselves ([Romans 12:10](#)). It is from the word, *phileo* which is never used of man's love to God. But both words, *agape* and *phileo*, are used of God's love to man.

Phileo love comes somewhat by our surroundings, we are born into a family and there is a kind of *phileo* love that is innate. Yet we might say *agape* love comes from knowing God.

Ye need not that I write to you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Paul reverts to the word *agape*.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-18 | Session 12

Paul's point is that instead of living a life of uncleanness and despising others, we need to show love toward each other, and this church is doing just that.

Verse 10–

This church was practicing *agape* love **toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia** (1 Thessalonians 1:8). **But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.** Increase in what? Keep increasing in *agape* (3:12).

Verse 11–

And that ye study to be quiet. The word **study** can mean to strive or labor. Back in verse 4 Paul said, “every one of you should know how to possess his own vessel” that is, his own body. Now, he says everyone should know how to possess his mouth. Live quietly. Don't try to defraud anyone. The word **quiet** also can mean “hold one's peace.” Or, lead a quiet life.

And to do your own business. One of the greatest acts of brotherly love is to mind our own business. What is the cause of a lot of fighting in homes? It is when brothers and sisters stick their nose into the other's business. Family members may try to get involved in your business, coworkers, friends, etc. Paul says keeps some things to yourselves, mind your own business.

And to work with your own hands, as we command you. Paul was a great example. Remember when he arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:3) after he had escaped Thessalonica—he went to work everyday as a tentmaker. Then on the weekend (the Sabbath) he went into the synagogue and reasoned and persuaded the Jews to believe in Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Remember also, back in 1 Thessalonians 2:9, Paul brought to mind how he worked to earn money so that he would not be a burden on any of the Thessalonians. When he was with them, he commanded, or charged them to work and not be lazy.

Verse 12–

Why should we be quiet, mind our business and work? **That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without,** That is, those who are outside of the church; unbelievers. We are to not defraud anyone, and we are to put in an honest day's work so that we might earn our own money.

And that ye may have lack of nothing. A Christian needs to get off the government dole. We are to work, earn our own money; honestly. And have enough to meet our needs, and that the church may lack nothing.

Verse 13—

The church needs to be an example and not get caught up in what is going on outside of the church. And, don't bring the philosophy of the world into the church. There was much mythology and questions about death and the underworld. Paul must have told them about everlasting life, but believers were dying. What happened to those who died?

But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren of what is happening within the church, **concerning them which are asleep** (Euphemism for death). Paul makes it clear that when a believer dies, **that ye sorrow not**; Like those outside of the body of Christ, **even as others which have no hope.**

Verse 14–

What gives the believer hope after death? First, **Jesus died and rose again**. This is the cornerstone of our faith ([1 Corinthians 15:13-14](#)). Without this hope, our faith is in vain. Second, **them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him**. The word **him** is referring to Jesus, or God. In the context it fits better to refer to Jesus, i.e., *them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Jesus*. Verse 16 states *the dead in Christ will rise*. Therefore, for the believer there is hope beyond death.

Verse 15–

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord. This is exactly what the Lord had told Paul, **that we which are alive** when the Lord returns, **shall not prevent** (precede), or go before **them which are asleep**. Those Christians who have died will be just fine, they will be first in line at the coming of the Lord.

Verse 16—

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. Jesus Christ will come from heaven and descend. The **shout** is a command. It is either given by Jesus, or it is a command perhaps by God, that the time has come for Jesus to descend? **With the voice of the archangel**. Is the archangel shouting the command? The only archangel mentioned in Scripture is Michael ([Jude 9](#)).

And with the trump of God. As the Lord Jesus descends there will be a shout in heaven and a trumpet blast. [First Corinthians 15:52](#) speaks of a **last trump**; is it the same trumpet that is blown here? It is difficult to know what it means. We will address it further when we get to chapter 15 in our Corinthians study. Nonetheless, Paul tells the Thessalonians, **the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise first**.

Verse 17,18–

They are encouraged to take heart because the dead will be raised, **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds**. After the dead rise, believers in Christ will follow. Notice this **coming of the Lord** (vs. 15), is not a coming to earth, rather we **meet the Lord in the air**.

And the the promise in which we find **comfort** is **so shall we ever be with the Lord**.