

# Your Progress Must Be Evident

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

“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.**” (1 Thess. 4:1)

“So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy” (Gen. 2:3); “Let ... the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy” (Rev. 22:11).

“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2)

“But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’ ” (1 Pet. 1:15–16).

*“The word sanctified simply means ‘set apart for a purpose’. You can rent the Jefferson Hotel in Washington, D.C. but you cannot rent the White House. The latter has been sanctified, set apart for a special purpose. The believer has been set apart for God; he or she is a saint, a set-apart one.”* (Wiersbe, W.W. Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament).

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And **everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself** as he is pure.” (1 Jn 3:2–3).

“Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 7:1)

*“There is always a danger of Christians thinking they have no further need to progress in sanctification; but this side of eternity, no believer has even come close to what God desires for him spiritually.”* (MacArthur, J.F., Jr. 1 & 2 Thessalonians.)

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:12–14).

## I. Divine Teaching

“For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, **for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you** and our labor would be in vain.” (1 Thess. 3:5).

“our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, 3 that no one be moved by these afflictions.” (1 Th 3:2–3).

“And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men** but as what it really is, **the word of God**, which is at work in you believers.” (1 Th 2:13).

“We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, We must obey God rather than men.” (Ac 5:28–29).

## II. Divine Will

“give thanks in all circumstances; **for this is the will of God** in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thess. 5:18).

“For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be **God’s will**, than for doing evil.” (1 Pet. 3:17).

“Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (Jn 3:36)

*“Salvation does not grant believers the right to sin without suffering the consequences.”* (Martin, D.M. 1, 2 Thessalonians).

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.” (Eph 5:3).

*“Thessalonica was part of that debased Greco-Roman culture. The city was rife with such sinful practices as fornication, adultery, homosexuality (including pedophilia), transvestism (men dressing like women), and a wide variety of pornographic and erotic perversions, all done with a seared conscience and society’s acceptance, hence with little or no accompanying shame or guilt.”* (MacArthur, J.F., Jr. 1 & 2 Thessalonians)

### A. The body should not control the believer

*“Once sin is allowed to settle in your heart, it will not be turned out at your bidding. Custom becomes second nature, and its chains are not easily broken...”*

*Habits are like stones rolling down hill – the further they roll, the faster and more ungovernable is their course. Habits, like trees, are strengthened by age. A boy may bend an oak when it is a sapling – a hundred men cannot root it up, when it is a full grown tree. ... So it is with habits: the older the stronger – the longer they have held possession, the harder they will be to cast out.”* (J.C. Ryle, Thoughts For Young Men)

### B. The believer should not act like the unbeliever

“And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (**Gal. 5:24**).

*“Overexposure to such temptations will only lower one’s resistance and diminish one’s outrage, thus weakening spiritual resolve and virtue.”* (MacArthur, J.F., Jr. 1 & 2 Thessalonians)

### C. The believer should not take advantage of others

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Mt 18:6).

“Believe me, you cannot stand still in your souls. Habits of good or evil are daily strengthening in your hearts. Every day you are either getting nearer to God, or further off.” (J.C. Ryle, Thoughts for Young Men)

“Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 6:9–10).

### III. Divine Presence

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit** who dwells in you.” (Rom. 8:11).

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but **if by the Spirit you put to death** the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:13–14).

*“Your soul is the one thing worth living for. It is the part of you which ought always be considered first. No place, no employment is good for you, which injures your soul. No friend, no companion deserves your confidence, who makes light of your soul's concerns. Set your immortal soul before your mind's eye, and when men ask you why you live as you do, answer them in his spirit, “I live for my soul.”* (J.C. Ryle, Thoughts for Young Men)