



QUESTION 1

How would you define sin? If we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) how can we ever live a holy life? Why does God demand holiness knowing we can never attain it on our own?

QUESTION 2

If God's will for our life is to be holy, how much of our day is spent trying to live in a holy way? How do we balance a pursuit of holy living with the idea that we can't earn God's love or grace?

QUESTION 3

In Titus 3 we understand there is a new birth and a new life given to us by God through the Holy Spirit. How does that new life manifest itself in how we live or does it show up at all?

QUESTION 4

Why do you think so many people who were 'sinners' liked to hang around Jesus? Can the same be said of us? Are we mature enough?

GOING DEEPER

In ancient letters, occasionally an author would remind the recipient of things the person already knew, at times indicating that such things should be put into practice. Reminders and repetition of what people had learned were considered essential for moral progress. In the same way, once more Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the teaching they had received: *For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.* Over and over again he urges the Thessalonians to recall what they already knew (cf. 1:5; 2:1, 2, 5, 11; 3:3, 4; 5:2), and when his teaching was remembered, his hope was that the Thessalonians would not ignore it but would put it into practice.

The *instructions* they received were not mere guidelines that could be ignored but, more precisely, "commands" or "orders" (Acts 5:28; 16:24; 1 Tim. 1:5, 18; and cf. the verb in 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:4, 6, 10, 12). They should not be glibly put aside or ignored according to the whims of those in the church. When an ancient author wanted to speak of an authoritative command that should be obeyed, such as that of a military commander, a philosopher, or a deity, this is a term that was readily at hand. Therefore, when the Thessalonians accepted the apostolic proclamation as the word of God (2:13), they also came under obligation to obey the moral commandments that accompanied it.