

ELIM ABERYSTWYTH, 2024

STAND FIRM

Learning from the Letters to the
Church of the Thessalonians

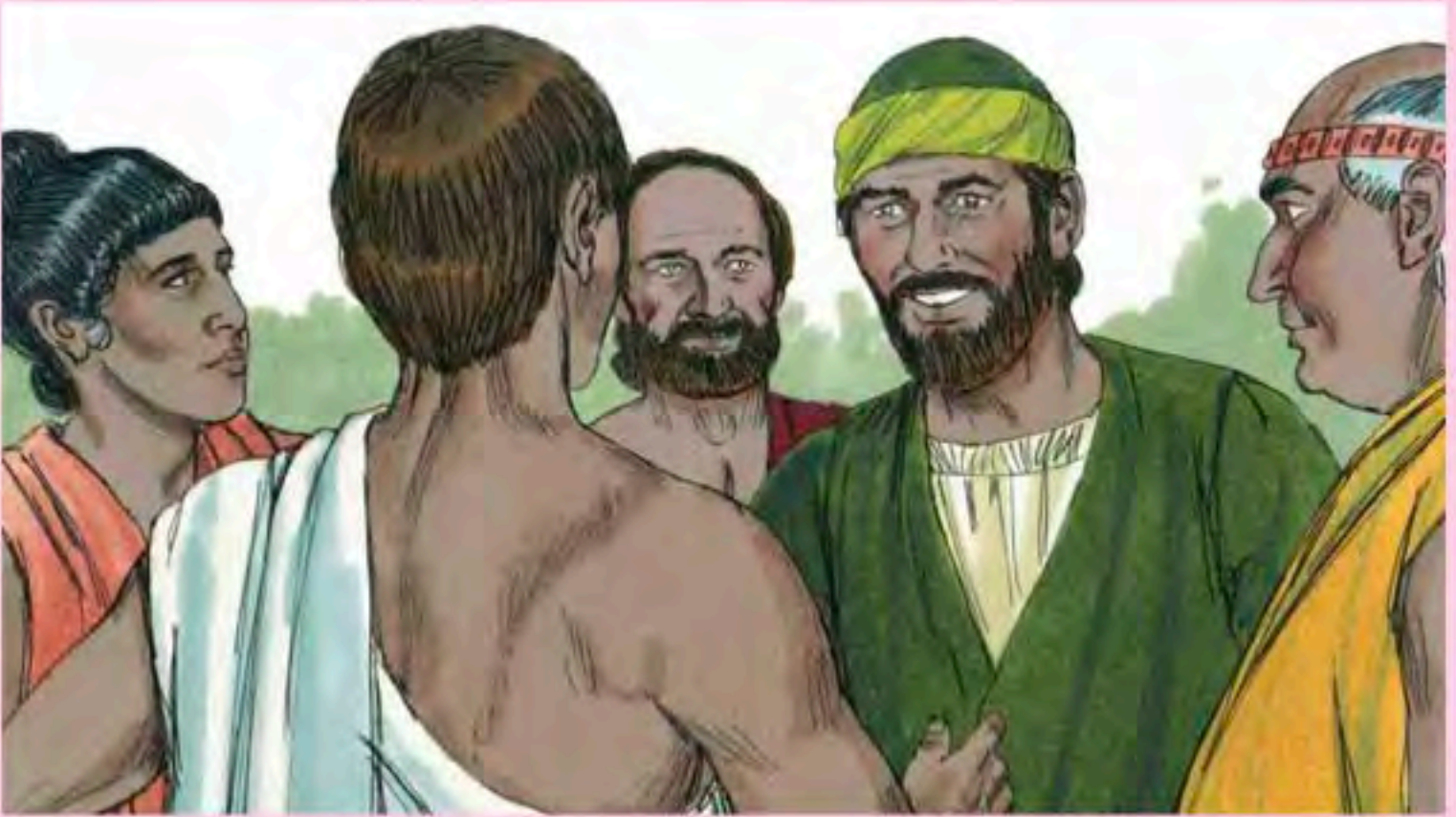
1 Thessalonians 4

PAUL WAS WRITING TO ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA TO LIVE A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD.

HE FOCUSES ON FOUR MAIN THEMES:

- **HOLINESS/SEXUAL PURITY – VS 3-8**
- **BROTHERLY/SISTERLY LOVE – VS 9 – 10**
- **HONEST HARD WORK IS GOOD – VS 11 - 12**
- **RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH – VS 13 – 18**

THE REALITY OF THESE THEMES ARE AS TRUE FOR US TODAY AS THEY WERE IN THE FIRST CENTURY ANO DOMINI



PAUL AND SILAS FIRST BROUGHT THE GOSPEL TO THE THESSALONIA NS – ACTS 17: 1-4

17 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to

Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

² As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said.

4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.



**HOWEVER THEY AND
THE NEWLY FORMED
CHURCH FACED
PERSECUTION FROM
SOME JEWS AND PEOPLE
OF THE CITY – ACTS 17: 5
– 9**

- They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd
- They dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials

- There crime was that they welcomed Paul and Silas into their house.
- And Paul and Silas were proclaiming another King other than Caesar.

- Paul had been longing to go back and finish what he started – 1 Thess. 2:17-19
- Paul feared that the persecution they faced when they first visited may have affected the young Church so he sent Timothy to encourage them – 1 Thess. 3:1-5



**PAUL'S LETTER TO THE
THESSALONIANS WAS
TO BOTH ENCOURAGE
THEM AND TO SET SOME
GROUND RULES AS NEW
CHRISTIANS –
1 THESS. 4:1-2**

4 As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.



**HOLINESS/
SEXUAL PURITY
1THESS.
4: 3-8**

- 3 It is God's will that
you should be
sanctified: that you
should avoid sexual
immorality;**
- 4 that each of you
should learn to
control your own
body^[a] in a way that
is holy and
honorable,**
- 5 not in passionate
lust like the
pagans, who do not
know God;**

6 and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. [b] The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before.

7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

8 Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

- According to John R.W Stoth, Thessalonica was particularly associated with the worship of deities called the Cabiri, in whose rites 'gross immorality was promoted under the name of religion'.
- Many of the converts to Christianity may have been temple prostitutes or people who may have patronized them.

- In fact sexual immorality was normalized in that society.
- The Church was not exempt from these external pressures.

- Paul admonished them to exercise self control which is one of the fruit of the Spirit – Gal 5:22-23
- And not take advantage of others vs 4 -8
- Paul also warned them of the serious consequences for sexual sin
 - King David – 2 Samuel 12:9-10



**WHAT IS GOD
TELLING US TODAY
ABOUT HOLINESS/
SEXUAL PURITY**

- Sex is a divinely given gift, to be enjoyed (and not withheld) within the context of marriage -
- Heb. 13:4 :Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

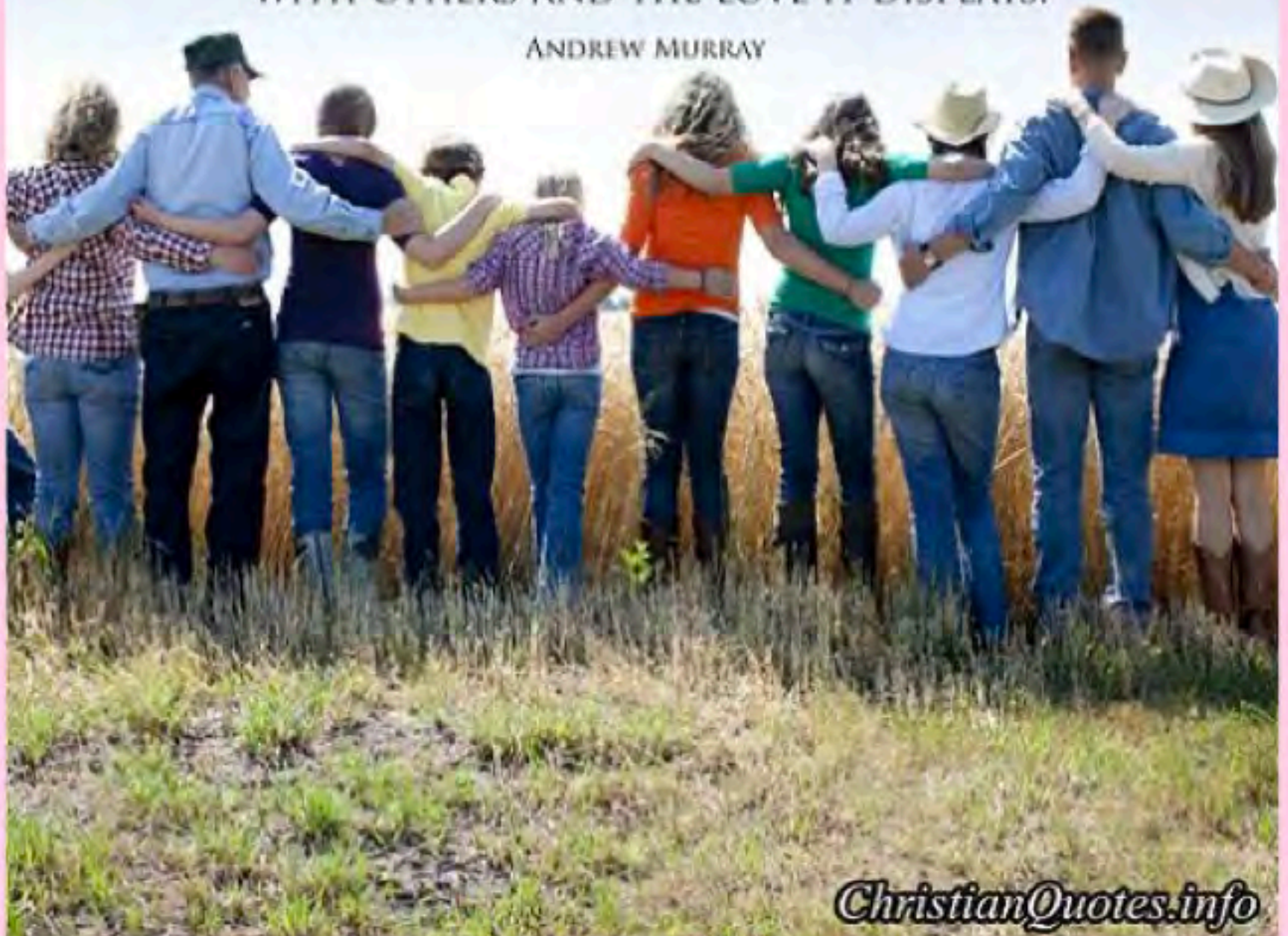
- **It should only be between a married man and woman**
- **Lev. 18:22 - You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.**
- **Romans 1:26-28**
- **²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged the natural sexual relations for unnatural ones,²⁷ and likewise the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed in their passions for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.**

- **Flee sexual sin.**
- **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**
- **18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.**

OUR LOVE TO GOD IS MEASURED BY OUR EVERYDAY
FELLOWSHIP

WITH OTHERS AND THE LOVE IT DISPLAYS."

ANDREW MURRAY



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**BROTHERLY/
SISTERLY LOVE –
1 THESS. 4:9-10**

9 Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

10 And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more,

- Paul commended the love that existed within the Thessalonian Church and encouraged them to do more – vs 9 – 10, Heb. 13:1-3

13 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.

2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.



**THE STORY OF THE
SHEEP AND GOAT –
MATT. 25:31 - 40**

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

**35 For I was hungry
and you gave me
something to eat, I
was thirsty and you
gave me something
to drink, I was a
stranger and you
invited me in,**

**36 I needed clothes
and you clothed
me, I was sick and
you looked after
me, I was in prison
and you came to
visit me.'**

MATT. 25:31-40

**37 "Then the righteous
will answer him,
'Lord, when did we
see you hungry and
feed you, or thirsty
and give you
something to drink?
38 When did we see
you a stranger and
invite you in, or
needing clothes and
clothe you?**

MATT. 25:31-40

**39 When did we see
you sick or in prison
and go to visit you?’**

**40 “The King will
reply, ‘Truly I tell
you, whatever you
did for one of the
least of these
brothers and sisters
of mine, you did for
me.’**

**Work Hard,
Be Kind,
and Amazing
Things Will
Happen.**

**HONEST HARD WORK
IS GOOD – 1 THESS.
4: 11 – 12, ECC. 5:12**

**¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you,
¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**



RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH – 1 THESS. 4:13 - 18

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 THESS. 4:13-18

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

- The Thessalonian Church must have lost some people and Paul was encouraging them as they grieved their loved ones – vs 13
- My sister's dream after my mother was called home.
- He spoke about the coming of Christ and the rapture of believers – vs 14 – 17
- We should be encouraged that we will see our loved ones who have slept in the Lord – vs 18

May we be encouraged..

- To live a life of holiness and sexual purity
- To love each other even as Christ has loved us
- To live a quiet and impactful life of service to others
- That one day we will see our loved ones and friends who have slept in the Lord
- And that one day God will come and take us home to a place where there is no pain, suffering, mourning and lack



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