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INSIGHTS FOR HOLY LIVING

I THESSALONIANS 4:1-8

PART ONE

When the Apostle Paul came to Thessalonica, 19 and a half centuries ago, he not only entered a busy seaport on the Aegean Sea, he came to reach a group of people well exposed to sin.

- The culture they were raised in had elevated the human body to its pinnacle. It was displayed for its beauty in statuary and in the flesh.
- When they went to school, exercise as well as most athletic games were performed in either near or total nudity.
- They were taught that physical beauty and mental fitness were the greatest goals of life.
- All the entertainment of their day was replete with all forms of sexual overtones. The literature of the day followed close behind.
- Watching their parents they had learned moral standards of men who had wives to bear legal offspring, mistresses for pleasure.
- In their daily and weekly worship services at the Greek pantheon they experienced licentiousness, debauchery and revelry of the lowest forms. The temples always were well supplied with both male and female slaves.
- At work orgies to the gods often were celebrated as a part of advancing divine favor.

It was to this degenerated society that Paul walked. He was barely recovered from the terrible scourging and horrible imprisonment he had experienced in Philippi a few short days before. He was the target of constant threats, awful accusations and direct assault.

Within three plus weeks, a group of idol worshippers, sexual addicts and hot tempered longshoremen as his congregation. He had to train them to live in a Christly way and protect them from error that surrounded them with the evil hearted false teachers teaching errors like:

DENYING CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY

- I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (KJV)

- Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (KJV)
- When the false teachers were saying go back to your old ways because a second mark of erroneous teaching is:

THEY DENY CHRISTIANS MUST LIVE THE SEPARATED LIFE

- 2 Timothy 3:1-2 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (KJV)
- What does Paul do? He lays down the way of Christ . What was it? Self-help and 12 steps? Was it gradual self-reformation?

No, just a good dose of the gospel. He called them to HOLY LIVING. He said they needed to separate from the world's standards and adhere to God's.

Sometimes Christians don't stay away from the world. Over the years this error has been called worldliness. What is this separated life God calls us to?

First Thessalonians chapter four has the seven secrets of separated to God, holy living. Last time we saw the first two. Do you remember them?

1. 4:1 = We must be pleasing God by our *conduct*.

2. 4:2 = We must live according to His *commands*.

- The word command is a military word for orders passed down.

Now, lets explore the rest of the content of the true message Paul delivered from God.

3. 4:3 = We must see our *calling* is to do God's will

- In 1 Th 4:3 its be pure.
- In 1 Th 5:18 its be thankful.
- In Ephesians 5:18 its be full of the Spirit.
- In 1 Peter 2:13-15 its be submissive to authority.
- In 1 Peter 4;19; 5:10 its be ready to suffer.
- In 2 Peter 3:9 its be saved.

4. 4:4 = We must be *committed* to avoiding sin, or personal holiness.

- God says our bodies must be pure as His temple:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (KJV)

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

- God says we are responsible to flee.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NIV)

What are some of the moeal sins we must flee?

- FORNICATION is any mental or physical sexual contact prior to marriage. This includes videos, movies, magazines, girl watching, living together, petting, parking.
- ADULTERY is is any mental or physical sexual contact outside your marriage. This includes fantasizing, photos, movies, videos.
- IF YOU'VE STARTED- God SAYS STOP. IF YOU HAVEN'T God SAYS KEEP PURE.

WHAT ARE THE REST?

5. 4:5 = We must be in *contrast* to the world because our minds are renewed. How?

6. 4:6-7 = We must remember God *cautions* us to avoid rejecting Him.

7. 4:8 = We must accept our *challenge* to go on to even more.

Well, how did they do? Very well. Remember the time we studied the epitaphs of the 1st century grave markers? The theme blameless living! Did they get it? Within three plus weeks, a group of idol worshippers, sexual addicts and hot tempered longshoremen He had to train them to live in a Christly way and protect them from error that surrounded them. Yes they got the message. Lets listen too!