

Pleasing God More and More

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[0:00] 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, and we'll read the first 12 verses. Finally, brothers, 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. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

It is God's will that you should be sanctified, that you should avoid sexual immorality, that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lusts like the heathen who do not know God, and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.

The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. Now about brotherly love, we do not need to write to you.

[1:23] You yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

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

An 18-year-old boy, newly shaved head, crisp, new uniform, new black boots, standing in line for the first time.

And the drill instructor walks along the line, looking over each one, and out of the corner of his eye, this young man watches as his drill instructor comes closer and closer.

And the drill instructor has muscles bulging in places where this young man didn't even know places existed. And his voice is nothing but a gravelly growl from hours of screaming.

[2:48] And this young man's stomach fills up with butterflies. What is he thinking? Well, if he's smart, the young man's thinking, whatever I do, I have to listen to this guy, and I have to do whatever he tells me to do.

Whatever it takes to do it. Well, Jesus is coming to us through his Apostle Paul, and he has something to say to us, and so we're standing in line, like that young man, waiting to hear what Jesus has to say.

Now, it's kind of like that drill instructor, in that if we're smart, we're going to listen to what he says and do whatever it takes to do it. But it isn't like that drill instructor, because Jesus doesn't come to us as a bellicose, yelling army sergeant.

He comes to us as our Lord and our Savior and our brother. And we want to listen with the same intensity as when you listen to a drill instructor, but he really is addressing us as brothers.

If you have your Bibles, turn in them to 1 Thessalonians 4, and just notice verse 1, how it begins. Finally, brothers.

[4:16] Brothers. Paul's going to ask us to do some things. He's going to urge us to do some things. He's going to give us some instructions, but he doesn't come to us as a drill sergeant.

He says, brothers. And that's what you are, brothers. You're my glory. You're my joy. I love you. Will you listen to me?

Will you listen to me, brothers, with the same intensity and the same affection as that you would listen to an older brother? And that's the way we need to listen to Jesus tonight, because he's coming to us as our brother, but he's also coming to us as our Lord.

Tonight, we're going to be talking about pleasing God. Pleasing God. And that's what this whole section is about. We instructed you how to live in order to please God as, in fact, you are living.

Now we ask and urge you and the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. So out of Paul's pastoral heart, he comes to the Thessalonians and says, now, brothers, I ask you, no, I urge you to keep walking keep living to please God.

[5:30] So let me ask you tonight, where are you spiritually? Where are you spiritually? Do you need to be reminded again of this message and this passage and what your life is all about?

The Thessalonians were only in the faith for a few months, and yet Paul felt that he needed to remind them, to encourage them, to keep walking and keep pleasing God.

And if they needed to be reminded, they were only in the faith for a few months, surely we need to be reminded of that fact. We need this. So, where is pleasing God on your radar?

Where is it on your radar screen? Paul says that this is what life is all about. The NIV translates it, we instructed you how to live in order to please God.

But literally it says this, we instructed you on how to walk and to please God. So he says, we told you how to walk and we told you how to please God, but he puts them together into one how-to statement.

[6:39] And so he equates them. The way that we live in the Christian life is to please God. Walking and pleasing God in the Christian life should be the same exact thing.

The Christian life should be a natural display of this is what it looks like to please God by the way I'm living. So do you follow what I'm saying? He says, remember the instructions that we gave you. How to walk and to please God. And he puts those two things together. And so our life as a Christian is to be a life totally given over, totally lived out, as one long pursuit of pleasing God, of God's pleasure.

So everything that we do needs to be swallowed up in this one thing. We are here to pursue God's joy, God's desires, to bring Him happiness.

So I ask, that's what we're about. Where is pleasing God on your radar? Is this the one thing shaping your life?

[7:47] See, Paul considered the Christian life to be summed up in those two words. We're here to please God. And that means that there should be a huge blip on everyone's screens that says, pleasing God.

And it should be right in front of our eyes where we can all see it. Now, so much of the time, for whatever reason, we're living life, and the fact that we are supposed to be making God happy, it doesn't weigh on our hearts.

I'm not going into a situation, we're not going into a lot of situations saying, how can I please God while I'm here? So what motivates you?

Something is motivating you. Why are you doing the things that you're doing? A lot of times, we do the things that we do just to please men. So, and that can be good and that can be bad in certain ways, but if I want to please you, if I go into this, let's say, this preaching experience and I want to please men, and so, I think of things and I say things in a way that you want to hear.

And that could be good because if you enjoy what you hear and it motivates you to put it into practice, that is good. Proverbs teaches us that pleasant words promote instruction.

[9:06] But if my motivation doesn't rise any higher than that, than just to make you happy, then I am missing the point of my life. I'm just missing it.

The point of my life, the teaching and preaching, is to please God. So, why do you choose to be a deacon? Why do you choose to be a Sunday school teacher? And you can say, well, well, well, I love grace fellowship.

I want to see grace fellowship prosper. And they asked me to do it and I could do it. I had the time and so I went ahead and I did it. Is that a good reason? Yes.

It is a good reason. But if it's the only reason that we have, if pleasing God never gets into that equation anywhere, then, you're just living for man. You're living for some lesser thing.

You're living so that grace fellowship can grow. And, that might be good, but if you're not seeking God's pleasure in it, then you aren't living up to what Jesus asked you to do and to be about in this passage.

[10:11] Now, sometimes we do things, we're talking about why we do things if we're not doing things that please God. Sometimes we do things out of routine. Don't you do that? I wake up, I get coffee, and I sit in my chair, and I read my Bible because that's what I do every morning.

So, why are you here on Sunday evening? Because I always come to Sunday evenings. It's my routine. So, that's a good thing. Those are all good things.

But, is that the full sum of our motive? Or, is there a desire there to please God? That I see God behind this, and I want to do Sunday evening, and I want to be a deacon, and I want to be a Sunday school teacher, for all those good reasons, but for the most part, for the final reason, I want to do it to make God happy.

Is that the desire, or are we just creatures of habit? And maybe it, maybe it isn't routine. Maybe instead, it's earthly reward. So, why do you work hard at your job?

Well, I want a promotion. I want to make more money. I want to earn more money. Why do you discipline your children? Because I want a home that's marked by peace and quiet, and spanking, and disciplining, and teaching your children.

[11 : 29] That is the way to have a home of peace and quiet. And things go better when you do it that way. And that's what I want. Those are all perfectly legitimate motives for doing all of those things.

But, without the desire to please God, without the desire to please God weighing on our hearts, all that stuff is idolatry.

It's just evidence that I love me and my ease and my comfort and money more than I love God. If I'm not pursuing God's pleasure, then I'm surely pursuing just mine.

Well, Paul knows that there's a constant drift away from the main thing. And so he asks us, he says, I ask you as a brother to remember what I said when I was with you.

I urge you to keep doing the things that you're doing and do it more and more. You see that at the end of verse 1. Do this more and more.

[12 : 34] Now, the pursuit of God's pleasure, it has no limits. You can't go overboard if you're pursuing God's pleasure. You can't please Him enough. There's no part of your life that you can say, this is mine.

This is where my will is done. This is what I like to do. And so this is my area for me. This is mine. Every part of our life needs to be permeated, completely filled with this goal.

And so I must hand over more and more of my life to this pursuit. So this week, I should be pursuing God more than I did last week. And a month from now, I should be pursuing God more than I did this week.

So why are you saving up for the car that you're saving up for? Why are you doing the retirement the way that you're doing? Why are you Facebooking? Why are you blogging? Why are you reading those books?

Why are you coaching that sport? Why are you watching that show? Why are you pursuing that career that you are pursuing? Why are you friends with that person? Why do you do the things that you do?

[13 : 42] Is it to please yourself? Or is it to please God? Are you doing everything that you do for God's pleasure? you aren't?

I'm not. None of us are. And so we have more and more work to do. We need to excel still more, the RSV puts it.

We need to run harder. We need to think harder. We need to examine our life more thoroughly. And we need to see and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to see those blind spots in our life where I have this little part of my life that I'm not giving over.

This is just for me and my pleasure. We need Jesus Christ help. Because Jesus Christ isn't giving us just a one time assignment, is he?

He's saying this is the mission statement for your life. This is what your life is to be all about. My glory, my joy, and my fame.

[14 : 46] A lot of churches and companies have mission statements. And they define what that group is about and what they're going to do and why they do the things that they do.

When I worked at NISCO, not Nipsco, NISCO here in town, we carried our mission statement on a badge with us all the time. It was required. Anytime someone stopped and asked me, they never did, but theoretically, they ask you, what is the mission statement?

You had to be able to have that card and be able to at least read it to them, say it back to them.

Well, that is what this is to us, is pleasing God our mission statement.

We should be carrying it around all the time with us. So God says, please me. Please me. That's why I made you. That's why I saved you. That's why you're a Christian, in order to fulfill this mission statement.

Now, I can imagine someone saying that that sounds absolutely miserable. You want me to give up my life and my desires to please God, to make God happy.

[16:04] Why? Why would I do that? If you're saying that, that tells me that you're not born again.

You don't see that this requirement, this command, this mission statement, is the most loving thing that God could tell us to do.

you don't have the spirit working in you to pant after God's ways. And so you're dead and your taste buds are dead. Because right now, unless my Christian brothers and sisters are very sick, their mouths are watering.

Because they have a new, God-given taste buds. And when they put their tongue on pleasing God, they find nothing but sweetness.

They want that. And they say with the psalmist, oh, that my ways were steadfast to obey your decrees. They know that pleasing God is the most loving thing that God can tell us to do.

[17:15] And I'll repeat that. God commands you to pursue his joy, his joy, because it is the most loving thing that God can tell you to do. Well, how can I say that?

Because we were made for something bigger than ourselves. High schooler, you were made for something bigger than yourself. You were made for a higher purpose, a grander purpose than pursuing your own pleasure.

You were made for God. You were made to make God happy. You were made for his joy. And to see God's glory in Christ Jesus, that is what you were made for. To behold his glory, and then when you turn from that, to live in order to please him.

And if that is what you were made for, that God created you to do, then you're going to be happiest when you are doing that.

So the most loving thing that God can do is to tell you to please him. Because to please him means your joy. To glorify him and rejoice in him, to do everything that you do for his pleasure, it means your happiness.

[18:24] happiness. So a person who is doing what they were never made to do is not a happy person. So how happy do you think LeBron James would be working at the DMV?

So he stands in line all day, he stamps cards, and he takes pictures. And he would be saying, look at me. I'm 6'8". I have this unnatural wingspan.

I have massive hands. I can jump through the roof. And my brain is wired to play basketball. And look at me.

I'm absolutely miserable. And that's exactly how we are if we're not pleasing God. He made us to get lost in his greatness and to pursue our life in just making him happy, to exalt him, to live for him. And so it's no wonder that sinners are so often so miserable. And in the long run, everything they do is so sad.

[19:32] Because they're like LeBron James working in the DMV. They were never made to pursue themselves and their pleasures. So high schooler, college student, are you restless?

You're restless. You want more. You feel like there's more to life than this than what you've got? And I tell you, there is. There is. You've been digging around in the dirt trying to find the water, and God is offering you a fountain, a fountain of life.

And he's offering you a life bigger than yourself, bigger than what you've been working on and what you've been scheming on, bigger than your circle of friends, bigger than your Facebook and your athletics and your video games.

He's offering you the life that you were meant to have before sin interrupted everything. And that new life that he's holding out before you, it begins when you come to Christ Jesus.

Your first act of bowing your knee, of submitting to him and repenting, of pursuing all those old things, that first act is pleasing to God.

[20:47] Now, it doesn't save you. Christ alone on the cross, in his resurrection, his death, his life, is all that saves.

But you should know this. When you embrace Christ for the first time, when you take him and you hold him to yourself for the first time, that is when you start to please God.

God. Because only when you trust in Jesus Christ can you please God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. But when you embrace Christ Jesus and take him on board and take him to yourself, that's pleasing to the Father.

So when you embrace Christ Jesus and you say, I am nothing but unrighteousness, but you are my righteousness. righteousness. And I have nothing in my life. I have no good thing, but in you is everything good.

And I have no power. I have no strength, but you Christ, you are my saving power. And I am nothing but weakness. That's when we start to please God.

[22:01] When we say, God, I've been living for the wrong things. I've been trying to make myself happy in so many other things, but now I see in Jesus Christ He is everything.

He is beautiful. He is all my pleasure. And loving Him is my joy and my delight. And that brings God the Father pleasure.

So when we embrace Christ, we take God the Father at His word, and that pleases Him. And so I'm not saying, we need to be very clear, I'm not saying that faith is a work.

And I'm not saying this is what we do and this makes us righteous, but this is the first step that every person takes when they begin to please God.

See, because God throughout His word, in hundreds of sermons, is saying, this is my Son, and I love Him, and with Him I am well pleased.

[23:01] Listen to Him. And faith is agreeing with God. It is agreeing with Him. It's saying, you know what, in Him, there is everything that I need.

He is my wisdom, He is my strength, He is majestic, He is everything. He is my dignity, and my delight, and my joy, and He's infinitely pleasurable, and I will listen to Him.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we agree with God the Father. And so, that pleases Him. When I say, here, here's my wife's chocolate chip cookies, they are delicious.

They're so chocolatey, they're so soft and warm. Taste and see how delicious these are. And you say, no thanks. I know that they're good, I believe they're good, but not now, I'd rather not.

You know what, that is an insult to me, isn't it? I don't care what you say with your mouth, until you taste and see that those cookies are good, I'm not going to be happy.

[24:07] And so, until you stop making excuses, until you come to Jesus Christ, you cannot please the Father, you cannot please God, because you're insulting Him, because God loves Jesus Christ.

He loves Him, He finds in Him everything that's pleasurable, and we're saying, you know what, what pleases you doesn't please me, I don't like that. So, how can we please God, unless we agree with Him about His Son?

Unless we give up the old way, and start pursuing this new way. So, I hope you understand what I'm saying. I'm saying, don't give up your pursuit of pleasure, I'm saying, you need to turn away from that way, and pursue it in Jesus Christ.

So, we need to taste and see how delicious Jesus is. And so, until you start enjoying Jesus Christ, and eating, and feasting on Him, then you cannot please God.

Or to put it another way, a man was digging in a field, and he found a treasure in the field, and in great joy, he buried that treasure, and he went and he sold everything that he had in order to buy the field.

[25:35] Was that man sad that he had to give up everything that he had in order to gain this treasure? No, because he did it in great joy.

In great joy, he sold all that he had because it was worth it. And Christ Jesus is worth it. pleasing God is worth it. You won't be the loser for it. You will have gained everything when you give up trying to please yourself and start pleasing God.

And a man is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. And so don't be a fool. Don't be a fool.

Don't hold on to those things that are just going to be taken away from you. Don't hold on to the mud pie that you've been playing with in the street when God is offering you an eternal Christmas dinner forever and ever.

So my point up until now is this. The meaning of the Christian life, what we as brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus ought to be about is pleasing God.

[26:41] This is the mission statement that we should have on us all the time that we should carry with us everywhere we go. It's the banner that flies over our life. It should mark everything that we

do. So that is what our life is to be about.

And pleasing God begins when we start trusting in Jesus Christ for everything that we need to be right with God. When we start believing him and embracing Jesus Christ as everything that we need for life, that is when we begin to please God.

And then the rest of our Christian life is living that out. Pleasing God begins and ends and centers on Jesus Christ.

And so let no one think here that I can go out and just start doing things in my own strength and that will please God. Because until you embrace Christ Jesus as a Christian until we are doing everything we do out of delight and love for Jesus Christ, we cannot please God.

God. And that's verse one. Let's look at verse two. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

[27:57] How serious is this command to please God? It's absolutely necessary. It's not in the least bit optional.

Why? Because these instructions, come to us from the Lord Jesus. It comes to us with the Lord Jesus and his seal, his authority on it.

So when a president writes an executive order, on that paper, he tells what he wants and he signs his name and impressed on that document is the presidential seal.

And he puts that there so that everyone knows that these instructions come with his authority. They come with all the backing of his office and the dignity that that office carries.

And so he who disobeys the instructions on this presidential executive order, they disobey the president. And so Jesus has commissioned the apostle Paul.

[29:00] He's put a seal of approval and authority on the apostle Paul. And so when Paul gives us these instructions, they come with the Lord Jesus, with his authority, backing them all up.

And so they absolutely must be obeyed. Or we could put it another way. How serious are these instructions? The word instructions is a military word.

So let's go back to the beginning. Remember our young man and he's standing at attention and he's waiting for his drill instructor. how is he waiting?

He's waiting, ready to listen, and he is committed to doing whatever that drill instructor says. Now, let's suppose that this young man wasn't ready, he wasn't committed to obeying him, and so the drill instructor says, drop and give me 50, and this young man says, well, you know, 50 push-ups, that's rather uncomfortable.

And I'm just not in the mood right now for 50, so I'm going to give you 10, I'll drop and give you 10. Does 10 push-ups sound okay?

[30:17] Well, after that young man pulls his head out of his neck from getting screamed at, he would see that military instructions are not optional.

They are not optional. And pleasing God is just that serious. Now I said, Paul's coming to us gently, he's coming to us as a brother, but we should never take that as something that, well, we don't have to listen, we don't have to obey, because he's coming to us with the Lord Jesus, his authority.

And he's coming to us with instructions that the Lord's army must obey. And so, you cannot go home tonight and not try to please God more.

Because Jesus tells you to please God more and more. And this isn't coming from Jason Webb, because who cares what he thinks, really. Because this is a word that comes from the Lion of Judah that we heard about this morning.

And he tells us to please God more, and the expectation is that we will do it more and more. Now, Paul's instructions, they move in a cone shape, in a funnel shape.

[31:38] They start out really wide. Wow, that's really loud. And at the top, and they get more and more narrow as he goes along.

So, Paul, what are we to do? We're to please God. Paul, how do we do that? That's what we come to next. He's going to move in a little bit closer.

He says, it's God's will that you should be sanctified. So, he starts out really wide, and he's getting narrower and narrower in the passage. And then we see in verse 3, it says, it's God's will that you should be sanctified.

So, how do we please God? By being sanctified. This life of pleasing God is a life of constant sanctification, of being made more holy.

holy. So, holiness is God's will for you. So, did you hear that? Holiness is God's will for you.

[32 : 39] And I think I need to repeat that because people get confused about what God wants from them, what he wants for their life, what his will for their life is.

They get confused, and they're not sure what they should be doing a lot of time. In the Bible, there's only two ways that God speaks about his will. He has his decreative will and his perceptive will, or it's his will of decree and his will of desire.

And so, in his decreative will, it refers to the fact that God decrees all things to come to pass. And they all, everything that comes to pass, comes to pass according to his will.

Listen to Ephesians 1.11. In him, we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

All things according to the counsel of his will. So, that's what we're talking about. Everything comes to pass because he has willed it. And that will to us is lost in mystery.

[33 : 47] There's no way that any of us can know where that will is going to take us in our life, our world, anything. We can get the most broad outline from the scripture.

We know that in the end, Jesus Christ is coming. We know that much. But between here and now, we don't know. Who's going to be the president eight years, ten years from now?

No one knows. It's unknowable. Sometimes it's called his secret will. Well, on the other side, you have this, God's will of desire.

And that refers to what God has commanded us to do. So here in 1 Thessalonians, we have an example of that. It is God's will that you should be sanctified. What does God will?

What does he want from you, from me? He wills for your sanctification. He wants you to be holy.

And in this sense, not everything works according to the counsel of his will.

[34 : 48] because we sin. But we can know it because he is very clear about telling us what he wants.

He gives us the Ten Commandments. He gives us wisdom literature, the Proverbs. And he gives us apostolic instruction telling us what God wants from us. And that's all God's will for us.

And we can know it. It's called his revealed will. Now, the reason I'm talking about those two things is there gets to be some confusion.

Some people are confused when people start introducing a third kind of will. It's this sort of mysterious third kind of will. And you hear about it when you hear sort of anxious Christian teenagers or anxious young people, Christian people saying, I don't know what God's will for my life is.

I don't know what he wills for me, what college I should go to. I don't know who God wants for me to marry. Or you hear men in their midlife crisis saying, I don't know what God wills for me in this life.

[36 : 00] I don't know what he wants. Should I go here? Should I go back to school? Should I get another job? Should I do this? Should I do that? Did I miss God's will for my life somewhere down the path? And now I'm out of his will.

And I'm no longer in the center of his will. And they act like God's will is some sort of mysterious prize that we have to figure out. And God's hiding it from us.

But if we pray enough, and if we look at random Bible scriptures enough, and if we read the road signs right, then we'll be able to find it. But you know what? You can look high and low in scripture, and you will not find anything like that.

God hasn't put us in the middle of a corn maze, and then put clues throughout. This is how you get just to the right place in your life. You don't look for the signs and the wonders, and you don't look for the stars in the sky, and impressions, and feelings, and things like that.

And you don't put out fleeces, and you don't look at random Bible passages that God just wrote just for you. So if you're thinking that way, give it up.

[37 : 10] Give it up. God's not hiding anything from you. He's not. And the things that he's hiding from you, you're not going to find them out.

So here it is in the broad daylight, what you are supposed to be doing with your life. It's God's will that you should be sanctified.

Young person, what college should you go to? Should you go to IUSB? Should you go to Purdue? You're not going to find the answer to that question in the Bible.

God didn't write the scripture to point you to IUSB or to Purdue. He wrote the Bible so that you would be holy, and that you would love Jesus.

Now, you're going to have to use scriptural wisdom. You're going to have to ask people, what is best, do you think? And then in the end, you're going to have to make a decision and then trust that God will lead you where he wants you to go.

[38:17] But you know what God's will for you is in this situation. Whether you go to IUSB or whether you go to Purdue, he wants you to be holy wherever you're at.

And that is what he is looking for. That is what he wants from you. So, middle-aged man or woman, what should you do with your life?

Should you go back to school? Should you try something new? Should you start this business? I have no idea. But I do know what God wants from you.

He wants you to be holy. God will be holy. You are going to have to seek wisdom. And in the end you're going to have to make a decision and trust God that he cares for you and loves you.

But whatever you do, you should be pursuing this all long. I'm to be holy. And that is liberating. That should be liberating to all of you. I don't have to listen to some inner voice and just read my impressions just right.

[39:24] I don't have to be worried that I missed God's will for my life and I'm out of the center of it. God's will for us, God says to be sanctified.

But God, I really want to know, what should I do? Should I marry this person? God isn't going to give you any sort of clear, direct revelation. He's going to give you principles in Scripture.

He's going to give you wisdom. He's going to give you certain instructions. And then by obeying those things, we know that the things that aren't his will, it's never his will to marry outside of the Lord.

But we can't know those things. But we do know what we should be doing. We should be seeking to be holy. So God doesn't give us an atlas of how to live life.

He doesn't. He doesn't tell, this is an atlas to get to the ideal center of my will, and then by following these hidden road signs that you'll get there.

[40:26] In the Bible, he teaches us how to drive the car. And he says, be holy, and as you're being holy, you can trust me that I will do what is best for you. And so there's no reason for anyone here to be sitting around wondering what I should be doing with my life.

You shouldn't be sitting around there, brother and sister, thinking, I don't know what God's will for my life is. The fact is that you don't love Jesus enough, and so you need to work on that.

And I'm not saying, I'm saying, we all, none of us love Jesus like we ought, and so we need to be sanctified in that area. And none of us hate sin like we should, and so we need to be working on that area.

So you know what God's will is. It's not a mystery. He's putting it right here on the page in black and white. It says, be holy. Pursue sanctification.

And if you're doing that, you're not going to miss God's will. You're not going to miss out on the secret. You're going to be obeying. And so the question is, will you obey?

[41:38] So as I said, Paul is moving in a cone shape, in a funnel shape. He says, please God, that is what Christian life is all about. Well, how do we do that, Paul?

We be sanctified. We go for sanctification. And next, in a couple weeks, he's going to tell us, Lord willing, well, what exactly does that mean? And he says, it means avoiding sexual immorality in this case.

And so that's where we're going. But I think we've seen enough, I trust, to know that what we should be doing when we walk out the doors tonight. we should have our eyes ready, looking for the situation, looking how I can please God in it, and how I can be more holy.

We need to be looking for those things. things. Now, we've also seen enough tonight to know that we really need the Holy Spirit's help. Because we are so weak and so easily distracted.

What should be a giant blip on our screen is often some small fuzz on the side and we don't notice what we're even about. And it should show us that we need the Holy Spirit's help.

[42:55] hope. We need Jesus Christ. We need to be embracing him closer. Because this pursuit of holiness, this pursuit of pleasing God, it flows out of this love relationship with Jesus Christ.

Why am I doing the things that I'm doing? Because Jesus loved me. He gave himself up for me. So I'm going to live out of gratitude for that. And in Jesus, I find everything delightful and pleasing and so I'm going to love my brothers and sisters because that is what he wants for me.

And we need the Spirit's help to shine light into our heart so that we could see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We need his work.

We need his power. So as we go, we should be praying. And asking help. Well, let's pray now. Our Heavenly Father, we love you.

And we love you because you first loved us. We love you because we have found you to be a merciful Father, a kind Father, so patient.

[44 : 12] We have been so sinful this week and yet you are still with us and you pick us up and you carry us and you drag us and you put us through situations for our good and for our holiness and then in the difficulty of those situations you uphold us.

Thank you. Thank you that your will for us is holiness of Christ likeness because we want to be like Jesus. We need to be like Jesus.

If we're going to be the fathers and the mothers and the Christian boys and girls that we ought to be, if we are going to be the employers and the employees and the grandmas and the grandpas that you have called us to be, we need to be like Jesus.

He was perfect. So make us like him. Thank you that we have in him everything that we need. We have all strength. He has become to us wisdom and power and he is our righteousness and that we have every resource that we need in him.

And so father, I pray that you would take what is Jesus Christ and by the spirit put it into us, make it to be active in us. Holy spirit, will you give us grace that we would bear the fruit of the spirit, even as we live in the heat of this coming week.

[45 : 45] father, will you help us to be mindful of what we are to be about. You have painted it clearly before us in the word of God that we should be always and more and more about pleasing you and about being holy.

We help us to do those things. We are powerless. And so we ask that you would do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

and father, I pray for Jesus Christ's sake, for his glory, for the magnification of his name, that you would save someone tonight, that their eyes would be opened, that they could see how wonderful and good and pleasing Jesus Christ is and that in him they can be have righteousness where they have no righteousness of their own, where they can have life and food, bread and water.

Now they're starving and digging in the dirt. Will you turn away, turn them away from their idolatry and turn them to yourself. We pray these things in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen. Amen.