



Pleasing God

How we should walk

1Thessalonians 4:1 - Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.

What does Paul urge us to do?

Abound more and more and walk a walk that is pleasing to God.

What does it mean to abound?

Abound means to be great in number or amount or to have a large number or amount. It also means to be fully supplied or filled, to teem.

What should we abound in?

All good things which are blessings...

Prov 28:20 - A faithful man will abound with blessings
Joy, peace and hope (the fruit of the Spirit)...

Rom 15:13 - Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Giving thanks to God for what He has done for us.

2 Cor 4:15 - For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Everything: faith, speech (opportunities to share your faith with others), knowledge (of the Lord, His Word and will for us), diligence (not growing weary of doing good), love (sacrificially doing what is in the best interest of others around us with out expecting anything in return), and grace (demonstrating kindness to others even when they do not deserve it)...

2 Cor 8:7 - But as you abound in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us-- see that you abound in this grace also.

How would you sum up all the things we should as Christians abound in?

We as Christians should abound in life. All of these expressions of what we should abound in are aspects of life. Certainly as possessors of eternal life, all believers have life abundantly. Indeed, this is why Jesus came...

John 10:10 - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

What does it mean to have abundant life?

Not just the length (eternal), but also the breadth of life or the quality of life. Since we become possessors of eternal

life the moment we receive Jesus into our life, we also begin experiencing an improved quality of life as well.

Why does Paul urge us to abound in life more and more?

- We will never reach a point in our mortal lives where we "have arrived" and are no longer in need of growth.
- We should be growing in our relationship with the Lord. We should be coming to know more about Him and His ways.
- Abounding in life more and more is similar to quality improvement in my business: In the computer chip business, quality is not so much a matter of being perfect but knowing what quality level you have and having a corrective action program to make continuous improvement.

What benefits are there in coming to know more about God and His ways?

- We become more effective in our prayer life...
James 4:3 - You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
- We become more useful to Him.
- We receive even more blessings from God.
- It pleases God when we are growing in your relationship with Him.

What is the great danger in not growing in your relationship with the Lord?

You may be kidding yourself that you even have a relationship with Him.

2 Cor 13:5 - Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified.

If you are not growing in your relationship you are not testing yourself and it is too easy to convince yourself you have a relationship with the Lord when you do not. If you are not getting continuous reinforcement about your position in Christ, it may be because you never had a relationship with Him to begin with and this is a dangerous position to be in. If you die not having responded to Jesus, you will spend eternity separated from Him.

What did the Thessalonians receive from Paul and his ministry team when he was with them?

When Paul was with them, they apparently studied how they ought to walk and please God.

We know that we are saved by God's grace that we can not do anything to earn God's favor so why should we walk a walk that pleases God?

1. We are commanded to do so in this passage.
2. If we've been saved, we should have an attitude of gratitude for what Jesus has done for us.
3. It is natural to want to please those you love.
4. There are rewards in heaven for our good works that are properly motivated...
1 Cor 3:11-14 - For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

What does the term walk here mean?

The term walk means what we do: it is the action we take, the direction we go, the decisions we make.

If walking is good, why doesn't it say we should run?

Walking is better for the race of endurance, we need to think in terms of staying with it for the long haul. Also when you walk, we are better able to avoid dangers in the path and better able to make quick course corrections if necessary.

If slower is better than faster, why doesn't it say we should crawl?

- God didn't make us to crawl, He made us to walk. We should strive to be more mature and move faster than spiritual babes in Christ. Walking requires more maturity than crawling, better coordination, better able to see around you, it is more comfortable and requires less energy. You are also better able to respond to a change in direction.
- I learned the benefits of maturing in my ability to ski. It requires less energy and I had a more enjoyable experience when I graduated from wedge christies to parallel skiing.

What kind of things do you think the Thessalonians studied with Paul?

The remainder of this chapter gives us insight into this...

- 1Thes 4:2-12
- 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.
- 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;
- 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

V2 – commandments...

V3-5 – sanctification by abstaining from sexual immorality... Note that we have a role in our sanctification by the choices that we make. This is what Paul was referring to when he said we should work out our own sanctification (Philippians 2:12). Our sanctification (holiness, being set apart for a purpose, being cleansed for that purpose) is part of our salvation and salvation has past, present and future aspects to it. The working out of our own sanctification is a present aspect of salvation, setting yourself apart for service.

V6 – not to take advantage of or defraud others... acting honestly toward others because it is God who will see that justice is served.

V7-8 – not to be unclean (sinful) but to be holy (different than the world, set apart, sin-free)

V9 – love one another

V10 – grow in love

V11 – lead a quiet life (not stirring up conflict between people, not a flashy, high-visibility life like those who seek fame), mind your own business (not occupying yourself trying to improve others because you have plenty to deal with in your own life), work with your own hands (demonstrate a good work ethic, not being lazy making people do things for you that you should do yourself)

V12 – walk properly toward those outside the church (in such a manner that you do not harm your witness to them, honestly, with the love of Christ)

V13 – Paul goes on to talk about the rapture of the church which He calls our "blessed hope" in Titus 2:13. The connection here is that a walk which pleases God is one which does not have sorrow over departed brethren as unbelievers have because we will see them again in heaven.

How is it that our walking properly toward those outside the church is necessary so that we may lack nothing?

If we walk properly, we will have more opportunities to witness and make an eternal impact on the lives of others. The more we are a blessing to others, the more God blesses us.

What does it mean to please God?

To please means to be agreeable with, so to please God means to agree with Him. To please God means to align your priorities, your perspective, your will with His and to take action accordingly.

Paul not only urges us but it says that he exhorts us, what does exhort mean?

Exhort means to encourage.

How is Paul's urging us to walk a walk which pleases God an encouragement to us?

- Paul knows that walking a walk that is pleasing to God is an encouragement to him because he has experienced it.
- Walking a walk that is pleasing to God means that we receive continuous reinforcement of our relationship with Him. This is an encouragement because it reminds us of the reality of our eternal life...

Rom 8:16 - The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

What do the following verses tell us about what it means to walk a walk that is pleasing to God?

Rom 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. We should walk according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh. This means we should follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit who indwells us and has communion with our human spirit giving us guidance in all matters. This guidance is often referred to as our conscience. Now unbelievers also have a conscience but it is limited to God's law that is written on their hearts, it does not have the benefit of the Holy Spirit who helps us understand the Spirit behind the Law. The flesh

Rom 13:13 - Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

We are children of the light of Truth so we should conduct ourselves as those who can see where we are going...

Eph 5:8 - For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

- This means that we should not waste time by partying medicating our minds as an escape from this world.

Also, we should not allow ourselves to be distracted from the path we are on by sexual immorality. And we should avoid stirring up conflicts between people because this detracts from the reason God saved us which is to be a blessing to others in leading them to Jesus.

- We should not walk as if we are aligned with the world's perspective:

1 Cor 15:32 - "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

1 Cor 7:17-21 - 17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. 18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. 19

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. 20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.

Serve God wherever you are at. Don't think that you have make major changes in your situation. If God wants you to change jobs for example, He will make this clear. God is in control of all things and has placed you in your job for a purpose. He can use you wherever you are at.

2 Cor 5:7 - For we walk by faith, not by sight. Make decisions by the prompting of The Holy Spirit through your human spirit. This always requires a step of faith but as we become experienced in taking these steps of faith, we grow in our relationship with the Lord and He grows our faith. Those who walk by sight try to require a miracle before they make a decision (such as Gideon and his fleece test). God is sovereign and honored Gideon's fleece test but this is not the norm, putting out fleeces should be considered exceptional, not the normal Christian walk. The normal pattern in Scripture and thus the proper sequence of events is for us to take that step of faith first and then the miracle comes which reinforces our faith and causing us to grow in faith.

Gal 5:16 - I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

If we chose the path the Holy Spirit is prompting us to take, we will not fall victim to the consequences of bad decisions following our old sin nature. God knows our weaknesses and will lead us on a path away from temptation.

Eph 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God saved us for a purpose: to do good works. Our walk should include good works. God gives us opportunities to do good works and even these opportunities were planned from the foundation of the world. It is our choice to respond to God and seize these opportunities to do good work or lose the rewards God had set aside for us.

Eph 4:1-3 - I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The walk that pleases God is humble, gentle, patient, loving, and creates peace between people, especially those in the church.

Why should we be especially patient with fellow Christians?

- We need to recognize that there are different levels of spiritual growth among Christians.
Rom 14:1 - Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.
- We need to be aware of the spiritual warfare raging around us where the Enemy would love to see Christians at odds with one another.
- It is a witness...
John 13:35 - By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Eph 4:17-19 - This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

How not to walk: as unbelievers who thoughts direct them to do things of zero eternal value, who can not discern things of the Spirit, not able to benefit from a relationship with God, unwise with activities which reinforce their lost condition (thus hardening their heart), are insensitive to others, drawn to sexual immorality and other sinful pursuits especially those demonstrating their materialism (greed – the things in the world is all there is of value... Sagan: matter is all there is, ever has been or ever will be... material things were his god).

Eph 5:2 - And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

A walk pleasing to God includes demonstrating sacrificial love. Acting in the best interest of others without expecting anything in return. This is contrary to the world's concept of love which has us loving others in

order to receive love in return. It is also distinguished from the world's kind of love in that God agape love is an act of the will, not a feeling. This is why there is so much divorce in the world today, people have not experienced God's love. He has called us to demonstrate His kind of love. Unless people in the world see the love of Jesus in us, they will not see it.

Eph 5:15-16 - See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Time is short and we are in a world ruled by the Devil (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11) who's agenda for believers is to get us to neglect our calling and idle away our time. Time is short and it is a gift from God. We should make good use of this precious resource before it is lost forever.

Phil 3:17-20 - Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame-- who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Follow the example of truly godly people. Be discerning in whose pattern you follow because there are many false teachers in the church (Jesus: wolves in sheep's clothing, Matthew 7:15). This false example is revealed by their being driven to make decisions to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and occupying their mind with temporal things of this world rather than eternal things of God.

Col 1:10-12 - that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

A walk which pleases God is one which bears eternal fruit, people get saved as a result of your good works. We also grow in our understanding of the ways of God making us more effective servants...

Matt 13:12 – “For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

Such a walk is powerful because it is tapped into God's power, it is patient, and content (joy), and gives the glory and thanks to God (credit is given where credit is due).

Col 4:5-6 - Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always

be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Act with understanding toward unbelievers. Don't expect them to act as Christians because they don't know the Truth. Make good use of your time with them. As Jesus demonstrated, we know what they need, we should restrain the idle chit-chat about frivolous things (aka small talk) and get them to give thought to spiritual matters. All the things we say should point people to God rather than turn them away from Him. This is what Jesus referred to when He exhorted us to be the salt of the earth:

Matt 5:13 – "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

This is why God saved us to temper our speech with salt. Christians walking a walk pleasing to God is what gives this a good taste.

During the past week, what have you done to please someone?

I came up with an explanation to companies interested in doing business with TI as to what type of relationship will work best.

What have you done to please God?

I've been faithful in my Bible study time and in preparing this lesson.

I've prayed to Him about things going on in my life thus getting Him involved.

How has God shown you how He is working in your life during the past week?

He has brought Scripture to mind that helped me better understand His Word.

He has answered prayer by making things go smoothly in my travels and business meetings this week.