



## **MORE AND MORE: DETERMINED TO PLEASE THE LORD MORE IN 2024**

### **SUMMARY**

We have become a very goal-oriented society, and, while that isn't a bad thing, we often fail to make the greatest purpose our greatest pursuit. With a myriad of options and opportunities, it is so easy for us to get distracted by and begin to drift towards things that aren't necessarily bad things, but they interfere with or take the place of what should be our greatest desire – to please God. This year, let's determine that our life is going to abound with and increase in those things that our Heavenly Father takes great delight in.

### **MESSAGE**

Before we dig into chapter 4, we need to gain an understanding of its context. Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians began back in Acts chapter 17. Having received what we call the Macedonian call, Paul and Silas entered into an incredibly difficult season of ministry. And yet, it was those hardships that brought Paul into the city of Thessalonica...

Where for about a month Paul preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

Where people trusted Christ as their Saviour, and

Where a local church was planted.

Even though a riot broke out that ran him out of town, Paul had developed a love for that local body of believers, and he had a desire to know how they were doing. So, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to find out how they were doing, and Timothy returned with a report that they were growing even though they were facing much persecution, and they were under much pressure...

To **DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM GOD, FROM THE THINGS OF GOD, AND FROM THE PEOPLE OF GOD,**

To **ALLOW MORAL AND DOCTRINAL ERRORS INTO THEIR LIVES AND INTO THE CHURCH,**  
and

To **REJECT THEIR FAITH ALL-TOGETHER.**

Let me pause right here for just a moment to acknowledge the fact that we face the same pressures today. Look! The Devil wants to destroy your spiritual progress today, but he is quite content to get you on a slippery slope that ultimately results in the exact same thing. And by the way, it doesn't take very long for us to look around and see that he has been very successful today in the lives of so many. Broken homes, cold hearts, and increased wickedness and deception are just a few of the results.

Now, let me pause here again to say this: we need make certain that we are **CELEBRATING** the goodness of God in our day, not just **COMPLAINING** about the realities of our day. Paul's letter is not one that is meant to bemoan all that happened while he was there in Thessalonica or to grumble and complain about everything that happened to him since he left Thessalonica; but rather a letter to **CELEBRATE** their faith and a letter to **CHALLENGE** them to continue.

Hey, I think we need both of those today. Let me remind you that in the world that we live in today, God is still God, God is still good, God is still on His throne, God is still in control, and God is still at work accomplishing His perfect will today and He wants to begin His good work in and through each of us. Essentially Paul is saying that in all of the struggles we need to surrender to and step up in the will of God for our life because one day we're going to stand before the Lord and when we do, we're going to wish that we had given Him so much more.

1 Thessalonians chapter 4 has been referred to as the rapture chapter, and rightfully so. However, while we are indeed to **LOOK FOR** the return of the Lord, we are to **LIVE FAITHFULLY** until the Lord returns. That's what this chapter is all about. Let's look at it together.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-18 says, *"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and*

*honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention to two statements that are found in the passage that we just read:

Verse 1 where the Bible says, "*...so ye would abound more and more.*"

Verse 10 where the Bible says, "*...that ye increase more and more...*"

For a few moments, I'd like to consider this thought: **MORE AND MORE: DETERMINED TO PLEASE GOD MORE IN 2024.**

As a society, we have become a very goal-oriented society. We are constantly bombarded with encouragement to and with instructions on how we can become a new and better version of ourselves, on how we can climb the corporate ladder, and on how we can achieve so much more by taking small steps toward established goals. Now, while it isn't a bad thing to be goal-oriented, we often fail to make our greatest **PURPOSE** our greatest **PURSUIT**.

The reality is that with a myriad of options and opportunities, it is so easy for us to get **DISTRACTED BY** and begin to **DRIFT TOWARDS** things that aren't necessarily bad things, but they have the potential of interfering with or taking the place of what should be our greatest desire – to please God with all and in every area of our life.

This year, let's take Paul's advice and determine that our life is going to abound with and increase in those things that our Heavenly Father takes great delight in. Now, Paul uses those two words in the statements that I have drawn your attention to. Both of these words have the idea of something that one excels in and that someone has a superabundance of. As a child

of God our life is to be one that makes much of and that is marked by those things that please God.

Paul says, in Philippians 2:13, *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

Now, we need to ask ourselves the question – what pleases God? What does God take delight in? And the great news is that the Bible tells us what God delights in.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, *"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."*

## 1) We need more and more **INTENSITY**

### A) We need to be intense in our **STUDY**

1 Thessalonians 4:11 says, *"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."*

2 Thessalonians 3:11 says, *"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies."*

2 Timothy 2:15 says, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

### B) We need to be intense in our **SOUL-WINNING**

Romans 15:20-21 says, *"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand."*

### C) We need to be intense in our **SERVICE**

Psalms 2:11 says, *"Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling."*

Psalms 100:2 says, *"Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing."*

## 2) We need more and more **INTEGRITY**

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 says, *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."*

Here's the reality: our relationship with God and the Word of God **ALWAYS** call us to a higher standard of living. We shouldn't **LOVE** the things of the world, but we ought to **LIVE** or **LOOK** like the world either. This was Paul's second time highlight this truth in this letter alone.

*1 Thessalonians 2:11-13 says, "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."*

### 3) We need more and more **INTERACTION**

*1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 says, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more."*

*John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

### 4) We need more and more **INVESTMENT**

*1 Thessalonians 4:11-17 says, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

*Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*