

1 Thessalonians 3

1. Why do we Christians live in order to please God?

- Because living to please God is the best for us.
- Because living to please God is the best life we can live.
- Because living to please God honors our God the most.

2. If we are already living to please God, why does the Word of God urge us to do more and more?

- To want to know God more and more is the foundation for the growth of our soul.

3. How do we learn to know God more and more?

- We ask our God to teach us by studying His Word.

4. If we do not ask God to teach us more and more, what are we?

- We are spiritual babies.

5. For us Christians, what is one of the biggest temptations?

- The temptation to be sexually immoral.

6. What happens when we commit the sin of sexual immorality or any sin?

- It dishonors our God and it dishonors us as well.

7. Why must we learn to control our bodies?

- Because we live in a world of Satan and sin.
- Because Satan and sin want to destroy us by encouraging us to sin.

8. How do we control our body in a way that is holy and honorable?

- We must ask God to help us to guard our eyes and our mind.
- This is because only God is more powerful than sexual immorality and all sin.

9. What does God mean when He says that He will punish all who commit such sins?

- While the spiritual souls of Christians who sin will not be punished with eternal death, our physical bodies may be punished.

10. What is the judgment seat of Christ?

- The judgment seat of Christ will be at the end of our lives on earth, and if we have done good as Christians, then we will receive a reward.

11. What are we doing when we reject the Word of God?

- We are rejecting God.

12. Without God's love in our lives, what do we have?

- Selfishness and pride.

-Although Paul was in Thessalonica for only a short time, we understand that he taught about the end times.

-In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Paul reminds the Thessalonians to wait for Jesus from heaven when He will rescue us from the coming wrath.

-In 1 Thessalonians 2:19 & 3:13, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that Jesus will come with all His holy ones.

-It seems, however, that the Thessalonian Christians did not completely understand the teaching about the end times.

-Many Christians today also do not completely understand the teaching about the end times.

-We do know, however, that our Jesus will come again.

-From the Word of God, we learn that there are two comings of Jesus—a first and a second coming.

-What was the first coming of Jesus?

-The first coming of Jesus was when He left heaven, was born on earth, grew to be a man, was crucified, and then, after rising from the dead, returned to heaven.

-Where is the Lord Jesus now?

-While He lives in the hearts of all Christians through the Holy Spirit, He is also in heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father.

-What will be the second coming of Jesus?

-The second coming will be when Jesus will return to

earth to begin His reign on earth.

-The first coming of Christ to earth is finished.

-The second coming of Christ to earth will be in the future.

-This is easy for us to understand.

-That which is difficult to understand is what will happen between the first and second coming of Jesus.

-What will happen between the first and second coming of Jesus?

-The Lord Jesus will come down to the clouds in the sky to take us Christians with Him back to heaven.

-That Christians will be taken by Christ to heaven is called “The Rapture” in the English language.

-The word “rapture” means “to be caught up” or “taken away” up to heaven.

-It is between the first and second coming of Jesus when Christians will be “caught up” or “taken away” to heaven by Christ.

-In John 14:1-3, this is what our Jesus told us before He was crucified:

1-“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

2-My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

3-And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

-As we learn from the verses above, the Lord Jesus has promised us that He will come down and take us to be with Him in heaven.

-Then why is this difficult for some Christians to understand?

-Because some people confuse the coming of Jesus to take Christians to heaven with the second coming of Christ.

-What are the differences between Jesus coming to take Christians to heaven and the second coming of Jesus?

-When Jesus comes to take Christians to heaven, He will not come down to the earth, but only to the clouds in the sky.

-Then, Christians will rise from the earth to the clouds in the sky where we will meet the Lord Jesus face to face.

-We understand this from one of the verses in this lesson, 1 Thessalonians 4:17:

-“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.”

-After meeting Christ in the air, He will take us to heaven where He has prepared a place for us.

-At Jesus’ second coming, He will come down to the earth, and remain on the earth.

-At Jesus’ second coming, no one will rise from the earth to meet Him in the air, and no one will be taken to heaven.

-In the Bible, there are three passages which teach us about Jesus coming down to take Christians to heaven.

-John 14:1-3

-1 Corinthians 15:51-58

-1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

-We have already looked at John 14:1-3, and as we continue our study, we will also look at 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

-Now, however, we will begin the study of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 4:13

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.

-Does the Word of God teach us that Christians should not grieve when other Christians die?

-No.

-When our brothers and sisters in Christ die, we are sad.

-Even Jesus wept when He went to Lazarus' tomb.

-When our brothers and sisters in Christ die, what is the hope that we have?

-That someday in the future we will be together with them again.

-It is only those who do not believe in Christ who have no hope.

-Why does the Word of God say that the Thessalonians were uninformed about those who sleep in death?

-Because it seems that some Christians in the Thessalonian church had died, and the rest of the Christians thought that those who had died would not be taken to heaven.

-Therefore, God through Paul writes these words to teach the Thessalonian Christians as well as all Christians the truth about Jesus coming down to take His children to heaven.

-This truth was to comfort not just the Thessalonian Christians, but all Christians.

-To understand the truth that Jesus will come down to take all Christians to heaven should comfort us greatly even though life on earth is difficult.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 4:14

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.

-Who are those who have fallen asleep in Christ?

-Christians who have died.

-When a Christian dies, does his spirit or soul sleep?

-No.

-When a Christian dies, what is it that sleeps?

-Only his body.

-When a Christian dies, what happens to our spirit or soul?

-Our spirit or soul remains with the Lord Jesus Christ,

and joins Him in heaven.

-On the mountain when the light of God shone out through the Lord Jesus Christ, the souls of Moses and Elijah were with Him and spoke with Him (Mt 17:3).

-When Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the soul of Lazarus was with the soul of Abraham in paradise or Abraham's side (Luke 16:22).

-Before Jesus died on the cross, He told the thief who repented, "Today, you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

-In 2 Corinthians 5:1 & 8, we read this:

1-We know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

8-We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

-In Philippians 1:23-24, Paul said this:

23-I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

24-but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

-All of these verses teach us that when a Christian dies, his soul does not sleep, but rather remains with the Lord

Jesus Christ, and joins Him in heaven.

-There are some religions that teach that the soul or spirit sleeps when people die.

-This is a lie from Satan.

-When a non-Christian dies, what happens to his spirit or soul?

-His soul goes into hell.

-When Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where was the soul of the rich man?

-In Hades or hell.

-What did the rich man say to Abraham?

-"Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire" (Luke 16:24).

-The soul of the rich man was not sleeping, but rather suffering in the fire.

-Once more, we see that when someone dies, his soul or spirit does not sleep.

-If he is a Christian, his soul remains with the Lord Jesus Christ forever.

-If he is not a Christian, his soul goes into hell into the fire forever.

Let's read again 1 Thessalonians 4:14

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.

-When the Lord Jesus comes down from heaven to the clouds in the sky, who will He bring with Him?

-The souls or spirits of those Christians who have fallen asleep or died.

-These are Christians whose bodies have been placed in graves, but whose souls have been in heaven with the Lord Jesus.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 4:15

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.

-When Jesus comes down to take us to heaven, there will be two groups of Christians.

-What are these two groups?

-The first group is Christians whose bodies have fallen asleep and are buried, but whose souls have been in heaven with the Lord Jesus.

-The second group is Christians who are still alive on earth.

-It is important to understand that all Christians will be "caught up" or "taken away" up to heaven.

Let's read 1 Thessalonians 4:16

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.

-With this verse, we learn that the Lord Jesus Himself will come down from heaven for His Church.

-Why will the Lord Jesus not send angels to take us to heaven?

-Because of His great love for us, the Lord Jesus Himself will come down to take us to heaven.

-The Lord Jesus will come down with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God.

-Just like the Lord Jesus commanded Lazarus to come

out of the grave and to come to Him, He will also command His Church to come to Him.

-The voice of an archangel will add his voice to this command.

-The trumpet of God will sound to bring God's people together as well as to proclaim that God is saving them.

-Then, the dead in Christ will rise first.

-What does it mean that the dead in Christ will rise first?

-First, the bodies of Christians who have died will be resurrected and will rise to meet their spirits.

-Will the resurrected bodies of the Christians who have died be the same as their bodies before they died?

-No.

-This is because the old body of flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Co 15:5).

-The bodies of Christians who have died will be changed.

-We read this in 1 Corinthians 15:52-53:

-“For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”

-The old body that died will be changed to a new, resurrected body.

-What will our new, resurrected body be like?

-We will have a body like Jesus after His resurrection from the dead.

-We will have a body that will never be able to get sick nor ever be able to die.

-Our resurrection body will be spiritual, and we will be able to see and live in both the physical and the spiritual world.

-When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He entered the room even though it was locked.

-When the disciples thought that the risen Christ was a ghost, here is what the Lord Jesus said:

-“Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39).

-When the disciples still did not believe, the Lord Jesus asked them if they had anything to eat.

-The disciples then gave Him a piece of fish, and He took it and ate it in their presence.

-With our resurrected body, we will be able to see God.

-As we read in Revelation 22:4, we “will see His face.”

-Before this, no one could see God and live except for the Son of God (Ex 33:20 & John 1:18).

-Yet, because we Christians are in Christ and resurrected with Him, we will be able to see God.

-In conclusion, we will be able to see and live with God Himself.

-Will non-Christians be taken to heaven?

-No.

-As 1 Thessalonians 4:16 teaches us, it is the “dead in Christ” who will rise.

-The second group of Christians are those who will still be alive on earth.

-When Christ comes down from heaven to the clouds, what will happen to the Christians who are still living on earth?

Let’s read 1 Thessalonians 4:17

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.

-These Christians will not die, but will be taken up to heaven to join the Christians who have already been resurrected.

-As the Word of God tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:51:

-“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.”

-This means that when Christ comes down to take His Church to heaven, the bodies of the Christians who are living on earth will be immediately changed into resurrected bodies.

Let’s read 1 Thessalonians 4:18

18-Therefore encourage one another with these words.

-If we believe in Christ, our greatest encouragement is knowing that Christ will never abandon us.

-If Christ comes down to the clouds in the sky and we are still on earth, we will never die.

-If Christ comes down to the clouds in the sky, and our body has fallen asleep, we will come with Him and receive our resurrected body.