

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz production  
Week 43  
1 and 2 Thessalonians

The Thessalonians were in an interesting situation. Paul was not there that long to set up the church in Thessalonica. But they did grasp at least one important principle. And that was that they needed to prepare for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They took this principle so seriously that they all quit their jobs and waited for the coming of Jesus. To us two thousand years later it seems silly that they would do such a thing. That they would think that He would return again in their day. When we ourselves are still waiting for His return this many years later. But there is a lesson there to be learned. Perhaps sometimes we slack on our duties because of the same reasons or motives.

In chapter 4 of first Thessalonians Paul gets bold and direct with this small band of believers. His hope is to place them firmly on the path with unwavering faith. Stating: “ye ought to [walk](#) and to [please](#) God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:1) And I believe Paul is correct in that statement. The world teaches us that what we want is the most important thing. That we should seek to please and to satisfy ourselves. The adversary is cunning in influencing this message. However, the eternal truth is that it is essential for our eternal salvation to seek to please God the Father and our Savior Jesus Christ.

So how do we do that? Well, the most obvious answer is to do what they have asked us to do. To do their will. How do we know their will? That is a great question and I'm glad you are considering these important questions. There are two ways to know the will of God. One is through studying their words which I will show you an example of is just a moment and the other is by personal revelation. This is a very important topic and one that we don't have time to delve into today. However, Brad Wilcox has an amazing talk on personal revelation that I believe is one of the best instructional talks on Personal revelation that I have ever heard. I will leave a link to this talk on the transcript that you can find on our website CFMpodcast.org

Link:

[Brad Wilcox talk on Personal revelation](#)

I would like to discuss the topic of knowing God's will based on the scriptures because there is a perfect example of this in this chapter we are looking at. And sometimes we really have to look and ponder to understand what the scriptures are telling us and other times it is very clear.

Look at verse 3 in chapter 4 of Thessalonians. It says: “For this is the will of God,” I don't think we can get much more clear than that. This is a straightforward no confusion verse. “For this is the will of God, *even* your [sanctification](#), that ye should [abstain](#) from [fornication](#).” Now we know why God needed to be so clear on this. There was no room for error on this. Now the word “fornication” as it is being discussed in this verse is referring to any type of sexual sin. Anything that falls outside of God's definition of Purity, which is: “Faithfulness

in marriage and abstinence in singleness.” We read from one of Paul's previous letters about how our body is a temple of God and must be kept clean so that God may dwell within. Well, yes of course, we know this, so why are we discussing it now. Because the world is getting worse and more lenient on this very important principle. See, all sin is equal in God's eyes. Every sin pulls us away from God and further from the influence of His spirit. But, just because all sin is equal, that does not mean that all sin is equal in the consequence it bears. And sexual sin next to murder carries the steepest and most severe consequence of all other sins. And among millennials today it is becoming more and more accepted as a common practice among young adults.

According to Barna research published recently. When asked if watching pornography was usually or always wrong, only 32% of millennials agreed with that statement. Meaning that 68% of millennials think it is perfectly acceptable and ok to engage in these types of behaviors. What's worse is that this same group when asked if it is morally wrong to not recycle, can you guess what that percentage was there? 56%.... 56% of millennials think it is worse to not recycle than it is to look at pornography. Can you see why this topic is becoming more and more prevalent for us to discuss in our day today? The importance of discussing this with our children and educating them on how God feels about this as their little testimonies grow is so critical because the adversary is hitting them with all that he has in order to make them slip, or push them over the edge of immorality and sorrow. Because that is where it leads. The battle for the souls of men is quickly gaining traction, with access to such material, because it is more readily available not just to adults but to young children as well.

For us to combat such attacks perhaps we can focus on what Paul was teaching the Thessalonians. Which is the good news that Jesus is coming!!

“I would not have you to be ignorant,” He says. That is an interesting phrase and one that he uses 3 times in his writings. 3 times he says to followers of Christ that he is going to teach them something so that they understand and are not ignorant about these important things. One is in Romans 11, where he says I don't want you to be ignorant as it concerns Israel and the Jews.

And then in 1 Corinthians 12 He says: I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. And then here in Thessalonians he says I don't want you to be ignorant about the second coming of Jesus.

What is interesting to me is that the main three things that Paul says he doesn't want them to be ignorant about, are the same three things that most Christians and latter day saints are the most ignorant about today. Israel and the Jews, the gifts of the spirit and the second coming of our Savior. It is so funny that we have evolved this much and yet the same things that they struggled with back then are the same things we struggle with today.

In a talk given for an Ensign college devotional Brad Wilcox said: “Satan has convinced many in the world that there is no God, he has convinced others that there is no truth. But, even believers are not any better off if we allow him to convince us that there is no hurry. We need to feel and urgency to draw closer to God and to live in accordance with His truth”

**In that same talk he said:**

“we should feel an urgency when it comes to repentance. I once received an email from a young woman who asked, “Why not have sex with my boyfriend? Why not? We can always repent later.”

I said, “I am so glad you know you can repent and I’m so glad you know you can be forgiven. And I’m so glad you know that can happen as many times as you need. But cleanliness is only one of God’s many attributes. To become like God, we need to become more than just clean – more than just forgiven. And the time you’re wasting with your boyfriend is time that could be better spent. It could be better spent developing the selflessness, the charity, developing the self-control that are the Godly qualities that the law of chastity can teach us if we are willing to learn.”

A young man, a return missionary, once said to me, Brother Wilcox “*If* there is a God and *if* the plan of salvation turns out to be true, then I will just repent in the spirit world.”

I said, “Good plan except for one thing. If you are not motivated to change now what makes you think you will be motivated then?” Amulek taught “that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world” (Alma 34:32-33). Mortality is a school. The spirit world is a continuation of that school. Continued opportunity for learning doesn’t give a desire for learning. Continued opportunity to repent does not guarantee a change of heart. That change of heart comes from Jesus Christ. And the sooner we can

get started on that process of becoming more like Him, with His grace, with His help, the sooner we can begin that process the better off we are.

In today's world, we often hear people say, "YOLO!" It is an acronym that means, "You Only Live Once," and people use it to justify All kinds of risky choices. However, YOLO is not in the scriptures. Instead, we see YEA WO: "Yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God" (2 Nephi 28:26). Yea, wo unto him that shall say, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us" (2 Nephi 28:7). God's work and glory is to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life (see Moses 1:39). It is time that we are about our Father's business (see Luke 2:49). Repentance matters. Change matters. There is a hurry."

<https://www.ensign.edu/bradley-r-wilcox-october-2021>

Brother Wilcox message and that of so many in this last general conference and that of Paul is that: today is the day to prepare to meet God. whether Jesus comes soon or if we return home sooner, one or the other will come before we expect it. So, please don't delay. Seek the Lord with all your heart and you will find peace and joy in your life. Of this I testify.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.