

'RIGHT AND READY'
(Sunday Bible Study Series – 'Ready or Not, Jesus Is Coming!')
Studies in 1 Thessalonians

WORTHY WALKING OR PUDDLE JUMPING

James Dobson of *'Focus on The Family'* says that one of the ways you can tell a boy has become a man is that he walks around mud puddles rather than splashing through them.

This criteria also helps define the rite of passage into spiritual maturity for Christians. When believers are first born-again some of them childishly continue to splash around in the sin-puddles of the old life from time to time. But if one truly has been regenerated with new life from Christ things begin to radically change. Frequent chastisement and constant washing for disobedience is gradually being replaced by a desire to bypass puddles of sin for the straight and narrow paths of righteousness. The Thessalonian disciples learned how to stand for the Lord Jesus without falling and now they must 'walk worthy of God' in a wicked world full of moral and spiritual pot-holes full of sin. The world, our own decadent flesh, and the devil himself have pocked the roadway of this life with many dangerous pot-holes filled with the dirty water of sinful temptation. To become mature followers of Jesus, the Thessalonians needed to learn how to walk around the mud holes of the old life not splash through them anymore. Are you a childish believer or a mature disciple? The puddle test this week divides the boys (and girls) from the men (and women) of God.

Memory Verse

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from sexual immorality..."
1 Thessalonians 4:3

In the Philadelphia area one of the worst road hazards is the notorious pot-hole. These car killers are holes in the asphalt about the size and shape of a good -sized pot, thus the name. They are very dangerous, not only because they can jolt your ride, but because of the unpredictable size and contents of each. When filled with dirty water you can't see the depth you are about to fall into or the tire-shredding nails and debris underneath.

Sin is a moral mud puddle or pot-hole in life. You think it's a small matter that won't hurt anything too much, so rather than steer around the temptation you just plunge in hoping you can get away with it. Sometimes you go away with just a dirty conscience or an unaligned devotional life. Then other times you seriously 'blow-out' your Christian life or break the spiritual suspension system of your testimony and have to pull into the Lord for repairs (if you're not totaled). Wise Christians realize that even minor damage caused by sin jolt one's relationship with God and gradually destroys the Christian life. God has put a warning sign next to the pot-holes of moral temptation (verse above), not to rob us of the temporary thrill of sin, but to keep us from wrecking our lives and others on the hidden dangers of sexual immorality.

Meditation

You wouldn't take a new car out and purposely run it through 'pot-holes' just to see how much it could take, would you? The new life Jesus Christ gives you at salvation is a trust to be valued highly and taken care of by the believer. Are you running your Christian life into situations that God is warning you not to go? You may get away with it for a while, but if you really belong to the Lord, He will be bringing you in for repairs and more driver's education sometime soon.

Disciples' Prayer

Father, I know that it's Your will for me to drive around sin (sanctification) and away from moral temptation (abstain from immorality). By Your Spirit and Your grace I purpose to steer clear of all the moral pot-holes in my path today. Amen.

‘Faith-fuel-ness’

(Don't foul up your faith-fuel from God)

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

‘Fulfilling Your Faith’

(Pleasing God in your ‘walk’ for the Savior)

*“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**; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.”* **4:1-2**

‘Fuel-Filtering Your Faith’

(Preserving your ‘walk’ with the Father)

*“For **this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality**; that each of you should **know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust**, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 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.”* **4:3-6**

‘Fuel-Proofing Your Faith’

(Protecting your ‘walk’ in the Holy Spirit)

*“For **God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness**. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, Who has also given us **His Holy Spirit**.”* **4:7-8**