

## 1 Thessalonians: Standing Firm

### Lesson 5 “God’s Will is Sexual Purity”

I. Review and Introduction - This church was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey after he left Philippi. Paul taught in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths and was then run out of town by unbelieving Jews. Paul then travelled to Berea and began to minister there, but the Jews from Thessalonica traveled there and ran him out of town there also.

A. Paul wrote *1 Thessalonians* about six months after he planted the church in Thessalonica to strengthen, comfort, and ground this church in truth.

B. Tonight we are going to focus on *1 Thessalonians 4* where Paul teaches them about what the practical aspects of the Christian life should be like. A heavy focus will be sexual purity. We are going to focus on the what and more importantly the why behind why God wants us live sexually pure.

## II. God’s Will is Sexual Purity

### A. *1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 Sexual Purity*

1. *Verse 1* connects back to *1 Thessalonians 3:13* that says God wants to establish our hearts blameless in holiness (being set apart) while we wait for the coming of Jesus.

a. We would do well to see holy as not just being purity, but being set apart (a cut above).

b. It’s interesting that Paul references the second coming of the Lord in *1 Thessalonians 3:13* and then takes the next twelve verses and talks about Christian conduct before he picks it up again in *1 Thessalonians 4:13*. This isn’t an accident. Paul is trying to teach us how to occupy until Jesus comes. We are to initiate the coming kingdom by our lifestyle that will be fully consummated at the return of Christ.

2. *Verse 2* Paul gave commandments. The idea is military commandments. These aren’t the laws of Moses, but these are directions about how to live as a new creation.

3. *Verses 3-5* God’s will for our life is our sanctification (being set apart) that comes through our sexual purity. ex: Joseph and King David.

a. sexual immorality - *porneia in Greek*. Means to fornicate, commit adultery, homosexuality, harlotry.

b. The fact God says this is His will means we can do it. People often make the excuse they can’t control themselves in this area. Jesus said you can, so I’m gonna say you can. Paul says we should know how to possess our vessel. This is something we are to learn to do.

4. **Verses 6-8** Why? When we don't we defraud others (ex: men who pressure their girlfriend into sleeping with them and take their virginity - the man steals something from her and her husband.) There is no condemnation because Jesus forgives and restores but we need to see this from heaven's perspective.
  - a. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Throughout scripture sexual immorality goes hand in hand with idolatry. The same way God doesn't want share our intimacy with another god, He doesn't want our spouses sharing the intimacy due them with another. It's an affront on Jesus.
  - b. God will avenge - when we steal sexually from one another God will give us grace, but if we don't repent He will deal with us (will be found out, natural consequences. **(1 Corinthians 5:1-5)** **Sex is so precious to God He wants to see that it is done right.**
  - c. **Verse 7** Called to holiness - this is our call.
  - d. **Verse 8** To reject this call is a rejection of God and His best.
5. What is the proper view of sex? Sex is not good, it is great. We do not need to be ashamed of it as Christians. God created it for our pleasure.
 

Sex is like fire, in the right environment (fireplace it's amazing), but left uncontrolled it can burn our house down. Multiple **Proverbs** tell us this.

  - a. One of the reasons Paul tell Christians to get married is for sexual fulfillment. **1 Corinthians 7:1-5.**
  - b. Song of Solomon - a lot of sexual imagery in the book. It's about Jesus's relationship with the church, but it's also about the husband-wife relationship. Our marriages should be filled with romance.
  - c. Two becoming one. **1 Corinthians 6:16**
  - d. Procreation
6. How do we possess our vessel with sanctification and honor?
  - a. Meditate the word.
  - b. Prayer
  - c. Healthy boundaries with the opposite sex - we don't need to be having close friends who are of the opposite sex.
  - d. Software protection on your devices. Don't have HBO in the house.

## B. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12** Living an Orderly Life

1. **Verses 9-10** Paul says he doesn't even need to write to them about loving one another because they are taught by God to love one another. Paul urges them that they increase in their love for one another.
2. **Verses 11-12** Paul urges them to mind their business and work with their hands. When we are busy, we don't have time to get caught up in silliness. Idle time is the devil's playground. Stay busy. Paul goes on to say that when we work we will lack for nothing. Interestingly, he has to talk about this again in **2 Thessalonians** when he says *if you don't work, you don't eat*. Many get so caught in the return of Christ, they have stopped working and occupying til Jesus comes.

III. Conclusion - Too often we reduce godly character to acts of holiness we must do because we are Christians that we actually miss the point. Holiness means to be set apart or a cut above and this is the life God has called each and every one of us to. If we will learn to live that way until the return of Christ we will live out our true calling and satisfy the longing on the inside of us and we will illustrate the resurrected Christ to the rest of the world. Demonstrating faithfulness in our marriages illustrates the faithful God. Working hard and being productive illustrates the productive God.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Pray Closing Prayer