**Sexual Purity**

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-8*

**Introduction**

1. Christians are expected to, and should, live their lives with one purpose – to please God (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**).
   1. This consists of a life of constant **improvement** and **growth** in the aim to please the Lord – ***“that you should abound more and more” (v. 1)***.
   2. This is ultimately accomplished by following the commands of Christ given through the apostles teaching **(v. 2).**
2. It is God’s desire that we be found blameless at the coming of Jesus (judgement day) **(cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)**.
   1. This is a work accomplished by God in us in which He will not fail (**v. 24)**.
   2. However, this is something which requires man’s cooperation in submission to His word (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 – *“you received the word of God…which also effectively works in you who believe.”***)
3. The apostle Paul, in his inspired teaching, touched on every aspect of that which is necessary to please God.
   1. He told the Ephesian elders, ***“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)***.
   2. **Every facet of the gospel is imperative, and we must not neglect to teach it and keep it.**
4. To this end, Paul considered the topic of Sexual Purity in his epistle to the Thessalonians (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8**).
   1. He gave attention to this subject in several of his epistles.
   2. We must understand, and submit to, the requirement and need for sexual purity.
5. The Will of God – Sanctification **(v. 3a, 7-8)**
6. Set apart to the Lord.
   1. **1 Peter 2:4-5** – When we obey the gospel, we are added to a priesthood dedicated to the service of God.
      1. **Holy** – *hagios* – ceremonially consecrated (or set apart).
      2. We were redeemed ***“with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1:19)***.
      3. For this reason, we are to use our body to God’s service – “***For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20)***.
   2. **Romans 12:1-2** – This requires continual transformation of our minds to know what God requires of us.
      1. **The life of sanctification (being set apart to God) is a continual life of inquiry** – what does God want me to do?
      2. ***“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17)***.
   3. ***“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:7)***. 🡪
7. Separate from all uncleanness.
   1. **A holy life, or a life dedicated to God in sanctification, is one that lives separate from uncleanness/impurity.**
   2. ***“Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).***
      1. Not merely things which simply appear to be evil, but those things which are in FACT EVIL.
      2. **Christians cannot pick and choose what to avoid. God wants us to avoid everything that is contrary to Him and His will.**
   3. **1 Peter 1:13-16** – **especially v. 14** – The Christians does not live his life as he wants to, but as God wants him to.
      1. The world does not separate themselves from unclean desires.
      2. **They allow the desires of their flesh to be satisfied, for they are not governed by God in their unfaithfulness.**
   4. Christians must understand that, when they became a Christian by obeying the truth, ***they made a commitment to God. God’s requirements should not turn us away, but draw us in.*** (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8**)
      1. Their commitment to God shows a **desire to please Him, to be like Him, and to be with Him for eternity.**
      2. ***“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3)***.
      3. **To refuse, or resist, a life of sanctification is to show your rejection of God.** (*It shows your true desire. A desire that is not to be with God, but to make a home in this world.*)
8. In our sanctification, God calls us to Sexual Purity 🡪
9. Maintaining Sexual Purity **(v. 3b-6)**
10. Abstain from *porneia*.
    1. **Sexual immorality/fornication** – *porneia* – illicit sexual intercourse. (Strong)
       1. **This is a generic term which denotes ANY UNLAWFUL sexual intercourse**.
       2. **Hebrews 13:4** – Marriage is the only institution or union in which sexual intercourse is lawful. (***bed*** – euphemism for sexual intercourse)
          1. **NOTICE**: Distinction between ***“fornicators and adulterers.”***
          2. **Fornicator** – *pornos* – a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse. (Strong)
          3. **Adulterers are fornicators, but not all fornicators are adulterers. All fornication is sin. 🡪**
       3. **Pre-marital** – sexual intercourse before marriage (**cf. Hebrews 13:4** – Marriage is the only authorized place of sexual intercourse.)
       4. **Adultery** – *moichao* – to have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife. (Thayer) (**cf. Romans 7:2-3** – The same can be said of a husband – bound to wife.)
          1. ***“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” (1 Thessalonians 4:6)***.
          2. **Adultery is a sin against God, and fellow man**.
       5. **Homosexuality** – one who lies with a male as with a female. (Thayer) (**cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9** – ***“sodomites”***)(**Lesbianism** – female with female – **cf. Romans 1:26-27**)(LEAVING THE NATURAL)
       6. **Bestiality** – to lie carnally with an animal. (**cf. Leviticus 18:23**)
    2. **EMPHASIZE:** God will judge any and ALL fornication. Pre-marital sex, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality are all sin.
       1. **Bestiality is no worse than homosexuality in the scope of sin.**
       2. **Homosexuality is no worse than pre-marital sex and adultery.**
       3. All are illicit forms of sexual intercourse which God condemns!
    3. ***“Abstain from EVERY form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22; emphasis mine, JC)***
11. Know how to possess your vessel.
    1. **1 Thessalonians 4:4-5** – abstinence from sexual immorality is achieved by gaining control of the body.
       1. **Vessel** – some suggest this refers to a wife, *but I am convinced the context considers the vessel as the body*.
       2. **Possess** – acquire.
       3. **Acquire control over your body.**
       4. **(v. 5)** – Not like the Gentiles who, without restraint, give themselves entirely over to their lusts.
       5. (**cf. Galatians 5:16-17** – We are to gain control of our fleshly appetites, only living in the spirit. **We do not live to satisfy the flesh, but to serve God in spirit.**)
    2. Concerning the control we are to have over our bodies in order to abstain from sexual immorality, consider the word, ***“lewdness”*** – Greek – *aselgeia*. (**cf. Galatians 5:19**)
       1. *Aselgeia* – unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence. (Strong)
       2. “wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." (Thayer)
       3. While fornication is lewd, not all lewdness is fornication.
       4. **Lewdness, or licentiousness, or lasciviousness is lust of a sexual nature which, unrestrained by moral conscience, is given over to any satisfaction of the sexual appetite.**
       5. **ABSTAINING FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY IS NOT SIMPLY STOPPING AT THE POINT DIRECTLY BEFORE FORNICATION, BUT RESTRAINING ONESELF FROM ANY SATISFACTION OF THE SEXUAL DESIRE OUTSIDE OF THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.** (Lewdness is sin.)
    3. **cf. 1 Peter 4:3; Ephesians 4:17-19; Philippians 3:18-19 – *“past feeling”; ”whose god is their belly (appetite – any)”***
    4. **1 Corinthians 6:12-20** – While Paul is talking about fornication, the principles espoused by him in this passage serve as an explanation for needed and commanded restraint concerning any sexually characterized sin.
       1. **Our bodies are made to serve and glorify the Lord. Not to satisfy the sexual appetite with fornication, or anything prior to it.**
       2. **(v. 18)** – sexual immorality is a sin against one’s own body because it disregards who that one is supposed to be joined to (Christ), and causes the body to fail in its created purpose.
       3. ***“know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).***
          1. To use our bodies to satiate the sexual appetite in any way other than the marriage relationship is to dishonor our body.
          2. **Our bodies should be treated with utmost respect and sense of value, as they are instruments of service and praise to God.**
    5. **Forms of lewdness *which indicate a lack of control over our body, and the sexual appetite* include:**
       1. Immodest dress and character.
       2. Consumption of sexually suggestive entertainment.
       3. Unchaste touching. (lewdness – *aselgeia* – unchaste handling of males and females. Thayer.)
       4. Dancing.
       5. And any other thing or activity which includes an indulgence in sexual matters.

**Conclusion**

1. Sexual purity is a vital matter of living acceptably before God.
2. It is necessary to give time to the subject, as the society we live in condones indulgence in sexual matters.
3. Christians are not to satiate the sexual appetite in any way other than the sexual relationship of marriage.
4. **We must understand that, despite the several forms of fornication, and the several forms of lewdness, all sexual conduct outside of marriage is illicit, and condemned by God.**
5. **We must have self-control before God, and use our bodies to serve Him, and Him alone.**
6. **Our salvation is near, and we must act accordingly (cf. Romans 13:11-14).**