



# I THESSALONIANS

a future for now

## 1 Thessalonians 3:11-4:8 – The Sanctity Of Sex

April 14, 2024

### Background

### The Transitional Prayers

#### The First Prayer — Looking Back

*Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you,... 1 Thessalonians 3:11 (ESV)*

*...clear the road for us to come to you.*

*...because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. 1 Thessalonians 2:18 (ESV)*

#### Second Prayer — Looking Forward

*...and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 (ESV)*

### Sex In The Modern And Ancient World

- Porneia — The purchasable one
- Porneum — The business of prostitution
- Pallakai — The concubine. The slave purchased for sex.
- Potneia — The mistress for friendship and sexual satisfaction.
- Moichos — The adulterer or adulteress
- Temple Prostitutes — 3,000 in the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth

*Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are*

doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:1–2 (ESV)

## God calls us always to improve and not become stagnant.

### 1. What does God require of my sexuality?

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)

- I am to be holy and abstain from any form of sex outside of marriage.
- The question is not, “How far can I go?” It is, “How can I improve my sexual purity?”

...treat older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. 1 Timothy 5:2b (ESV)

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Ephesians 5:3 (ESV)

**Sexual Immorality** — A junk drawer term referring to any sexual expression outside of marriage.

**Impurity** — Moral filth. It is dressing or acting in a way that inflames the sexual passions of others.

**Covetousness** — Sexual covetousness. It is allowing ourselves to entertain thoughts, desires, or dreams about any one of the opposite sex that is not our spouse.

### 2. How can I keep this command?

#### A. Learn to control my body.

...that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 1 Thessalonians 4:4 (ESV)

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.”  
1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)

But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.  
1 Corinthians 9:27 (ESV)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.... Galatians 5:16 (ESV)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.  
Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

## **B. Stop imitating the lives of godless pagans.**

...not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;  
1 Thessalonians 4:5 (ESV)

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,  
Romans 1:24 (ESV)

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Romans 1:26–27 (ESV)

## **C. Don't take advantage of other people.**

...that no one transgress and wrong his brother (or sister) in this matter,... 1 Thessalonians 4:6a (ESV)

- Transgress means to defraud. It is stealing what is not ours to take.

### 3. Why keep this command?

#### A. Jesus promises to avenge sexual sin.

...because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 1 Thessalonians 4:6b (ESV)

...for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19b (ESV)

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea." Mark 9:42 (ESV)

#### B. God the Father saved us for sexual purity.

For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 1 Thessalonians 4:7 (ESV)

#### C. The Holy Spirit empowers us for sexual purity.

Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. 1 Thessalonians 4:8 (ESV)

### Life Group Questions

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1. What about modern sexuality is most shocking to you? What about first-century sexuality was most shocking to you? Why?
2. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3.** What is the Christian standard for sexuality? Why must we always focus on improving it in our lives? Why does culture make it hard to keep?
3. What is wrong with the question, "How far can I go?"
4. **Read Ephesians 5:3.** How does this verse help us better understand the standard for Christian sexuality? (See the explanation in the notes above if you are stuck.)
5. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:4.** What does this verse teach us about how to live a sexually pure life in a sex-saturated world? (See also 1 Corinthians 6:12, 9:27, Galatians 5:16-17)
6. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:5.** What does this verse teach us about the importance of the kind of friends we keep and the type of information we put into our brains?
7. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:6a.** Why is all sexual sin a form of not loving our neighbor? Explain how this is true in various situations.
8. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:6b.** Why is Jesus' promise of avenging sexual sin a strong motivation for purity? How might Jesus avenge sexual sin in a life?
9. How would you answer someone who claims God is a prude and a sexual killjoy?