

Purity: 1 Thessalonians 4

Introduction: Paul now addresses an age old temptation of mankind: sexual immorality. Being a Christian doesn't annihilate temptation. Being a Christian calls you to fight it and recognize it for what it is. The world can pull us back and we can pull each other into a mess as well. The struggle is found without and within. However, this temptation comes in many forms as we'll discuss. We need to support one another, not sacrifice the purity of our brothers and sisters for our own weaknesses.

Vs. 1-8: Sexual Immorality

- Paul was preparing his brethren for what came next: their sanctification regarding sexual purity. Not only did Paul mirror the correct behavior, but he also gave clear instruction and delivered the command of Jesus. This was the will of God.
 - **Parents:** We teach through what we say and do, as you know. Are the shows your children watch clean? What kind of jokes do they hear from you? What is the tone concerning sex? Do they see it as a part of marriage? Is it beautiful? Is it honored? Does it have its place?
 - We don't leave these conversations to those outside the family unit. We need to be able to talk about sex in a healthy fashion. I've said it before and will say it again and again - young people have questions they will get answers to. The real question is: whose providing the answers?
 - **Proverbs 7:1-5** Pornography is such a practical issue in the body, beloved parents. You've heard this before because it's true: you don't have to drive to the local VHS store and request entrance to the adult section anymore. It's right there on the phone. It's one innocent or accidental google search away. It's the forbidden fruit of 2022 - once you take part, your eyes are opened and it's hard to return.
 - While there is wisdom in accountability and some practical guidance as to how avoid the temptation, we must trigger the heart. One simply tries to avoid doing the thing you want to do, while the other seeks to crush the desire. Men need to see women for who they are - children of God. A woman who is hurting or simply caught in Satan's snare doesn't need your support her struggle. The same goes for women, and yes, women look at pornography as well.
 - It's also become more common for married couples to engage in pornography together. The same advice goes for all - this is offensive to God and should have no place in our lives. Marriage is beautiful and so is sex. We should embrace it and have honest discussions about it in our marriages. We need to feel comfortable talking about it. Just read Song of Solomon - it's more than takes place for the purpose of procreating. It's beautiful. It's to be enjoyed. It's romantic, it's playful and so on.
 - **1 Corinthians 7:1-5** I know you don't want someone in your personal business, and I don't care to go there either, BUT we all need to hear Paul's instruction. Brethren, it's not good to deprive one another. We have

very natural wants and desires. When we neglect each other, we open ourselves to Satan's attack.

- **Singles:** We don't want you to feel alone. If you're struggling in this area then seek a wise counselor. Try not to lean on someone who is struggling with the same problem.
 - Some other guy or gal who's not your spouse does not belong to you. They belong to the one they will marry. Not only is this not behaving like a sanctified child of God (not pleasing to Him), but it comes with practical issues. This can cause internal issues. This can result in unwanted pregnancies. This can result in emotional turmoil. It can damage a sense of security in marriage and the marriage bed.
 - Do not make a rash decision based on your urges. I know what Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 7:8-9**, but I think it had to do with their present distress (vs. **26**). At the end of the day, two bad decisions don't make a right one. There are individuals who cannot marry for various reasons and they have to battle urges.
 - **1 Corinthians 6:13b-20** We need to remember this principle. It's not all about me.
 - Brethren, we want to be ready to counsel those who are struggling. These are real temptations. They are very strong. Many have fallen prey to Satan on this one. The Bible is full of examples. It got the best of David. It got the best of his son, Solomon. That alone should say something. Think about how much it's addressed in the Psalms.
 - There's a balance in upholding God's desire and patience. It's not easy. We've got to be ready for a messy ride, because it is messy. It reminds me of passages such as **Galatians 6:1-2**. There is a burden to bear. Or passages such as **Jude 22-23**, "And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh." We need to remember passages such as **1 John 1:7-10**. Remember, how many times are we to forgive our brother who sins against us again and again? Would Jesus ask us to do something He isn't willing to commit to?

Vs. 9-12: Simplicity of Christianity

- I'll not beat a dead horse sense we've talked at length about brotherly love, but simply take note how many times Paul addresses the topic. We never stop . . . we aim to do more and more.
- People gravitate towards drama, but there's something you come to appreciate about peace. "Same old, same old" doesn't have to be a bad thing as long as we grow spiritually and commit to holiness. There's something beautiful about peaceful living, is there not? Don't worry . . . this world will offer you plenty of drama and stress. Try to avoid what you can.
- How much better things would be if we'd keep our heads down and hands on the plow. Christians shouldn't be in everyone's else business. We're also not supposed to be an unnecessary burden. Yes, there is a time and a place to receive help. In fact, in can be a wonderful experience. But, generally speaking, we need to do our part and be ready to help, not take, take, take. How can we make judgments in life, yet turn around and as the very world we preach against to help us with the basic necessities of life? See **Ezra 8:21-23**.