

## Set Apart for Sexual Holiness

1 Thessalonians 3:11-4:8

**Objectives:** We want to learn how to be set apart in our sex lives. We want to learn how to live a life that is pleasing to God. We want to learn what it means to be holy in our sex lives, why we would want to be holy and how we can be holy in this area.

### Launch

Why is the subject of sexual holiness such a hot topic?  
Should Christians talk about this subject in Bible study?

Tonight we are going to look at a passage in the book of 1 Thessalonians. In this letter the Apostle Paul gives the young believers of Thessalonica (modern day Greece) instructions concerning Godly living.

Before we look at the passage it's important to note that Paul, Silas and Timothy brought the Good News about Jesus to the people of Thessalonica and many believed. But while they were there a riot broke out (Acts 17) in which they were accused of defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus. They had to flee the city and narrowly escaped with their lives.

6 months later, Paul decided to send Timothy back to Thessalonica to encourage the believers. When Timothy returned to Paul he delivered the news that the believers had remained faithful. To which Paul wrote this letter to them to express his joy and also give further instructions on Godly living.

### Explore

Read 1 Thess. 3:11-4:8

- What is the Big Idea that Paul is trying to communicate in this passage?** (*pleasing God in holiness*)
- Take a closer look at verses 1 and 2, listing all that you can observe from this verse.** (*finally- indicates moving to last section; then- links to previous section; brothers and sisters- we are all in this together; ask and urge- strong directive words; in the Lord Jesus- where His authority comes from, why he is able to be so bold; pleasing God from their lives is the goal; they have already received instruction on this; he encourages them but challenges them to excel still more. Paul's basic message is "keep up the good work!"*)
- How old were these believers when Paul talked about this subject?** (6 months to 1 year old in the faith)
- Do you struggle talking about this subject with young believers? Why or why not? (optional)**
- What indicates that this is a serious subject?**
- There are many ways to please God, why does Paul emphasize this one?** (*life in 1<sup>st</sup> century Greece was very sexual. It was normal for a man to have a wife, concubines and visit the temple prostitute. They were*

*bombarded with opposite message 24/7. Paul is calling them to be counter cultural.)*

- Ultimately this passage is about holiness (4:3, 4, 7, 3:13). How would you define "holy"?** (*set apart for holy use, set apart from sin, set apart TO God*) (*God's will is for believers to be set apart from the rest of the world and set apart to God in the area of their sexual purity*)
  - Verse 3 states "we are to abstain from sexual immorality". What sorts of things would fall under the category of sexual immorality?** *lust, inappropriate touching, seeking and causing sexual arousal, pornography, premarital sex...*
- According to this passage, what are some aspects of sexual immorality that we are to abstain from?**
1. *Not controlling your body in holiness and honor*
  2. *Acting in passionate lust like heathens*
    - *Lust= sexual desire that dishonors its object and disregards God. The Greek word for lust means "over-passion" or "mega-passion" and sexual immorality is the Greek word "pornea" from which we get the word pornography.*
    - *Lust= Selfish desire to steal or take something that does not belong to you and use it for yourself.*
  3. *Wronging (robbing) or taking advantage of another brother (both the person you are messing with and their future spouse).*

- How is this view of sex different than our culture's view?**

- Why are we to abstain from sexual immorality?**

1. *It is pleasing to God (4:1)*
2. *We are called to something greater- Doing God's will; living in holiness (4:3, 7)*
3. *Honors people and God (3:12, 4:1, 4, 6)*
4. *Christian love (seeing others as better than yourself, not using others for your pleasure) (3:12)*
5. *Avoiding God's vengeance (4:6)*

- How are we to abstain from sexual immorality?**

1. *Know God (contrast 4&5)- his patience (4:1); His power (3:11-13); His preeminence (Phil 3:7-8); His love for you and others (1 John 4:7-12). That He is the only way to the abundant life (John 10:10). Following His way in our sex lives is the only way to get the abundant life.*

2. Holy Spirit (8)- We have the Holy Spirit who lives within every believer. 1 Cor 6:13-20 says that our bodies are the new temple of the Holy Spirit. This is a great chance to explain how spiritual breathing works with this temptation. 1 Cor 6:18 states we are to “flee or run”
3. Love one another (3:12, 4:9)
4. Learn how to control your body (4). This is not something we naturally know how to do. You could ask a question like “**how do you learn how to control your body**”. (1 Cor 10:13)
5. With other brothers or sisters (v.1). This is not a battle that we should be fighting alone.
6. By staying connected to God and allowing Him to sanctify you (v.13).

### Apply (at least 25 minutes tonight!)

- When we seek to apply the scriptures to our life we need to look at three different things: **the head, the heart and the hand.**
- **From this passage, what are we to believe?**  
*(We are called to something greater than living to please ourselves. We are called to someone- someone who loves us, someone who sanctifies us. We are called to please Him in holiness.*
- **From this passage what are some heart conditions that should be true of us?** *(We should desire to please God, love our brother, and not reject God or His teaching)*
- **From this passage, what are some things that we should do?** *(abstain/avoid/control; learn how (4); love your brother; submit to God the Holy Spirit; Know God; listen to God)*
- **What are the main things keeping you from being holy in this area of your life? What will keep you from making the changes necessary to be holy?**
- **In the area of sexual purity, what’s the most helpful thing you’ve shared with another believer or the most helpful thing someone has shared with you? (optional)**
- **What are practical steps you can take this semester?**
- **Read 5:23-24. Remember that God will be the one to make you holy if you cooperate with His work. Pray for one another.**

## Announcements

- **We will be starting another “Bethesda” group in January. Bethesda is an 8 week Bible study written for those who have experienced some form of sexual trauma. This could be sexual abuse as a child, relationship violence or some form of sexual assault as an adult. It is for women looking to allow God to bring healing to this area of their life. This is a safe group and any information shared in the group is kept confidential. More details will be on the website soon.**
- **More articles are also available for personal growth @ msureallife.com click on the resources tab**
- **Please share why you are going to IndyCC. Share more about what it is & why someone would want to attend.**