

1 Thes. 4:1-8

- I. Continue to grow in your Christian lifestyle pleasing to God (1)
 - A. We are asking and encouraging you (1a-b)
 - 1. Therefore, finally, we are asking you (1a)
 - 2. And we are encouraging [you] in the Lord Jesus (1b)
 - B. Purpose: that you would live a Christian lifestyle to a greater degree (1c-e)
 - 1. Just as you know how you should live, and are already doing (1c-d)
 - a. Just as you received from us how it is necessary (1c)
 - 1) For you to walk
“walk” = lifestyle
 - 2) And to please/be pleasing to God
 - b. And just as you are [already] walking (1d)
 - 2. That you may abound/do so to a greater degree (1e)
- II. Continue to live in God’s will by being sanctified in sexual purity (2-8)
 - A. For you know which commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus (2)
 - B. Specifically: Regarding God’s will for you (3-8)
 - 1. For This is the will of God: (3a)
 - Many people – us included – wish to know God’s will for our life
 - We cannot expect to know or claim to seek God’s will if we ignore passages like this which clearly state His revealed will
 - Pursue this aspect of His will which is clearly taught, and all the other necessary guidance and direction will be given
 - Ignore this and you shouldn’t expect guidance in other things – God will direct you back here
 - 2. Specifically: Be sanctified in your lifestyle (3b-8)
 - a. Your sanctification [is the will of God] (3b)
 - Both the process and the resulting reality of sanctification
 - b. Specifically: Be holy in all sexual matters (3c-8)
 - 1) Refrain from sexual immorality which harms your brother (3c-6b)
 - a) That you would refrain from sexual immorality of any kind (3c)
 - Then, as now, sexual sin is a common hindrance to sanctification
 - This is defined generically, not precisely, with a broad term
 - Therefore, there are no loopholes

- b) The way to keep from sexual immorality: (4-6b)
- (1) That you would master your desires like a Christian (4-5)
- (a) Pos: That each of you would know to gain possession of his own vessel with sanctification and honor (4)
- This is often translated “control/gain full possession over one’s own body/desires”
- Of course, we should do this
- Could also be translated “acquire your own spouse”
- Cf. Prov. 5 – the solution to chasing the ‘foreign’ woman is to be enraptured with your own wife
- Guys should get a wife - not as a sex toy to solve your lust problem, but as a life partner to love and cherish, and fight your lust problem with you – which will help, but not solve your lust problem
- Positive holiness is the only true solution to the negative problem of lust
- In holiness (same word as in v. 3) and honor
- Positive virtues to combat negative vices
- (b) Neg: Not in lusts characteristic of the unregenerate (5)
- (i) Not in strong desire of lusts (5a)
- (ii) Just as the Gentiles who do not know God (5b)
- Knowing God is not compatible with passionate lusts
- If you pursue/allow/give room for passionate lusts, God will be squeezed out over time
- If you pursue/allow/give room for God, passionate lusts will be squeezed out over time
- cf. “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection” by Thomas Chalmers
- Notice that this issue is primarily connected with God, not ourselves and our desires
- What are you looking at? Looking at your lust will never cure it, only grow it

- (2) That you would not wrong your brother by this (6a-b)
 - (a) That [each of you] would not transgress (6a)
 - (b) And take advantage of his brother in this matter (6b)
 - How is this connected?
 - How would you feel if your spouse cheats on you?
 - How can you expect to be faithful/self-controlled after marriage if you cannot exercise self-control before marriage?
 - If you are fooling around with some girl before marriage, you are training her to be unfaithful
 - This is someone's daughter and possibly someone's future wife
 - You are wronging them (not to mention her)
 - Make sure you see that connection – it is not just about you and your desires
 - Other people are involved and ultimately hurt
 - And make sure you also see the connection with what follows
- 2) Reason: God's design for humanity is not sexual immorality, but holiness (6c-8)
 - a) God holds you to this standard because He has designed you for it (6c-7)
 - (1) We warned you that the Lord exercises justice in these matters (6c-e)
 - (a) Because the Lord is the one who punishes concerning all these things (6c)
 - If the girl's green beret, black-belt father walked in – your sex drive would shut off like a light
 - If we keep God and the Gospel in view, our sex drive can be controlled
 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
 - “The primary question for sex ethics, or any ethical question taking the Scriptures seriously, must not be simply, ‘What must/ought/should/may I do?’ but rather ‘To whom am I accountable, and for what?’” – Robert Yarbrough
 - But also the blessedness of seeing God face to face should motivate us toward purity of heart
 - (b) Just as we told and swore to you beforehand (6d-e)
 - (i) Just as we told you beforehand (6d)
 - (ii) And we made a solemn declaration (6e)

- (2) Reason: God's destiny for you is sanctification, not uncleanness (7)
 - (a) Neg: For God did not call you into uncleanness (7a)
 - (b) Pos: But [He called you] into sanctification (7b)
 - By faith, we need to concentrate on our goal and better reward
 - We need to love holiness more than sex
 - We need to see Jesus as more desirable than Miss October
 - Connect this with God's character, the cross and our eschatological inheritance
 - "Be killing sin or it will be killing you" – John Owen
- b) Therefore: Whoever rejects this standard rejects God (8)
 - (1) Neg: For this reason, the one rejecting [this standard] is not rejecting man (8a)
 - (2) Pos: But [he is rejecting] God, Who gave His Holy Spirit to us (8b)
 - Again, notice the close connection to God and the Gospel
 - Why does Paul bring up the Holy Spirit here?
 - The emphasis in the way Paul says it falls on the word "Holy" – "His Spirit, the Holy One"
 - God's nature and character is holiness
 - God's will for us is holiness
 - God's Holy Spirit works in us toward holiness
 - What a great idea, what a great thing to have in our lives!
 - What could be worth going in the other direction?
 - Actively, strongly, passionately pursue holiness and lust problems will be conquered