

Abstain from Sexual Immorality - 1 Th 4:1-8

1. Paganism and Modernism

- A. Pagan idolatry: So depraved that fornication included as act of worship. Rom 1:24-29 gives good overview of sexual liberty/deviancy of the time.
- B. It is not so different today. Various philosophies are merging to create an atmosphere of total sexual liberty. No deviancy. No abnormality. No limits. Pedophilia has its advocates as does sado-masochism, homosexuality and other perversions.
- C. This influence slowly seeps into the church. **Illus:** Two occurrences lately of sexual abuse in churches: 1) ongoing sex with 11 yr. old sister-in-law; 2) fondling of 8 yr. old female in preacher's home.

2. The Will of God - 1 Th 4:1-3

- A. Paul takes pains to state unequivocally that what he has taught and now reiterates is God's clear, unalterable will - not just a passing fancy or latest philosophy.
 - 1. *Urge and exhort in the name of the Lord Jesus* - 1 Th 4:1.
 - 2. *Commandments ... through the Lord Jesus* - 4:2.
 - 3. *For this is the will of God* - 4:3.
 - 4. *God (calls us) in holiness* - 4:7.
 - 5. *Not reject man but God* - 4:8.
- B. The will of God on the proper sexual function/expression of man is not some puritanical, stifling, antiquated restriction from enjoyment but **for our benefit**.
- C. The litany of social, medical, psychological disasters coming from irresponsible, indiscriminate sex: teenage pregnancy, abortion, STDs (including AIDS), one-parent households, poverty, prostitution, crimes of passion, adultery, divorce, etc.

3. Three "Thats" - 1 Th 4:3b-6

- A. **"THAT** *you should abstain from sexual immorality*" - 4:3.
 - 1. Like other sins, fornication begins small. People who know better are led into it in little steps, each taking one farther and farther from purity and holiness.

2. We are desensitized by sex portrayed in humor, added into an otherwise clean movie or TV show, via commercials, music, etc. Adulterous romances often begin as friendships, counseling sessions, “innocent” occasions to be together.

3. **Caution to men:** Pornography (movie rentals, internet, magazines, etc.)

Caution to women: Romance outlets (soaps, novels, gossip, etc.)

Let us be wise to the ways of Satan! “We are not ignorant of his devices.”

B. **“THAT** *each of you should know how to possess his own vessel ...*” - 4:4-5.

1. Vessel => Two possibilities: wife or body. Both applicable. Sanctification/honor. **Wife** - honored “*as weaker vessel ... heir of grace of life*” (1 Pet 3:7); love and serve her as Christ does church. **Body** - Belongs to Christ, to serve Him.

2. “*Not in passion of lust ... who do not know God*” - v 5. Knowing God, and thus the honor and dignity that befits us who are made in His image, is the key to proper living. **Those outside of Christ lack motivation for purity.**

C. **“THAT** *no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother ...*” - 4:6.

1. Adultery is “package deal.” It is accompanied by deception, lying, pretending. It is literally stealing the most precious item a brother has - his mate. It is degrading to one’s mate, ruinous for the children, a humiliation to the families, a black eye for the church. **Adultery is complete, abject misery.**

2. “*The Lord is the avenger of all such.*” While men say be free, come out of the closet, be unashamed of what you are, **the Lord will hold us to account.**

3. Note the term “wrath” in these epistles: 1 Th 1:10; 2:16; 5:9.

Conclusion: The best remedy for sexual perversion, unfaithfulness is a loving husband/wife to whom one is committed for life. To love, cherish, serve, fulfill, and to build a physical relationship that is romantic, adventurous, expressive - a one-flesh joining of soul and body - is God’s pure and holy solution to lawful sexual expression.