

A Practical Study of 1 Thessalonians

Delighting The Heart of God “Learning to Bring Pleasure to God”

Question Number Seven – Have You Gotten Dirty? – 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

We’re making a Spiritual Check-up.

And in making a Spiritual Check-up, we’ve talked together about:

1. Making the right start,
2. Are we phony?
3. Has Satan hindered us?
4. Are we discouraged by the problems?
5. Are you an encouragement to others in your walk with the Lord?

And then last time we looked together at:

6. How is your prayer life?

Remember one thing, there were three prayer requests. Those

prayer requests of the apostle was:

1. for DIRECTION,
2. for LOVE, and he ended with
3. HOLINESS.

And it's altogether fitting that as we open this fourth chapter, he's focusing on HOLINESS.

We want God's direction, we want God's love, and we want to begin to manifest His holiness by a life of obedience.

There's no way that some dramatic experience is going to save the day and we're going to have revival. God will not pour out revival on disobedient people.

Second Chronicles 7:14 is still in the Bible:

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, then will I forgive their sin, then will I heal their land.

It only will come when we get specific with regard to obedience. And the Scripture speaks very clearly about our responsibilities in the moral realm and what needs to be done.

Ray Stedman in his little commentary, which is a new one, on 1 and 2 Thessalonians says:

If we could create a drug that would remove pleasure from the act of sex we could change the whole moral climate of our country. We could reduce crime, bring an end to the scandal of divorce, eliminate teenage pregnancies, reduce the present population, stop the sale of pornography and decrease poverty. But, in doing so, we would also lose a special part of God's creation. We would forfeit some of the zest and spontaneity between the sexes and life would become drab and dreary indeed. Since we obviously cannot make that drastic change, the only thing left for us to do is to learn how to handle our sexuality properly.
(source unknown)

And so that's what these eight verses are about in chapter 4.

Now WHY is the apostle moved to direct himself toward sexual purity and a holiness, and obedience in this personal area?

The Greek culture had such a religion whereby prostitution and sex was a part of their worship. It was a prerogative of the priests and the leaders of the worship to indulge in such activities as a part of it.

The goddess Aphrodite in the city of Corinth alone where the apostle is writing this letter, had some 10,000 prostitutes

walking the streets indulging in activity that worshipped the goddess Aphrodite.

So he's writing from a city that is saturated with sexual disobedience and sexuality out of bounds. And he's writing to a city in Thessalonica which is very much the same. And it's necessary for him to deal with this.

Now we talked about his three prayer petitions last time: for direction, for love and for holiness.

How do you manifest your holiness? You manifest your holiness in your sexual obedience.

Pick up with me at verse 1 and you'll see what he says.

v. 1 Finally therefore, brethren, we are asking and exhorting you in the Lord Jesus, in order that, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God (just as also you are walking), in order that you may abound more and more.

Now don't get the idea that just because the preacher says "finally" that it's over. This is only the BEGINNING of the END.

He is now addressing the problems that he sees that must be handled.

Remember chapter 3, verse 10? The last verse we had

yesterday morning.

He is supplying what is lacking in their faith.

Now, he's dealing with those areas.

“[So] Finally therefore, brethren, we are asking and [we are] exhorting you in the Lord Jesus,”

He's getting ready to teach them.

To ASK them is to ask a FAVOR.

To EXHORT them is to focus on their RESPONSIBILITY now that they are believers.

So he's “asking and exhorting [them] in the Lord Jesus.”

And his PURPOSE is:

“in order that, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.”

Now, he has spent some time during those three weeks when he was with them in ministry to instruct them specifically about these matters. But he's coming back to it again to focus on it and to bring the truth home.

Someone has said:

The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.
(source unknown)

And that's what we're trying to do here, and Paul is trying to do, in a walk that would please God. And he says this:

“(just as also you are walking).”

But he's not content with that.

Christian experience is not a stand-still experience. He says I want you to keep on doing it “more and more.”

In other words:

Philippians 3:12-14

Forget what's behind, press toward the things which are in front. ...

Get on with it. Reach for the goal!

“I am pressing on the upward way...”

Continue to abound! Continue to practice this “more and more” as you grow in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 2.

v. 2 For you are knowing what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

He's calling again to their attention with that little word "knowing" that has occurred so many times in the letter.

"You know what we told you when we were there. We talked to you as we gave you instructions in the Lord Jesus about these matters."

That word "instruction" is a military word. It's a word to give you the instructions before you go to battle of how you're supposed to act and conduct yourselves. And you remember those words.

Now verse 3 is very important. Look at that.

v. 3 For this is the will of God, your being set apart; that you should keep yourselves away from fornication;

"For"—REASON—"this is the will of God, your being set apart; that you should keep yourselves away from fornication;"

There's the other pole.

Holiness on one extreme, fornication or impurity on the other.

And “the will of God” is to stay away from one and to pursue the path of holiness.

First Thessalonians 3:13—that last word of prayer that he offered yesterday afternoon:

1 Thessalonians 3:13

so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness in the presence of our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all of His saints.

What can we learn from this?

It is God’s will that His children or His people be holy—that we are pursuing that path.

“this is the will of God, your being set apart;”

That reminded me of:

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

In other words, by sanctification we mean being holy or set apart.

First Corinthians 6:19, 20 are two more verses that really go

there:

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Now would you notice something? I'm going to give you a little KEY here.

There are three "THAT" phrases and then there are going to be THREE REASONS that are going to wrap up the rest of the study so it's going to be easy for you to flow through.

Why is it the will of God that we be "set apart" from sexual immorality?

THREE THAT'S—it'll be in verse 3, in verse 4 and in verse 6.

Second Corinthians 6:17 and 18 says:

2 Corinthians 6:17, 18

come out from among them and be separate," saith the Lord. "And touch no unclean thing...

Now, this is the will of God—"your being set apart."

Phrase #1:

“that you should keep yourselves away from fornication;”

Fornication involves anything sexually outside the revealed will of God: adultery, premarital, extramarital intercourse, homosexuality and other perversions. *Porneia*, the word that I have translated “fornication” includes all of these practices.

And the scripture is very strong about people who continue to pursue this dirty path instead of dealing with it in their lives.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 6:9:

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

You know I read a verse like that and I wonder how in the world we can condone homosexuality. They’re not going to inherit the kingdom of God. I mean it’s just as plain as the nose on your face. And yet we go along with it, we rationalize it, we condone it in some ways by allowing it to happen in our religious leadership, and we continue to move in that direction.

And then you move over to the book of Revelation chapter 21 and verse 8 and boy it's just very clear.

Revelation 21:8

But for the cowardly and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

I don't think that you can find anything more clear than that.

In Romans chapter 1 you have that little phrase that just haunts you: "God gave them over...God gave them over...God gave them over."

And in most of those phrases it has to do with sexual perversion.

Why did God give them over? Sexual disobedience.

Why did God give them over? Sexual disobedience.

And it was not only sexual disobedience in the sense of immorality, it was sexual disobedience in the realm of homosexual. And it is dominant.

What does it mean when it says "God gave them over"? I think it's God saying "Alright, you want to keep on doing it. Keep on doing it! But you're going to hell! I'm through!"

And a lot of people find that God drops the chain and he finally drops the gauntlet. And the time has come knowing that man is bent on going his way and doing what he's going to do, God just gives them over to the full enjoyment of all of their pleasure to the point of leading to the ultimate demise.

You know something. We have got to be sick to condone some of the practices that are far less than the will of God for our lives. This is very clear here. He starts out by saying "this is the will of God."

Have you ever chased that down?

It's the "will of God" we're going to find in chapter 5 verse 18:

1 Thessalonians 5:18

that in everything we give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.

We're going to find the "will of God" in Romans chapter 12:

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Sexual obedience is the will of God.

Now, of course the religion of the time where they were living was very pagan. And yet we're living in the same day.

You know you need only look at the biographies of sexual disobedience in the Scripture that literally ought to scare it out of you or cause you—if you've been traveling on the edge of it—to get out of it and make a new statement of purity and experience cleansing in your life.

When you see what happened to David, what happened to Samson, what happened to Amnon and others—tragic, tragic stories—sad, sad picture.

Now, naturally you raise the question:

How do people get caught in these things?

How does it happen to us so quick?

Listen to James 1:14 and 15:

James 1:14, 15

Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

There are FOUR THINGS that converge that will hang you out to dry if you don't deal with it and recognize they're there.

Now I want to be practical in helping along this line because you and I are vulnerable at this point, probably more than at any other time in history.

First of all:

1. the MIND.

The MIND is a key issue.

Mark 7:21-23

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile a man.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

The battle is really in the head. It's not in the hormones. When you're not thinking right, the hormones are going to be released. That's a problem.

But it starts up here in the head. If you want to have victory, you need to recognize that Satan is in the mind-blinding business. And that he comes in so subtle. And it is his whole

purpose to attack the mind.

In 2 Corinthians 4:4 says:

2 Corinthians 4:4

in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest they respond to Christ.

But he's also in the blinding business as he shows us the pleasure of eliciting sexual relationship rather than showing us the ultimate demise and the tremendous aftershocks that come from it.

First Peter 1:13 is an excellent verse for you to think about:

1 Peter 1:13

Gird up the loins of your mind...

That's a picture of a guy getting ready for battle. He tucks his long trailing robes into his belt so he's ready to run or to work or to do whatever he needs to do. He's ready to fight.

Second Corinthians 10:5 is another excellent verse:

2 Corinthians 10:5

...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

What does the Lord want me to do in this situation? I'm thinking these wrong thoughts.

Ok, what do you do when you think a wrong thought? If you have in your mind the Scripture you're going to do a good spiritual battle by using the Word at that point. And that's the reason why you memorize the Word of God.

Psalm 119:9, 11

Where with all shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.
Thy word have I hid in my heart
that I might not sin against thee.

The minute that thought comes into your mind, you can reject it with a verse of Scripture if you've got it. And if you don't, you're probably going to continue to pursue that line of thought and it eventually is going to lead to a weakness that's going to make you vulnerable.

Now the second thing is:

2. POOR JUDGMENT

The first is the mind, but the second is poor judgment.

Listen to the Proverbs at this point:

Proverbs 6:32, 33

But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment;
whoever does so destroys himself.
Blows and disgrace are his lot,
and his shame will never be wiped away;

So there is a picture of poor judgment being exercised in this situation that leads to the ultimate demise.

It was Mark Twain who said so graphically:

Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment.
(source unknown)

Or a friend of mine said:

Good judgment is what you have right after you needed it.
(source unknown)

You know that probably describes it the best.

Ok, you've got the MIND, you've got POOR JUDGMENT, but the third thing is:

3. COMPROMISE

There comes that time when you kind of teeter on the edge. Am I going to compromise? Am I going to go ahead and pursue this, leave my wife, leave my kids, leave my profession? I'm

going to go for the pleasure.

At that critical time the salmon is looking at the flesh, he's looking at the bait, and he's making a decision—a judgment. I'm hungry. Is this worth it? And he takes it and he's hooked and fried.

I mean, that's the time when compromise is so critical.

Do I have convictions that have been strong enough, forged by the Word of God, that I can see when I'm being tempted at that point to alter my course and to continue along that path? Or am I going to immediately dart away from it and not compromise but stay committed?

Now there are some verses on that.

Proverbs 6:25

Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes,

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life.

Then where is it in Job, I think it's in the later chapters where Job says "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully upon the virgin daughters." (Job 31:1).

It is making a commitment—making a statement that for the rest of my life I will be a person of commitment. I will not compromise.

Now listen, the only problem is, that with sexual sin if you hang around you're probably going to compromise. The Scripture teaches us to FLEE these things. We are not equal to it.

Over and over again Paul tells young Timothy: “But thou O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness” (1 Timothy 6:11, 12).

The fourth thing is:

4. FOCUSING ON SELF

And boy this is where it really happens. What I need and what I want is more important than my fidelity and faithfulness to a commitment.

I am focusing on myself.

How many times have I had people walk through my office and who have said “God expects me to be happy, therefore it’s necessary for me to do drastic surgery in my marriage and take this young lady who is 20 years younger than me.”

Over and over again it’s FOCUS ON SELF.

Now I'm not opposed to us understanding ourselves. I don't have any problem with psychology and psychiatry and those things if they're going to provide truth for conduct.

You take truth where you find it. But I think there are some horrible consequences that we've got a bunch of Christians who are running around more concerned about their self-image and about their self and their self-satisfaction and their self-self-self that they've forgotten the Savior! And they've forgotten the power of the Spirit of God who can give them victory! And because they're dribbling over here over their selfish needs and the mistakes they made 30 years ago when they married so-and-so! They're just going dead in the water right and left! It's focus on the individual.

Philippians 2:3, 4

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each one of you regard one another as more important than himself...

Listen to Proverbs 6:27 and 28:

Proverbs 6:27, 28

Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?
Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?

No!

So this is the KEY VERSE to our study—Have You Gotten Dirty?

And if you've gotten dirty, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to be willing to confront it? To deal with it? And to move in right paths that will bring about a change in your life?

Just because you've gotten dirty doesn't mean that you've got to stay dirty. Sexual sin like divorce is not something that is the unpardonable sin. God can deal with it in your life if you'll respond and do something about it.

The problem with David was he tried to hide it for a whole year. And when you read Psalm 32 it affected him. Man, his spiritual juices dried up. He said my moisture's turned into the drought of summer: "Your hand was heavy upon me. My body waxed old through my roaring all the day the long" (Psalm 32:4)

The guilt that was there for that whole year over the fact that he had committed sin with Bathsheba. But then he went around working it out to murder her husband in order to take her. And so when you keep silent, you are going to destroy yourself. But to come honestly before the Lord:

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together,”
sayeth the Lord.

“Though your sins be as scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow; ...

The Lord’s saying to you today, if you’ve been vulnerable in sexual disobedience, God is just saying “Come on, I want to clean you up man! I want to get back on track again!”

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

There is a tomorrow for you!

The devil is saying “Now you’ve done it! You’re finished!”

No, you’re dirty! And you need to get a bath and get on with it for the rest of your life. And use your good judgment where you used the poor judgement the last time.

Now Joseph probably teaches us the most about sexual fidelity and how to handle sexual temptation.

He beautifully describes that you can’t handle it!

Do you remember in Genesis 39 he was sold into the house of Potiphar? Potiphar was a government agent. He was hardly ever home so he left things at home unattended.

Mrs. Potiphar spent most of her time at the garden club and the bridge table and had no relationship with her husband. And as a result of it, she cast her eyes upon Joseph in his 20s. Beautiful black sparkling eyes and curly hair attracted her very much. And one day, you know, makes the very quick approach by saying “Come to bed with me.” I mean, there wasn’t any preliminaries at all to this deal.

And Joseph said “How can I sin and do this great wickedness against God?”

Sexual or any kind of sin is, first of all, against God. And when we recognize that, we’re at least in the position of realizing who we’re dealing with. But it’s also against man.

“I cannot do this against your husband. He’s trusted me with everything in the house. I will not violate that trust.”

And so he said NO. But the text says she kept on day after day until one day she found him in isolation. And when she found him in isolation, she took hold of his coat. And man he left his coat and kept his character. He fled the house. And because he fled the house, he illustrates to all of us:

You must FLEE, not FIGHT.

You know and one of the wisest things you can do, when these things begin to stir up within you is to flee. Get out of it! Make a decision now that you’re going to leave. Don’t allow anything

like that to get out of hand.

It's not wrong to be tempted! But it's what you do with it. It's when you don't handle it and flee, you're going to have problems.

Now I know what you're saying. You're saying "Ok Anderson, I'm scared to death. I'm living in an environment where I'm being tempted all the time. How can I fight a good fight?"

Ok, since you asked, I'm going to tell you how.

FIVE WAYS—If you will hang onto these five words, I guarantee you that you're going to make it to glory and you're going to find yourself avoiding some horrible, horrible problems.

First of all:

1. **HONESTY**—Don't pull a cloak of dishonesty over any relationship. If it's your wife or your sister or whoever—honesty.

Secondly:

2. **ACCOUNTABILITY**—drive the stakes around you everywhere.

I have discovered that my accountability works best with men I'm memorizing Scripture with. And I must have 15 or 20 of

those men staked all over the state of Texas so that they know where I am and I make appointments with them to memorize Scripture, to share and to talk. And there's nothing in our lives that are secret.

And so we talk over these things—accountability. You find that the guys that are most vulnerable are the lone wolves. They are the people who are in ministry by themselves or they work by themselves, they don't have many friends and Satan loves to pick off the wick. He looks for the one that's isolated.

Just like the lion looks for the weak and the one that's isolated from the pack, to take them to lunch. That's exactly the way Satan works when it comes to sexual temptation. You don't find sexual temptation hitting a whole bunch at once. It's when you're a loner, it's when you've drawn back, it's when you're away by yourself that you're most vulnerable.

Third:

3. **DEPENDENCE**—don't lose your spirit of dependence upon others.

I have found one common denominator with sexual disobedience and that is **INDEPENDENCE**.

“I want my happiness and I don't care what anybody else thinks and I don't care who I'm going to hurt. I'm gonna go ahead and do this because I want to do it.”

There's an independent spirit rather than a dependent attitude.

Number 4:

4. OBEDIENCE—make obedience priority in your life with Christ and you're going to be blessed.

Obedience is better than sacrifice.

First Samuel chapter 15, Saul learned that in a horrible experience.

And then finally:

5. TEACHABLE SPIRIT—don't lose your teachable spirit. Be teachable before those who are around you.

It's an amazing thing with this too, that when you have people involved in this kind of thing, they cease to be taught. It's like they're a law unto themselves. They won't listen to you as you express your love, your warnings, your exhortations, your concern, your compassion. They just simply tune a deaf ear. They've lost the teachable spirit. So ask God, as a part of your defense mechanism as you sit here in this place, "God keep me with a teachable spirit so I can hear Your Word through those who would guide and teach me!"

Now that's the first "THAT" phrase. The second "THAT" phrase is in verse 4.

“For this is the will of God, your being set apart; that you should keep yourselves away from fornication;”

v. 4 that each one of you should know that he is to take a wife for himself (or gain control over his own body) in consecration and honor,

Phase #1 was in verse 3:

“that you should keep yourselves away from fornication.”

Phrase #2 here:

“that each one of you should know that he is to take a wife for himself (or gain control over his own body) in consecration and honor.”

Now you say “Don, why did you translate it that way? And why did you put the parenthesis in there?”

Well see that little Greek word can be translated “vessel.”

And women in the Scripture are called the “weaker vessel” in many passages. Now it doesn’t mean inferior. It only means weaker in the sense that the man has the ultimate responsibility for the relationship.

And so I take it, if you translate “vessel,” that most of the evidence of Scripture would be toward that if this is a problem

then, “each one...take a wife for himself” and solve the problem.

But now let’s say he’s referring to my vessel, that I should take to my vessel, that I should gain control over this. That’s true too.

It is possible for sexual desire to be controlled by the Christian through God’s power.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

So you see, the neat thing about the controversy over the Greek word is that it says the two things that are the viable options in the will of God.

You’ve got problems with sexual desires. Hey look, God made you that way. Then get married or control your desires with the power of the Spirit.

Those are the two things. Because the marriage bed is undefiled. And the other option is, if God has called you to a single life (which is an honorable and beautiful life) then God is also going to give you the strength and the grace to live with your sexual desires and to live in obedience.

And so the controversy in the text only can be helped by the fact that those are the two things that we’ve got as options as

believers.

Now, we recognize that we have to get control of our bodies. We've got to learn as Christians how to manifest self-control.

Anybody that has an experience with anger is learning how to exercise self-control to deal with that.

Anybody that's having a problem with food has learned how to say no to the body in order to prolong life.

Or anybody having problems with exercise, you know, it's just one of those things. You've just got to say "Hey look." And my body complains every morning when I wake up, you know. "This is the dumbest thing in the world. You don't need to do this."

"Well I've heard that song, second verse, body. You just shut up. We're going to go beat the heck out of you for the next hour."

You've got to learn to do that! Because there's consequences for not doing it. So you better get your act together and do it!

And the same thing's true with your tongue. You know, some of that gust speak 35,000 words a minute. And others of us don't have quite that much problem. But you know, you've eventually got to put the tongue under the control of the Spirit—James chapter 3.

Sexual desire is just like it. It's the name of the game.

You treat your body roughly and you make it serve you—1 Corinthians 9:27—so that you won't be disqualified, ordered to stand aside.

Now can I give you a few verses of warning?

Romans 6:13

do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

I gave you 1 Corinthians 9:27: "...buffet your body..."

1 Corinthians 7:2

But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

We are responsible for our bodies and our behavior as believers. And it's the power of the Spirit that can give us the victory.

Now the NEGATIVE side of that is verse 5.

v. 5 not in lustful passion, even as also the Gentiles who do not know God;

A believer ought not be acting, allowing his passions to control him. But rather we ought to be doing the will of God and recognize that our attitudes toward sex will change. And God will give us the victory if we'll just simply trust Him.

But to those in the world, it's a satisfaction of a passion, and it has horrible consequences.

Mark Baker wrote the book *NAM—N-A-M*—and it's a sad, sad tale of the inside of Vietnam. And there are some very horrible pictures of what our men went through in that situation.

This particular story was the story that I was looking for in the book. This is a guy satisfying his passion.

(*NAM* by Mark Baker)

This eighteen-year-old kid was celebrating one night, because the next morning was going to be his first time through there. He was going to do it up big, get drunk and get himself a prostitute and spend the night doing whatever it is they do.

She was a sweet little thing. She brought a satchel charge into his APC with her. They did their thing. She went home, and shortly thereafter the charge blew up. Of course, being in a confined area, he not only got the shrapnel, he got the full load. He came in with no arms and his legs were gone below the knee. All he had was a head and a trunk.

I was the lucky one. I got to take care of him. He was so bad, he got a “special”: one nurse just for him.

He had these huge gaping holes and he had lost so much

blood. You give somebody a lot of blood and they have problems coagulating. They couldn't stop this kid from bleeding. So he's got these big dressings on his stumps that are bleeding and his arms are bleeding. He's recovering from the anesthesia. Yet, you don't want him to recover, because he's going to freak out when he sees what's left of him.

Plus, there were some other guys in the ward who knew him and they are waking up. They see him and they're going nuts. There's nothing you can do for them. All you can say is, "If you don't like it, man, you can just look the other way. I'm sorry, but there's just nothing that we can do about it."

Every time the kid tried to open his eyes or even lift his head to see how he was, we just gave him a blast of morphine. It took him two days to die. What an awful price to pay for a one-night stand.

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You know, I don't care what you say about it. When you think in terms of here's a guy in the world satisfying his passion, that's a graphic picture of what's going to happen to you if you're in a marriage and in a family and you mess around with this stuff.

You're going to find everything blowing up all around you. You're going to lose your family. You're going to lose your credibility. You've got everything to lose and Satan knows it. And that's the graphic picture to me that describes what happens when you just keep on playing and you keep on going on in something like this rather than doing drastic surgery and dealing with it in your life.

Verse 6.

v. 6 that no one be overstepping and taking advantage of his brother in this matter because the Lord is the one who punishes concerning all these things, even as we also told you before and warned you.

“For God called us not for uncleanness, but in holiness.”

There’s your third “THAT” phrase.

“THAT” phrase #1—verse 3.

“THAT” phrase #2—verse 4.

“THAT” phrase #3—verse 6:

“no one be overstepping and taking advantage of his brother in this matter.”

That he would mess around with these things so freely.

You know I read *Gifted Hands* by Ben Carson. He’s in charge of pediatric neurosurgery in John Hopkins Hospital now. In the fifth grade he was in the bottom of his class until his momma made a decision for him and his brother Curtis. And that is, “you’re going to get to watch three television programs a week and you’re going to read two books as long as you’re under my roof.” A week!

And his whole career has just skyrocketed. He was responsible for the separation of the two twins that were attached at the skull, and making a successful surgery.

But I found out in the other book that was written by Ben following this one called *Think Big*—and it’s just been out a brief time. It’s the story of his momma and the convictions that helped her achieve what she did in raising, as a single parent, these two boys.

A minister friend made a point of hiring her as a secretary because she didn’t have enough money. And so she thought it was a wonderful job. And this guy was only trying to get her into bed.

(Think Big: Unleashing Your Potential for Excellence by Ben Carson, M.D. with Cecil Murphey)

“You’re asking me to hop into bed with you? And you’re a minister?” I was so naive that such an idea had not occurred to me. Naive, yes, but I wasn’t stupid, and I told him so. “You get yourself another bird because this bird don’t fly that way.”

“That’s no way to talk,” he said as he stepped toward me.

“If you move any closer to me, I’m going to yell that you’re bothering me. If I start yelling, they’ll hear me screaming for two city blocks.”

Obviously he had not expected that kind of response. He stepped backward and stared at me, a confused look on his face. “Okay, okay,” he said. “Don’t yell. Look, it won’t go any further; just act like it did not happen, and you needn’t come

back any more. Just don't let anybody know this happened.”
I picked up my pad and walked out of the room.
p. 36

You know, there's the answer. That's the reason she's so blessed with two boys because she had an undergirding conviction to sexual purity.

Jack Hayford discusses 10 reasons sex sins are worse than other kinds of sin: 1) They stain the deepest part of a person's identity. 2) They exploit the deepest aspects of our emotionality. 3) They pollute the fountainhead of our highest creativity. 4) They produce guilt that cripples our confidence in God's forgiveness. 5) They expose us to the risk of begetting and conceiving an unsupported child. 6) They compromise the foundation of life's deepest human relationship. 7) They increase the probability of multiplying the spread of disease. 8) They give place to appetites that can only beget further unnatural behavior. 9) They break trust with the whole body of Christ. 10) They assault the pure lordship of Jesus in our lives.

“Why sex sins are worse than others” by Jack W. Hayford.
Charisma & Christian Life. Oct 1989. Pages 68-75.

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

Now you've got three “THAT” phrases, but you've got THREE REASONS that wrap it up:

REASON #1:

God is the avenger concerning these things.

God takes special notice and He deals in a severe way with this sin.

REASON #2:

He has called us to be holy.

REASON #3:

The man who rejects this becomes a personal opponent of God.

Now look at the remaining phrases and you'll see that.

REASON #1:

“The Lord is the one who punishes concerning all these things, even as we also told you before and we warned you.”

And it's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Verse 7 is the SECOND REASON.

v. 7 For God called us not for uncleanness, but in holiness.

REASON #2:

“For God called us not for uncleanness, but in holiness.”

That takes us back to that prayer request in verse 11.

And then finally, we see the next phrase when he says:

v. 8 Therefore, the one who is rejecting [this] is not rejecting man but God who also is giving his Holy Spirit to us.

Yes, it is the Holy Spirit, and He wants us holy.

Now, how as a believer can I be following the path of holiness?

There are all kinds of different of opinions.

You’ve got the DIPPERS who say “one dip does all.” You get dipped and you have your experience and you’re all of a sudden instantaneously holy.

And then you’ve got the DENTISTS. They pull the sins out one at a time. They’re just trying to extract them from their lives.

And then you've got the DEDICATORS. These poor people look like they've been weaned on embalming fluid. They're dedicating and re-dedicating and consecrating and re-consecrating and they never know any joy.

But then you've got the people who are living by DIVINE DESIGN. And that is, when you've got a problem you deepen your relationship with the Lord and you come and seek His face. And with increased sensitivity, you want to be pleasing to Him, and you devote yourself to that effort.

That's the divine design—closer and closer to the Lord as a result in your walk with Him—He indeed is going to give you the victory.

I read this little story:

THE ENEMY WITHIN

In Victor Hugo's story, "Ninety-Three," a ship is caught in a storm. The frightened crew hears a terrible crashing sound below. Immediately the men know what it is: a cannon has broken loose and is crashing into the ship's side with every smashing blow of the sea! Two men, at the risk of their lives, manage to fasten it down again, for they know that the unfastened cannon is more dangerous than the raging storm. Hillery C. Price made this application: "Many people are like that ship—their greatest danger areas lie within their own lives."

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

And this one thing that you let loose, man, it's going to break up your ship in the storm unless you nail it down, unless you learn how to handle it.

You know we've spent a lot of time talking about it, but in drugs we say "Just say no." Well in sex let's do the same thing. Let's just learn as believers to say no.

Now I've got ten lessons and I must read them so give me a minute.

Lesson #1: Paul's exhortation in this passage is to sexual holiness.

Lesson #2: The key to effective Christian living is to conduct ourselves in such a way as to please God.

Lesson #3: The Christian life was never meant to be a standstill or arrived experience.

Lesson #4: There is no finality in our Christian lives, we are either going up or down.

Lesson #5: The will of God is for us to continue to become more holy as time goes by.

Lesson #6: The ways to get snagged into irresponsible sexual behavior are: wrong thinking, poor judgment, compromise,

and selfishness.

Lesson #7: It is the Spirit of God who produces the fruit of self-control in the life of the believer.

Lesson #8: There is the potential for victory in every area of our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson #9: The Lord deals severely with sexual disobedience.

Lesson #10: Learn to JUST SAY NO.

An unknown poet wrote these words:

“What would He find, should He come just now;
A faded leaf or a fruitless bough;
A servant sleeping, an idle plow;
What would He find should He come just now?
What would He find should He come tonight,
Your garment soiled or a spotless white;
Your lamps all burning or with no light;
What would He find should He come tonight?”

(From InfoSearch 2.21)

Now, how can we survive and how can we have victory?

I want to give you FOUR THINGS:

1. STAY IN THE WORD

Use my M&M theory—MEMORIZE and MEDITATE.

Stay in the Word. Don't get out of the book.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

Find as many friends as you can and be accountable to them in every area of your life. Don't have anything that you can't talk with them about.

3. FOCUS ON SERVANTHOOD

If you're single, focus on the Savior. If you're married, focus on the Savior and your wife or husband.

Focus on servanthood. You're there to be a blessing to your wife, your husband, to your family.

And fourth:

4. STAY AWAY from situations that could lead to TEMPTATION and COMPROMISE.

Stay away from situations that could lead to temptation and compromise.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. I pray that this personal talk, this chat about sexual fidelity would help us to understand how we can gain the victory through the power of

the Holy Spirit. And I would pray, our Father, if there are those who are silent in their lives because of something in the past that they've been in bondage about, they'd be released from that. And that they could be set free on this mountain and realize that You're waiting to start all over again. You're waiting even as the Father was waiting for the prodigal son to return home, to put your arms around him and to start over brand new—pick up where they left off. I pray that each of us would be those who would fight the good fight. We would flee these things when there are opportunities to compromise our moral standards. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of 1 THESSALONIANS: Your Spiritual Checkup

“Victory in Areas of Vulnerability”

Key verse 3:10 — *“night and day praying as earnestly as possible that we might see your face and complete what is lacking in your faith”*

QUESTION NUMBER SEVEN – HAVE YOU GOTTEN DIRTY? – 1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8

KEY VERSE 4:3

v. 1 Finally therefore, brethren, we are asking and exhorting you in the Lord Jesus, in order that, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God (just as also you are walking), in order that you may abound more and more.

v. 2 For you are knowing what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

v. 3 For this is the will of God, your being set apart; that you should keep yourselves away from fornication;

v. 4 that each one of you should know that he is to take a wife for himself (or gain control over his own body) in consecration and honor,

v. 5 not in lustful passion, even as also the Gentiles who do not know God;

v. 6 that no one be overstepping and taking advantage of his brother in this matter because the Lord is the one who punishes concerning all these things, even as we also told you before and warned you.

v. 7 For God called us not for uncleanness, but in holiness.

v. 8 Therefore, the one who is rejecting [this] is not rejecting man but God who also is giving his Holy Spirit to us.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What is Paul asking them to do in verse 1?

3. What is the “will of God,” according to verse 3?

4. Do you think Paul thought it was wrong to be married? If not, why not?

5. When we sin against our bodies, who is the one who punishes, according to verse 6?

6. What is God's calling, according to verse 7? Apply this calling to your personal life and conduct.

7. If we reject this instruction, whom are we "rejecting," according to verse 8?

8. Who is the gift of God, according to verse 8?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Paul's exhortation in this passage is to sexual holiness.

LESSON #2: The key to effective Christian living is to conduct ourselves in such a way as to please God.

LESSON #3: The Christian life was never meant to be a standstill, or arrived experience.

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