

Spiritual Maturity: Maturity Leads to Purity #1 (1 Thes 4:3-6a)

Spiritual Maturity: What Does It Look Like? (1 Thes 3:8-13)

1. That you would **remain standing** in the Lord (8)
2. That you would get **repaired** what is missing in your faith (9-10)
3. That you would increase and abound in **sacrificial care** toward each other (11-12)
4. That God would solidify your heart blameless in **active holiness** at the presence of God at the return of the Lord Jesus (13)

Spiritual Maturity: How Does it Happen? (1 Thes 4:1-3)

Do we grow spiritual automatically? Accidentally? Arbitrarily? No...

1. Process of Maturity: **Building** one truth on another, & living the truths we are taught
2. Activity of Maturity: Ongoing **practice** (walking) & ongoing **purpose** (pleasing God)
3. Expansion of Maturity: Current **practice** with continual **progress**
4. Necessity of Maturity: Not a choice but a **necessity**; God's will, not pastoral creativity
5. Elements of Maturity: Involves **stopping, starting, and avoiding** different behaviors

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

It Is God's Revealed Will that We Abstain from Sexual Immorality

(porneia) is "understood as any type of unlawful sexual activity from prostitution to adultery or fornication" Wanamaker, C. A. (1990). *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*

We Live in a Culture that Immerses Itself in Sexual Immorality

- **In Our Entertainment:** Sexually immoral movies (most now have some element of porneia), sports culture and sports heroes, music, novels, books & magazines, internet, bar lifestyle, advertisements, etc.
- **In Our Dress:** Provocative and revealing clothing (when clothes were designed to hide our nakedness and cover our bodies); no shame – we show our skin; we show our shape. MEN too (God covered Eve and Adam).
- **In Our Relationships:** Internet chats; talk; pairing off without consideration of commitment; living together; Christian sex; recreational sex ("dating"), sex outside of marriage; same-sex marriage; prostitution; affairs within marriage.

We feed the very thing God has commanded us to avoid, and we immerse ourselves in it in every way.

How are we to view sexual immorality and moral purity?

God is very, very clear that we are to reject sexual immorality and be set apart – sanctified – in our conduct.

1. Purity Is First Defined Positively (4)

"that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor"

As stated, it indicates acquiring control (a fruit of the Spirit) of our vessel is something we each must learn how to do.

- It is God's will that you learn (acquire) self-control of your own body
- It is God's will that you possess your body in practical holiness – avoiding sexually immoral input and practices.
- It is God's will that you possess your body in honor.

2. Purity Is Contrasted with Unbelievers (5)

"not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God"

- Purity means not living by our desires (feels, sounds, looks good)
- Purity means not living like those that do not know God

Eph 4:17-24 ¹⁷ This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

3. Sexual Immorality Clearly Hurts Others (6a)

"that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter"

Sexual Immorality is SINFUL

It is a trespass against the other person (you are sinning against them even if they participate – it assumes they do!) – and thus against God.

Sexual Immorality is SELFISH

You do not love them; you are taking advantage of them

Two Bible Principles:

- **The Touch Principle** (1 Cor 7:1): Don't touch until he/she belongs to you. God created and designed sex for marriage alone. It is not a means of getting to know someone, or a form of recreation. It is a gift for a husband and wife.
- **The Family Principle** (1 Tim 5:1-2): Treat people like your own sisters/brothers.

Τούτο γάρ ἐστὶν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,
ὁ ἁγιασμός ὑμῶν,
ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς
ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας,
εἰδέναι ἕκαστον ὑμῶν
τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι
ἐν
ἁγιασμῷ καὶ
τιμῇ,
μὴ ἐν
πάθει ἐπιθυμίας
καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδόντα τὸν θεόν,
τὸ μὴ
ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ
πλεονεκτεῖν
ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ,
διότι ἕκδικος κύριος
περὶ πάντων τούτων,
καθὼς καὶ
προείπαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ
διεμαρτυράμεθα.
οὐ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς
ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσία
ἀλλ' ἐν ἁγιασμῷ.
τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἀθετῶν
οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ
ἀλλὰ τὸν θεόν
τὸν [καὶ] διδόντα τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς.

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