

## **Spiritual Maturity: Maturity Includes Accountability (1 Th 4:6-8)**

### **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 Jesus' coming (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

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup> 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..." Wanamaker, C. A.

### **We Live in a Culture that Immerses Itself in Sexual Immorality**

*In Our Entertainment – In Our Dress – In Our Relationships*

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 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"*

- 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.
- 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)

#### **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:** A trespass against the other person & God.

**Sexual Immorality is SELFISH:** You don't love when you take advantage.

**Two Bible Principles:**

- **The TOUCH Principal** (1 Cor 7:1): Don't touch until he/she belongs to you.
- **The FAMILY Principle** (1 Tim 5:1-2): Treat people like your own sisters/brothers.

Northridge Baptist Church – Pastor Kevin Subra – December 7, 2014

#### **4. God Avenges Those Hurt by Sexual Immorality (6b)**

*"because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified."*

- **This life** – misery, brokenness (e.g. David), ripple effect; broken testimony (you and ripple effect); sexual diseases, guilt; goofed up families (single moms, kids with no dads, etc.); spiral downhill; loss of true joy; promotion of Satan's agenda; broken marriages (often more than one); no true relationships; hurt family, children (stigma, even).
- **The next life** – negative spiritual impact on you, your family, your children, your extended family and your posterity; your church family; your extended spiritual family; loss of eternal rewards; eternal influencing others away from God; prevention of some from believing because of your behavior; rejection of the Gospel and the truth.

*We need to acknowledge the utter sinfulness of sexual immorality, and commit by God's grace to live for Him and reject the claws of sexual immorality.*

*Confess to God. Take measures to AVOID sin. It's much easier than fixing what breaks when we disobey our Loving God and His Clear Will. We need to hear this over and over (even more in our time).*

#### **5. God's Clear Purpose Is for Us to Be Holy, and not Unholy (7)**

*"For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness."*

*You are NOT called to uncleanness (living by lustful or impure motives), but to holiness – it is your job (e.g. customer service – "people bug me") It is not just something we do as Christians, it defines the very essence of Christianity, the very reason Christ died, the realm in which we are suppose to live and proclaim the Gospel of God. If we live in sinfulness, we are without any eternal effect on our family and the culture in which we live.*

- Rom 1:24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, *[living by uncleanness is a curse or punishment that people are unaware of]*
- Rom 6:19 ...For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness [leading] to [more] lawlessness, so now present your members [as] slaves [of] righteousness for holiness.
- Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

#### **6. God's Clear Choice for Maturity and Personal Purity (8)**

*Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*

*If you reject sanctification – personal purity,*

- You are rejecting God, not man. It's not man's idea. We ourselves are sinful creatures with sinful natures that would revel in sin until it killed us if not for the grace of God. You are picking a fight with God, not men, on this, and He's already promised to punish you if you do (and God has never lost an argument, or failed to keep a promise).
- You are violating the indwelling Holy Spirit – you will drag God into this! – 1 Cor 6:15-20

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 εἰδότα τὸν θεόν,  
τὸ μὴ  
ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ  
πλεονεκτεῖν  
ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ,  
διότι ἔκδικος 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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