

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

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

<sup>8</sup> For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? <sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1. That you would **remain standing** in the Lord (8)
2. That you would get **repaired** what is **missing** in your belief (9-10)
3. That you would increase and abound in **sacrificial care** toward each other (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)**

<sup>1</sup> Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; <sup>2</sup> for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

*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*

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

<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

**Fact #1: It Is God's Will that We Are \_\_\_\_\_ 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*

**Fact #2: We Live in a Culture that \_\_\_\_\_ Itself in Sexual Immorality**

- **In Our ENTERTAINMENT:** Sexually immoral movies (most have some element of porneia), sports, music, books & magazines, internet, advertisements, etc.
- **In Our DRESS:** Provocative, revealing clothing (which is to hide nakedness and cover our bodies). Shame is gone. We show our skin and shape.
- **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.

## **How are we to approach sexual immorality and moral purity?**

1. **We Are to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Purity (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.*

- a. **It is God's will that you learn (acquire) self-control of your own \_\_\_\_\_**
- b. **It is God's will that you possess your body in practical \_\_\_\_\_ – avoiding sexually immoral input and practices.**
- c. **It is God's will that you possess your body in \_\_\_\_\_.**

2. **We Are to Live in Purity, \_\_\_\_\_ Unbelievers (5)**  
**"not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God"**

- a. **Purity means not living by our \_\_\_\_\_ (feels, sounds, looks good)**
- b. **Purity means not living like those that do not \_\_\_\_\_ God**

**Eph 4:17-24** <sup>17</sup> 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, <sup>18</sup> 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; <sup>19</sup> who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. <sup>20</sup> But you have not so learned Christ, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: <sup>22</sup> that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, <sup>23</sup> and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

3. **We Are to See that Sexual Immorality \_\_\_\_\_ Others (6a)**  
**"that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter"**

- a. **Sexual Immorality is \_\_\_\_\_**  
*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.*
- b. **Sexual Immorality is \_\_\_\_\_**  
*You do not love them; you are taking advantage of them*

### **Two Bible Principles:**

- **The \_\_\_\_\_ Principle (1 Cor 7:1):** Don't touch until he/she belongs to you in marriage. 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 from God for a husband and wife alone.
- **The \_\_\_\_\_ Principle (1 Tim 5:1-2):** Treat people like your own sisters/brothers. Note that the emphasis is on the man.