

Spiritual Maturity: Maturity Affirms 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 belief (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

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**.

Fact #1: It Is God's Will that We Are Distancing from Sexual Immorality

(porneia) is "understood as any type of unlawful sexual activity..." C.A. Wanamaker

Fact #2: We Live in a Culture that Immerses Itself in Sexual Immorality

- In Our **ENTERTAINMENT**: What we read, watch, listen to, admire, view
- In Our **DRESS**: How we cover and conceal our skin and shape (or not)
- In Our **RELATIONSHIPS**: Sex before marriage, affairs, pairing w/o commitment

How Are We to Approach Sexual Immorality and Purity?

1. We Are to Learn and Practice Purity (4)

- a. It is God's will that you learn (acquire) self-control of your own body.
- b. It is God's will that you possess your body in practical holiness.
- c. It is God's will that you possess your body in honor.

2. We Are to Live in Purity, Unlike Unbelievers (5)

- a. Purity means not living by our desires (feels, sounds, looks good)
- b. Purity means not living like those that do not know God (Eph 4:17-24)

3. We Are to See that Sexual Immorality Hurts Others (6a)

- a. Sexual Immorality is **SINFUL**: A trespass against the other person & God.
- b. Sexual Immorality is **SELFISH**: You don't love when you take advantage.

Two Bible Principles:

- **The TOUCH Principle** (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.

4. God _____ Those Hurt by Sexual Immorality (6b) "because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified."

- In _____ **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).
- In the _____ **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 _____ Is for Us to Be Holy, and _____ 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 Draws a Clear _____ on Our 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 personal purity you are rejecting _____, not man. 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, and He's already promised to punish you if you do (and God has never lost an argument, or failed to keep a promise).
- If you reject personal purity you are violating the indwelling _____ Spirit – you will drag God into this! – 1 Cor 6:15-20