

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **How to Walk Pleasing to the Lord 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 Part 1**

We are going back to the Book of First Thessalonians this morning but not to the same chapter. Rather than turning in your Bibles to **1 Thessalonians 3**, will you please turn in your Bibles to **1 Thess. 4**. Paul in **1 Thess. 4:1 - 1 Thess. 5:22** will be amplifying the instruction he had already given the Thessalonians on his first visit. And even though they had done well in respect to this instruction he is exhorting them to **“excel to more.”**

Why is he exhorting them to excel still more! Because there is always, I believe, a tendency for all of us to become satisfied. But we just cannot allow this to happen. We certainly have not yet arrived at personal perfection and as long as we are, in any way, short of that mark we must not allow ourselves to become complacent.

And certainly we see Paul doing all that he can to keep the Thessalonians from experiencing any kind of self satisfaction in **VV. 1-2 “(1)Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk,) that you may excel still more. (2) For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.”**

These words are also very appropriate for us. We are a wonderful church just like the Thessalonians. I believe that we are in many ways walking in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord, but we can excel still more. There are areas of our walk that certainly need to be given attention and there probably aren't three better areas of our walk to focus on than the areas that Paul will address in **1 Thess. 4:3-12**.

My hope for this message is that as we address these various areas of our lives in such a way that we will be far and away better prepared to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord. What is the first area of our walk Paul focuses on?

#### WALKING IN SEXUAL PURITY (1 THESSALONIANS. 4:3-8)

Let us read **VV. 3-8 “(3) For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; (4) that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, (5) not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; (6) and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. (7) For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. (8) Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.”** This is an extremely appropriate topic. Not only for the Thessalonians but also for us. And within this passage which deals with walking in sexual purity there are three specific commands.

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### THAT THEY WOULD ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY (V. 3)

Let us read V. 3 again “**For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.**” The Lord has drawn a very definite and clear line in the sand. We must “**abstain from all immorality**” the word for “immorality” is the word “PORNEIA.” This is any sexual activity with anyone other than your spouse.

Why was this such a problem in Thessalonica? Thessalonica like Corinth was known for their immorality. All we have to do in order to understand what was going on in these cities is to look at Greek vocabulary. All we have to do is look at the words that were being used to describe the behaviors that were present in their culture.

PORNE - Refers to a harlot, whore, prostitute. They used this word because, they in fact had them. Prostitution was not only practiced, but it was legal. People who want to visit prostitutes in the Antelope Valley have to actually, for the most part be looking for prostitutes. That was not the case then. I have read that we have had problems with prostitution in certain places in the city. But I have not been approached by a prostitute. And I don't think I have ever seen one in the Antelope Valley. That would not have been the case in Thessalonica.

PORNUEIN - Refers to the businesses that sprang up that involved prostitution. Since prostitution was legal, sexual appetites of the Thessalonians were not only being met by individual prostitutes plying their wares but by whore houses or brothels. I know that our society has deteriorated but I do not know of a single brothel in the Antelope Valley. I don't believe that the Thessalonians could have said this.

In fact, prostitution had gone from a secular venue into the religious venue. There were temple prostitutes. During that time period there were people who began to teach people that the way to get in touch with various deities was by sexual contact with a temple prostitute. We do not know the extent of this in Thessalonica. But we know that in Corinth they had 3000 temple prostitutes. In order to be truly spiritual in many peoples minds, cavorting with prostitutes was not only good it was necessary.

POLAKEI - Means “concubine.” A concubine was a slave whose primary purpose was to fulfill sexual desires. You purchased a concubine and used her. This was a long term purchased woman. This was not unusual but common in the Thessalonian world.

ETAHRAI - Is the plural form of “mistresses.” This was not someone you would buy. A mistress was a friend. Typically men and women had these kind of friends outside of their marriages. A wife was primarily for taking care of the house, cooking the meals, keep the clothes clean and to watch the children. The wife was not primarily the sexual partner.

MOICKOS - To the adulterer or adulteress. This was having sex with someone else's spouse.

All this was going on. Do you see the problem for these Thessalonian converts? Months prior to this letter and just prior to their conversion they were involved, many of them, in seeking out prostitutes on the street corners, in brothels, or temples.

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In addition to this or in lieu of this many of them had their own sexual slaves, the concubines, and as a change of pace it was extremely common for them to be having sexual liaisons with various friends recreationally. The one person they most likely were not having sex with was their husband or their wife. IF WE UNDERSTAND THIS IT BECOMES VERY CLEAR TO US WHY PAUL WAS SAYING WHAT HE WAS SAYING. HE IS REMINDING THEM OF THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE.

We also need to be reminded of the sanctity of marriage. We need to understand that the Lord will not tolerate any sexual activity outside of the marriage relationship. The Lord makes it very clear to us that any sexual activity with anyone other than our marriage partner is IMMORAL. This understanding is the foundation of faithfulness in the marriage relationship. If we in any sense find that we somehow entertain the thought that unfaithfulness to our marriage partner is negotiable we open the doors to sin.

If you are married to a person who you feel good toward but who does not seem to be as interested in sexual matters as yourself, or fails to satisfy you in some physical way, it is not grounds for flirtations outside of your marriage relationship. I don't care how frustrated you may be.

If you are married to a person who you do not particularly like anymore, your marriage is faltering and you have very little interest in them personally or sexually, it is not a ground for flirtations outside of the marriage relationship. I don't care how lonely you are. It is sin.

We are not to be looking outside of our marriage relationship for sexual satisfaction. Rather we are to be looking to our marriage. If you have the mind to do this I would like to give you a few practical examples.

We must seek to focus 100% of our sexual energy toward our spouse. In **I Cor. 7:1-4** it says “**Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. (2) But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. (3) Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. (4) The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.**” Why should a hundred percent of our sexual energy be directed toward our spouse? Because this is right and this is good. For a married person all sexual thoughts and actions should focus on your spouse this should be your goal.

We need to make time for a regular physical relationship (**1 Cor. 7:5**).