

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **How to Walk Pleasing to the Lord 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 Part 3**

These last several weeks as we have been examining **1 Thess. 4:1-12** we have been considering how we can walk pleasing to the Lord. The very first subject that Paul tackles is the subject of SEXUAL PURITY. In addressing this subject Paul gives us three different commands.

The first command was “abstain from all sexual immorality.” We saw this clearly stated in **V. 3.** The word “**immorality**” is the word “PORNEIA.” This is a very broad term that refers to any sexual activity with anyone other than your spouse. This certainly would include “adultery” which is extramarital sexual encounters. And it would also include “fornication” which is premarital sexual encounters.

The second command was “that each of you know how to possess his own vessel.” The word “**vessel**” is the word “SKEUOS.” This word can either refer to a “**wife**” or to our “**physical body.**” The better interpretation I believe would be “**body.**” If we are going to abstain from “**sexual immorality**” each of us must know how to “**possess his own body in sanctification and honor.**” And this interpretation is supported by the NIV Bible. Certainly if we are going to abstain from sexual immorality we must learn to “control our bodies.” We must learn to “buffet our bodies.”

But why is all this so important? Why should people be so careful in this regard? More specifically why should we as the children of God be so careful not to become guilty of sexual sin? With that question in that back of our minds let us now go to the third command related to sexual purity.

And this third command is “that no man transgress and defraud his brother.”

Let us read these verses. “**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.**” We are not to transgress or defraud our brother it says in the “**matter.**” What “**matter?**” In the matter of sex. This is the only matter we have been talking about and this certainly is the matter that Paul has in mind.

The verb “transgress” (HYPERBAINO) means “to go beyond” and thus “to go beyond the bonds.”

The word “defraud” (PLEONEKTEO) connotes greed, “to want to have more than one should.”

If you or I would seek to have or even want to have a sexual encounter with someone other than our spouse we have gone beyond the bonds of what is right and we have transgressed. And we have defrauded our brother in the sense that we have desired or sought for something that was not ours to take or theirs to give.

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Note: the term “brother” most likely refers to someone within the Christian community, but the principle could certainly be applied to anyone even outside of church fellowship.

But why? Paul will now answer that question. And I believe in answering that question he gives to us the primary reason why we need to be so very careful in this area. The reason is simple, **“the Lord is the avenger in all these things just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.”**

While it is true that the Christian is not under condemnation (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1), it is also true that he is not free from the harvest of sorrow that comes when we sow to the flesh (**Gal. 6:7-8**). When King David committed adultery, he tried to cover his sin, but God chastened him severely. When David confessed his sins, God forgave him; but God could not change the consequences. David reaped what he sowed, and it was a painful experience for him.

Being saved, being one of God’s elect is not an excuse for sin. It is an encouragement for holiness. Look at **VV. 7-8 “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.”**

If you or I choose to be involved in sexual sin, know this, that in choosing to embrace behavior we have also chosen to reject God and this is no small matter which is magnified even more so in the next phrase, **“who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”**

Paul is calling our attention to the magnitude of sexual sin. God has given the holy Spirit to us so that we might have the strength and power to live holy lives. As a result of this gift we not only have the grace to be victorious but the additional responsibility to keep the temple of the Holy Spirit. And what is the temple of the Holy Spirit? It is our body (**I Cor. 6:18**).

No other sin that we would enter into as a believer could be more offensive to the Lord than the desecration of His temple. Therefore I am warning you as Paul did the Thessalonians. Do not desecrate the Lord’s temple for he is the avenger in all these things.

That is by far the most important reason not to engage in sexual sin but I would like to take a few more minutes and outline rather superficially a few others. **NOT ONLY ARE THERE SPIRITUAL REASONS FOR NOT COMMITTING SEXUAL SIN**

There are **physical** reasons as well.

Sexually transmitted diseases - One of the most destructive and permanent results of premarital or extramarital sex is acquiring a sexually transmitted disease (STD). People are paying the price for abusing their bodies and God’s gift of sex, reducing it to a form of entertainment.

Anyone who has sex outside of marriage is at risk. STD’s do not recognize a person’s religious or moral beliefs, only his or her actions. As one researcher said, “Unless you’re monogamous for lifetime, with a monogamous partner, you are at risk. And the more partners you have, the greater the risk.”

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The U.S. is currently seeing an outbreak of STD's unprecedented in history. The statistics are staggering. The Minnesota Institute of Public Health warns that "there are twenty sexually transmitted diseases which are not prevented by contraception." They emphasize that fifteen million people now get a sexual disease each year.

Dr. Edward Weismeirer, director of the UCLA Student Health Center, warns students that, "Even an honest answer to an intimate question is no guarantee that a person is safe. While dormant in one person, an STD can be transmitted to another." He says that "one chance encounter can infest a person with as many as five different diseases."

Until recent years, public-health experts counted barely five types of sexually transmitted diseases. Now, they know that more than twenty-seven exist. Heading the list is one of the most feared diseases in the world today and this is AIDS. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, since first reported in the U.S. in 1981, it has each year doubled in its number of new victims. AIDS damages the body's immunity against infection, leaving its victims without a defense against a host of serious diseases. And in spite of an extremely aggressive research effort there is no known cure. WHY SHOULD WE LIVE SEXUALLY PURE LIVES? FIRST OF ALL THERE ARE PHYSICAL REASONS. THE FIRST PHYSICAL REASON IS SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES. IN ADDITION TO THIS, ANOTHER PHYSICAL REASON FOR LIVING SEXUALLY PURE LIVES BESIDES STD'S IS UNWANTED PREGNANCY COULD OCCUR.

### Unwanted pregnancies

As the values in our country continue to change, and moral standards once generally accepted are ignored, young people particularly will continue to pay a high price in unwanted pregnancies. Time Magazine reported that "Free sex" came on the scene in the 1960's, and as a result of that freedom, "the percentage of out-of-wedlock births to women under twenty years of age has dramatically increased over the last 20 years, from 15 percent to 51 percent."

When such a pregnancy occurs there are four choices. They can give their child up for adoption, marry the father of the child, raise the child alone, or have an abortion. None of those options are particularly good and abortion is downright sin.

In an article entitled "The ultimate form of child abuse" I found the following quote "Since the Supreme Court decision of Roe v. Wade in 1973, in excess of 15 million abortions have been performed. This is an unconscionable moral and ethical dilemma." In speaking of the Roe v. Wade decision, President Ronald Reagan said, "Our nationwide policy of abortion-on-demand through all nine months of pregnancy was neither voted for by our people nor enacted by our legislators - not a single state had such unrestricted abortion before the Supreme Court decreed it to be a national policy in 1973. But the consequences of the judicial decision are now obvious: Since 1973, more than 15 million unborn children have had their lives snuffed out by legalized abortions. This is over ten times the number of Americans lost in all our nation's wars."

God's commands are there for our protection. First of all for physical reasons. He doesn't want anyone ever to have to suffer the consequences of STD's. He doesn't want anyone ever to have to make gut-wrenching decisions about unwanted pregnancies, so He tells us to wait to have sex until marriage.

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But not just only for physical reasons.

### Because of emotional reasons

#### Misleading feelings

One of the reasons I hear most often for sexual involvement taking place is the confusion between sex and love. Premarital sex can take a person who may actually have had a legitimate understanding of love and confuse him or her terribly. When we mix sex and love, we have confused the simple concepts of giving and taking. Love always GIVES and always seeks the best interest of the other person. Premarital sex TAKES. Each individual has his or her own goal in having sex before marriage, but each is in it for personal reasons. The problem is, the taking can sometimes look like giving. This is where the water gets muddy.

A girl may “give her boyfriend what he wants,” thus making it look as though she is giving to him in love, but she does it from a personal motive. She may want the security he provides, she may want to achieve popularity by being his girlfriend, she may have one of a dozen other reasons but her “giving” is actually a form of taking. She is manipulating him for her own ends. It takes maturity and understanding to realize this, something a girl who behaves like this needs to have but she is misled by her emotions.

Colleen Kelly Mast, creator of Sex Respect, points out that premarital sex can fool us into marrying the wrong person: “Because sex is so powerful, it creates very strong emotional bonds between partners. These bonds can make us believe the relationship is deeper than it really is, that we know our partners much better than we actually do. Or, because we’ve had sex, we may be tempted to hang on to the relationship, not out of love, but just to save face.

By restricting sex to marriage, God protects us from the devastating effects these confused emotions can have.

### Self-Esteem

A much publicized report on teenage pregnancy by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences draws one conclusion that many would agree with: Sexual activity among teenagers is intimately connected with issues of self-image. As the report states,

Several studies of social and psychological factors associated with adolescents sexual behavior conclude that self-perception -- that is, the sense of what and who one is, can be , and wants to be -- is at the heart of teenagers sexual decision-making.

People who see themselves the way God sees them - as unique creations of the Master, made in His image, having talents and personality traits that set them apart from everyone else, have a healthy self-image, one that lets them stand on who they are in Christ and not have to depend on another person in order to feel good about themselves.

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Without a healthy self-image, people are insecure. “Indeed, low self-esteem is reported by many to be the number one psychological problem in contemporary society. People who do not believe they are lovable often find they are incapable of liking others and of functioning productively in society.” These people will need some kind of boost, some kind of infusion of self-esteem from another person in order to feel right about themselves. Sex is a common tool used in the effort to bolster a weak self-image. An insecure guy may try to be macho and prove to himself and others how masculine and attractive he is. An insecure girl may try either to hold a guy’s affections by giving him sex, thus making her feel secure, or to be sexually appealing to a lot of guys, thereby proving to herself she has value in their eyes.

The problem is, those strategies backfire. Sex as it should be, in marriage, is based on security. In God’s plan and provision for sex, there is total love, trust, companionship - and freedom in giving sexually. The marriage is designed to be a permanent commitment in which the partners are completely secure in the relationship.

There are consequences when we fail to live sexually pure lives. There are potential physical consequences, there are emotional consequences, and there are most importantly spiritual consequences.