

(1 Thessalonians) Sexual Purity Is God's Will

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life pleasing to God, abstaining from sexual immorality, and becoming more like Jesus through the process of sanctification.

Duration: 57:01

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3

Topics: "Sexual Purity", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of dying to oneself and giving up worldly desires in order to find true life in God. He encourages believers to stand out and abstain from sexual immorality, even in a mocking society. The preacher also highlights the need to possess one's body in sanctification and honor, unlike the Gentiles who are driven by lust due to their lack of knowledge of God. Lastly, he warns against defrauding others and reminds believers that the Lord will avenge those who deceive or trick others. The sermon is based on the book of 1 Thessalonians, where Paul addresses various concerns and questions of the Thessalonian believers.

Transcript

Amen. All right, let's open our Bibles tonight to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. As we continue in our study of Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, we have looked at the first three chapters and just to refresh your memory, in those first three chapters Paul was basically reflecting on his time with the Thessalonians and sharing some of his current concerns for them. So Paul now turns to address some of the questions and concerns that had arisen in the fellowship and the remainder of the epistle, these last two chapters, he is going to be addressing various topics that were evidently being discussed among the believers and things that they had some questions, some unanswered issues.

Paul's going to address those now here in the fourth chapter. So he says, So right there toward the end of the third chapter, he sort of, you know, prayerfully said may the Lord make you increase and abound in love toward one another. So he's kind of going on with that same theme, but not abounding only in love, but just abounding in all of the things of the Spirit.

That's really what he's referring to. He just wanting to see them overflowing in the goodness of God and the grace of God and the love of God and the gifts of the Spirit and all of those things. And that's really, you know, that's what our lives ought to look like.

And that's what the church ought to look like. And if we look at our lives and if we look around at our fellowship and we see that there's not an abundance of these things and we have to, we have to go back to the Lord and we have to ask him to deal with us. We have to ask him to, you know, work in our lives to bring that condition that he desires about.

And so Paul is wanting to see them really receive all that the Lord has for them and that they would be walking in a manner that pleases God. You know, we should never be just seeking to do the bare minimum as believers. You know, some people do content themselves with just getting by with as little as possible.

You know, if I can just, just, you know, do the bare minimum and still make it to heaven, then I'll be happy with that. But that should never be our attitude. We should never be asking, you know, how much can I get away with and still get to heaven? We should never be asking how close can I live to the world and still be safe and, you know, sure that I'm going to end up in the kingdom when I die.

Those are questions we should never be asking. We should be asking rather, how can I get closer to the Lord in this life? How can I walk in a way that is totally pleasing to God? That's the ideal. That's the standard that we ought to be, you know, really trying to attain.

We have to be shooting for that rather than contending ourselves to, you know, just the lowest possible point. And I think sometimes that we are all guilty in some way or another of doing that. We're just, you know, we're happy just to get by.

And I've been at that place at times in my life. You know, in the ministry, I'm happy to just give a few good sermons a week. If I can do that, well, that's okay.

That's good. I'm doing great. But, you know, that's not enough.

The Lord wants me to be abounding in his grace and full of his spirit and walking in that kind of, you know, intimacy with him 24-7. He wants it to be something that is...it's what my life is all about. And that's what Paul is talking about here when he's talking about them walking and pleasing God.

So that's what we want to shoot for. We want to shoot for pleasing God, doing those things that bless him. For you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

So one of the things that we have to remember in regard to pleasing God, it has to do with obedience. It has to do with keeping his commandments. You know, it's very easy to deceive ourselves.

It's very easy to think that we're doing just great when in actuality, we might not be doing well at all. There are lots of people that are, you know, quick to just sort of push aside the commandments of God, but at the same time to turn around and say, hey, I'm doing great with the Lord. But that's an impossibility because the only way to really be doing great with the Lord is to be living obediently.

We have to be obeying his word, keeping those commandments that he's given us. And so Paul reminds the Thessalonians of that. He reminds them that they were familiar with the commandments that they gave through the Lord Jesus.

And then he says this in verse 3, for this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from sexual immorality. This is one of the few places in all of the Bible, believe it or not, where we are told

specifically what the will of God is. We are only told that in a very few places in Scripture.

And this is one of those places. And what does it say? We see here that God's will is our sanctification. What does that mean? That we abstain from sexual immorality.

Now, the word sanctification, of course, is a word that speaks of a process of growing in holiness. It speaks of becoming more and more fashioned into the image of Jesus Christ. When you believe in Jesus, the instant you believe in Jesus, you are what the Bible refers to as justified.

You are declared righteous. You have a perfect standing before God. The minute you believe in Jesus, the instant you believe in him, you're declared righteous at that moment.

And if you were to die five minutes later, you'd go straight to heaven, not because of anything that you've done, but because of what Jesus did. So that's justification. But sanctification is a process that begins once we are justified.

And it is a process that will culminate in us ultimately being conformed to the very image of Jesus Christ. And of course, the sanctification process will not be completed until we've arrived in heaven. But while we're here on earth, it ought to be visible to us and to others around us that we're progressing in our sanctification, that we are looking more and more like Jesus as time passes.

And so Paul deals with this particular area here in speaking of sanctification. He deals with the area of sexual purity. So here, he's referring to separation from sexual sin, from moral impurity.

Now, the world that Paul was writing to, the Gentile world of the 1st century, was a world that was immersed in sexual immorality. This was very commonplace among the Gentile nations. The Jewish nation was the only nation, for the most part, in the world that held to any real high sexual moral standards.

And that, of course, was because of the word that God had given them. He'd given them very specific instructions regarding sexuality in the law. But the nations that had rejected God and had been now for centuries living apart from His law, they were steeped in sexual immorality.

They were steeped in sexual perversion, much like our Western culture is today. And for the very same reason, we've just disregarded what God has had to say about how we're to conduct ourselves sexually. And so, Paul refers to their abstaining from sexual immorality.

Now, the Greek word is pornea, translated sexual immorality. And without going into any detail, I think this is the best way to summarize what is being referred to. Pornea is an all-inclusive word referring to all forms of sexual activity outside of the God-ordained husband and wife relationship.

This really simplifies it. You don't have to go into detail. You don't have to, you know, give graphic descriptions of anything.

I think that's, you know, totally unnecessary and uncalled for, especially from the pulpit. It's real simple to know what is permitted and what is not permitted by God. There's one sexual relationship that is sanctioned and blessed by God, and that's the relationship that exists between a husband and a wife, a married couple, a man and a woman.

That's it right there. You say, but what about this? Okay, but what about anything? Anything outside of that is unacceptable and falls under the category of sexual immorality. Hebrews chapter 13 tells us this.

It says, marriage is honorable among all and the bed undefiled. What that means is simply this, that in the context of the marriage relationship, the bed is undefiled. In other words, a sexual relationship is appropriate.

It's right. It's good. It's pure.

It's beautiful in that context. You take it out of that context in any way, and it becomes corrupt. It becomes defiled, and it becomes then sin.

Now, notice what Paul says here. He says that you should abstain from sexual immorality. Notice the word abstain, abstinence.

Paul promoted abstinence. He would have been vilified today by many within our culture. The journalists, and the educators, and many of the politicians would vilify him for using that horrible, repressive, intolerant word, abstinence.

Have you ever noticed the irrational hostility that comes toward those who suggest today that young people in our culture ought to abstain from sexual activity until they're married? People come unglued over that. They're irate. They cannot believe that anybody would suggest such a prehistoric approach to sexuality.

I don't know about you, but, you know, when I read different journalists and people who are ranting and raving over this topic, I just ask the question, why would they be so upset about this? But you see, they're upset about it because it's in a collision with their worldview. And if we understand what their worldview is, then we'll understand why they become so irate, and why they are so adamant that this could never be, and why they enlist the ACLU and all of the other powers that they can get, the media and everything else, to vilify and to demonize and to do everything possible to just squelch any possibility of the idea of abstinence being taught to our children. It's because they have embraced an ideology that believes that any repression of sexual activity is a hindrance to human progress.

I'd like to quote to you from Chuck Colson in his book, *How Now Shall We Live?* And the chapter here is entitled, *Salvation Through Sex*. For many modern thinkers, sexuality has become the basis for an entire worldview, the source of ultimate meaning and healing, a means of redemption. Now, there are two people that... Oh, he highlights more than two, but I'm just going to highlight two people.

Two people that he mentions that have been very influential on the attitudes towards sexuality today, one of them being Margaret Sanger. Margaret Sanger is most well-known probably as the grandmother or the great grandmother of Planned Parenthood. She's generally remembered as an early champion of birth control.

She taught a broad philosophy of sexuality, a philosophy reinforced by science, she claimed. She contended that sexual restraint suppresses the activity of the sex glands and thus injures health and dulls the intellect. Thus, science itself, she argued, supports sexual liberation.

The drama of history, by Sanger's account, consists of a struggle to free our bodies and minds from the constraints of morality, the prohibitions that distort and impoverish human nature. She adamantly opposed

the moralist who preached abstinence, self-denial, and suppression, and described Christian ethics as the cruel morality of self-denial and sin. She hoped to replace it with her own morality of sexual liberation, promising that the release of sexual energies was the only method by which a person could find inner peace and security and beauty, and also the only method for overcoming social ills.

She said, remove the constraints and prohibitions which now hinder the release of inner energies and most of the larger evils of society will perish. What Sanger offered was nothing less than a doctrine of salvation in which morality, listen, is the root of all evil and free sexual expression is the path to redemption. She even resorted to religious language calling on a sexual elite to remove the moral taboos that now bind the human body and spirit, free the individual from the slavery of tradition, and above all answer their unceasing cries for knowledge that would make possible their self-direction and salvation.

So she speaks in terms of salvation. In other passages, she promises that men and women will literally become geniuses through the removal of physiological and psychological inhibitions and constraints which make possible the release and channeling of the primordial inner energies of man into full divine expression. And then she says, or Colson goes on to say, it is in our power, he's quoting her, to remodel the human race and create a real civilization to transmute and sublimate the everyday world into the realm of beauty and joy.

She wrote euphorically. That's what she said. And she resorts again to religious language.

Through sex, mankind may attain the great spiritual illumination which will transform the world, which will light up the only path to an earthly paradise. So this is the woman who is hailed as a great, great hero and, again, the great grandmother of Planned Parenthood. One of her contemporaries, somebody that we might be a little more familiar with recently because of Hollywood's glorification of this man, Alfred Kinsey.

He was equally influential in shaping sexual mores and sex education theories. Kinsey's impact was due in part to the pose he struck as an objective scientist, tabulating what Americans did in their bedrooms. But the truth is that he was neither objective nor scientific.

Like Sanger, he was committed to an ideology that defined morality as harmful force, as a harmful force to be opposed and that elevated sexuality into a means of salvation. I can go on and on, but I won't bore us with that any further. But here's the thing.

What was then sort of isolated to the intellectual elite in this country is now mainstream thought 50 years later. It's mainstream thought today. This is what Hollywood says.

This is what many political leaders say. This is what you hear all across academia. They are preaching basically the overthrowing of Christian ethics and morality and to replace it with this humanistic idea that the world is going to become some sort of a utopia if we all can just have free sex.

This is a radical assault, as you can see, upon the truth of the Scriptures, upon the Word of God. So with that as a background, we can see why our world is becoming more and more promiscuous with each passing day. Because truly demented and sexually perverted people have set the agenda for morality in this country and it's been swallowed hook, line, and sinker by the general population for the most part.

And so here we are. We find ourselves in the midst of this kind of a culture. And what is God saying to us today? He's saying the same thing to us that He was saying to the Thessalonians, that we are to abstain from sexual immorality.

That regardless of what's happening in the culture around us, we are to stay free from it. We are to separate ourselves from it. Now this, of course, is a real concern in the church today.

Because our culture is so inundated with this stuff, it has found its way into the church. Now, of course, most churches, evangelical churches at least, would still at least preach a biblical morality and teach that we ought to abstain from sexual immorality. But on the other hand, there are many in the larger church world who would agree with the Sangers and the Kenses of this world and say that we need to drop that old form of morality and we need to not be so concerned or hung up on sexual things these days.

And we can't in any way go back to the apostles to find out the way we ought to be conducting ourselves sexually because they were just children of their own culture and the generation in which they lived and they don't know what we know today. And, you know, all of this kind of rubbish that's going around the larger church world. So what are we to do? Well, we're to do what Christian people have always done.

We're to cling to God's Word. We're to hold fast to it. And we're to embrace it as being the truth in all of these matters.

And, of course, that is indeed what it is. All of these promises, you know, of liberation and all of this nonsensical kinds of stuff. I mean, you just look at the lives of the people who said that and you find that whatever they purported was going to benefit through their theories, the rest of humanity did absolutely nothing for them.

They were miserable, wretched people. And, of course, that's the way it always goes because the way of the transgressor is hard and sin always leads to death and to destruction. So we are not to be duped.

We're not to be pulled into this. We're not to be deceived. Paul says that in writing to the Ephesians on this very topic.

He says, Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience. Let no one deceive you with empty words. There's a lot of empty words floating around today saying, Oh, well, you know, this isn't really, we can't categorize that as sin and we don't want to be judgmental.

And, you know, back in those days they had a different perspective and they didn't know things like we know scientifically today about human sexuality and all. Those are empty words. Paul says, Don't let anyone deceive you with those.

These things will bring God's wrath upon people. But we are to abstain from sexual immorality. And then verse 4, he says, That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.

Your body, our bodies, according to Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, they are the temple of the Holy Spirit. He refers here to the body as a vessel. A vessel is an instrument, a container, a conduit.

Your body is a vessel that contains God. Your body is an instrument through which God wants to manifest his life and accomplish his work. Your body is a conduit through which the Spirit of God wants to flow.

But, you see, if you contaminate your body with sexual sin, then, of course, you're circumventing what the body is intended to do. And that's glorify God. So he says that we should know, Each of us should know

how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and in honor.

So there should not be any ambiguity about this. There should not be any uncertainty. And, you know, the reality is, not only are the scriptures crystal clear on these subjects, I mean, there is nothing vague.

There's nothing ambiguous. It is very straightforward. It's very in-your-face.

It's very this-is-the-way-it-is. But not only that, there's also the conviction of the Holy Spirit. There's also that sense inside.

You know, when I became a Christian, nobody had to tell me that certain things were wrong. I knew they were wrong before I was even a Christian. And when I became a Christian, I knew for a fact that that behavior was no longer going to be allowed in my life.

I knew it intuitively. And it's true for everyone. Everyone knows it.

And the only way to get around it is to do what Paul says men tend to do. In Romans 1, verse 18, he says, They suppress the truth in unrighteousness. They push it down.

They don't want to hear that voice of conviction. At the beginning of this particular chapter in this book that I just read to you from, in each chapter, he has a quote from, you know, from a certain person, a quote that pertains to the topic. And here's a quote from E. Michael Jones.

Listen to what he says. He says, All the intellectual and cultural breakthroughs of modernity were in some way, breakthroughs of modernity were in some way or other linked to the sexual desire their progenitors knew to be illicit, but which they chose nonetheless. Their theories were ultimately rationalizations of the choices they knew to be wrong.

They knew these things were wrong. And it's always the case. A person knows it's wrong because God has instilled in us that sense of what is right and wrong.

And the only way to get around it is to do what Paul says men do, is to suppress it, to push it down, to ignore it, to try to pretend like it's not the case. So we've got that intuitive thing that's happening. We've got the Word of God.

And then, of course, when we become Christians, we have that additional work of the Spirit, where the Spirit convicts us and where the Spirit shows us. But here's the dangerous thing. Because we do have temptation.

We're not immune from temptation as Christians, are we? We do have temptation. And sometimes the devil comes and he's relentless, and he keeps knocking, and he keeps coming back with the same thing. Now, one thing you want to make sure that you're never doing is giving him any opportunity.

Never give him any inroad into your life. In other words, don't sit at your computer and contemplate going to certain websites. Don't even do it.

Because sooner or later you'll end up there. So we don't want to give him any inroad into our lives. But those temptations will come.

We have to continue to resist. And the first step in resistance is to just stay as far away as possible from anything that would remotely lead you into sin. So we have to be careful.

Jesus said, if your eye offends you, pluck it out. If your hand offends you, cut it off. Now, he didn't mean to literally pluck out your eye or cut off your hand because that wouldn't do a whole lot of good.

You could have both eyes plucked out and still have a brain full of lust. What he's doing is showing the severity of sin and how it's better off to live without those things. So what he's saying is we have to take drastic measures.

And you know, in our current situation, you know what that translates to? If your TV offends you, stick a piece of dynamite in it and blow it to bits. If your computer offends you, take it up on the tallest building you can find and drop it off and let it shatter into a million pieces. Make sure you don't hit anybody with it, though.

It means pull the plug. It means get rid of this stuff. You see, that's what we've got to do.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. And we're living in desperate times because, quite frankly, the church has become somewhat contaminated by sexual immorality. There's all kinds of people who are coming into churches week in and week out, but all throughout the week they're caught up in this kind of thing.

And it doesn't have to be, and it should not be the way things are, but we've got to take those serious measures. And we can't justify holding on to something because, well, you know, this helps me in my business, I've got to keep this. You know, hey, if it's causing you to sin, Jesus said get rid of it.

About four months ago, six months ago, something like that, I ordered cable TV. I was sick and tired of reading the newspaper. I thought, I want to hear somebody tell me the news for a while.

And that was my sole purpose for getting cable, and I got only a limited amount of stations, mainly just to get the news channels. But in that you get some other things. And yet, you know, most of what we got, I mean, there was nothing, you know, we didn't get HBO or any of that rubbish.

But anyway, so my whole justification was I want to get the news. And, you know, as time went on, I found that here we were as a family, never have had TV to speak of in our entire lives, and everybody's just sitting there glued to the television, just watching a bunch of mindless junk. You know, nobody watching anything, you know, there was nothing that you could, you know, tune into that was explicit or anything like that.

But, of course, you have no control over the commercials or any of that stuff that goes on in between, and sometimes the commercials are worse than anything you'd see otherwise. But so this is going on for a while, and, you know, I'm looking at this, and, of course, my wife, who wanted to kill me from the very moment she found out that I had ordered it, relentlessly, I won't say persecuted me because that wouldn't be the right word, but she was the Holy Spirit. She was stepping in for the Lord and reminding me of this.

Well, anyway, finally, I just said, okay, you know, I agree. Because in the end, I didn't even end up watching it. I wasn't even watching the news.

And when I did watch the news, I found that all I really wanted to do is jump into the TV and grab certain people around the neck and break their necks, you know. So I found this is not conducive, really, for spiritual growth. So, you know, anyway, last week, I just finally called him up.

I said, you know, come and take this thing away. And the guy on the other end, he's trying to talk me, you know, he's got all these little things like, hey, but if you do this, you could do, you know, and he's trying to talk me into it. And I said, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, all the way down.

And he says, boy, I've tried everything, and I can't get you to budge. And I said, no, and you're not going to get me to budge. I just want you to come and pick this stupid box up.

I'm finished with this. He said, okay, we'll be there next week. So they came and got it.

But, you know, it's not worth it. It's not worth it because we're living in a world that is filthy. It's contaminated.

The rebellion against God is at an all-time high on this planet. And the last thing I need is to be subjecting myself to that kind of stuff, intentionally or unintentionally. I just don't need it.

And Paul is saying to us that we should know how to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor. You know, there are so many more wonderful things that you can do with your life, with your brain, with your time, by just saturating yourselves in the things of God, the things of the Spirit of God. And some people just, oh, wait a minute, you're going to become culturally irrelevant.

You know, you're not going to know what's going on in the world. So what? You're better off. It doesn't really matter.

You know, most people live their entire lives throughout all of history without knowing the kind of junk that was going on all over the planet. We are the first generation, probably, with satellite and all that, to have all of this news. And have you ever noticed even the news itself, how everything is so sensationalized, everything? You know, it's all a big, you know, they're trying to sell you something.

They're trying to sell you their broadcast, and you lock into it, and then you buy the, you know, the various products that are advertised and all that. But everything is blown out of proportion, and, you know, it's just, who needs it? We don't need it. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We need to have our minds saturated with the things of God. I'm not saying that we shouldn't be in some touch with our world. I'm back to reading the Internet news and the newspaper.

But even then, I'm finding more and more that, you know, once or twice a week is sufficient and better to just spend time in the Word and prayer. And so he says that we should know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. That's where the world is.

They're driven by their passions and their lust. And why? Because they don't know God. But we know God.

And God has something so much more glorious for us. And then he says that no one should take advantage of or defraud his brother in this matter because the Lord is the avenger of all such as we also forewarned you and testified. So, defrauding others.

To defraud, the idea behind the word here, is to deceive or trick a person into giving up a valuable possession. Your purity is highly valuable. Don't be deceived into giving it up.

And if you are a person who's defrauding, if you're a person who's trying to deceive, if you're a person who's wanting to take sexual advantage of someone else, know this, the Lord is the avenger of all such. God is after you. And he's going to bust you.

And it's not going to be pleasant. Persistence in sexual sin will lead to God's judgment upon a person's life. There's no question about it.

And you see it all over. You see it manifested in a variety of ways. But that's the reality.

So, we're not to defraud anyone in this matter. This is an area where we're to be above reproach. We're to treat one another with utmost and absolute purity.

And we should never, under any circumstances, allow ourselves to go in this direction. Because it will bring God's judgment upon us. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness.

God has called us to holiness. There has been, unfortunately, in the history of the church, a distorted view of holiness that has been more concerned with external kinds of things. Sometimes, when you look at holiness groups, you find that they're very meticulous about a lot of trivial types of things.

You can't see a movie. You can't go to a bowling alley. You can't have a friendly card game.

In some cases, men in church cannot wear short-sleeved shirts. And women cannot wear dresses that rise above their knees. And women cannot wear makeup or jewelry.

And these kinds of things. This is legalism. And this isn't holiness.

This is a distortion. Holiness is beautiful. Holiness is something that goes much deeper.

It's more intrinsic. It's inside of a person. And it works itself out, not in a legalistic kind of a way where a person is all petty and concerned about unimportant things, but it works itself out in just a real love for God and a love for the things of God and just a very natural disdain of the things that would grieve the Spirit.

That's what God's called us to. He hasn't called us to become freaks. He's called us to be holy.

And we can be very much ourselves. And that's kind of what I'm getting at. A lot of times in these movements, you know, a person's very personality is altered.

They cannot even be themselves because they're under this idea that, you know, holiness means a certain thing, even in regard to personality. But that's a distortion. God wants you to be yourself.

And He wants all of the creativity and everything that He's put in you, He wants to bring all of that out in your life, but He wants there to be a beauty about it, a purity about it, something about it that gives off the aroma of His presence when you're there. That's what He's called us to. He's called us to holiness, not to uncleanness.

There's not to be an uncleanness in us, any defilement morally, but rather a holiness. And then He says this, verse 8, Therefore, he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us the Holy Spirit. See, Paul makes it clear.

This isn't my opinion, folks. This isn't my puritanical ideas of morality. This is what God has to say.

And whenever we deal with the subject, of course, when we're dealing with it with those outside of the church, and especially those outside of the church who, like we read earlier, have a great hostility, we have to just stand on the fact that this is what God has to say. Now, of course, those people like Sanger, like Kinsey, and their disciples, they, of course, come to these conclusions because they start in the wrong place. And, of course, their starting point is that man is autonomous, that man is not a created being, that he's not created in the image of God, but that he just, you know, is here randomly through evolutionary processes.

And, of course, if that's true, then you can extrapolate that out to whatever you want in the end, if that's true. But the reality is it's not true. Man is not the byproduct of random chance, but man is a creature made in the image of God.

And because we are made in the image of God, God has called us to conduct ourselves in a manner consistent to that image. And so if we disagree with these things, if we challenge them, if we reject them, then we're not merely rejecting somebody's opinion. And that's what they have, you know, tried to reduce it to today.

They talk about the religious right, the ones that want to suppress everybody's sexuality and take away everybody's fun. They've reduced it, you know, to that horrible group, the religious right, and then the wonderful liberal free people over here, the free thinkers, the ones that are going to let you just have a great old time, whatever you want to do. And in some ways, they sort of succeeded in reducing it just to a conflict between these two groups and just a difference of opinion.

Well, it's not simply a difference of opinion. It's God's word versus man's word. And God, of course, has the right to the final word because He's the creator of everything.

And soon to manifest Himself as the judge of everything as well. But I want you to notice one thing here. He says, He who rejects us does not reject man but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit, better translated, who is presently also giving us His Holy Spirit.

You see, what Paul is saying here is similar to what he said to the Corinthians, and it's something that we all need to be very conscious of. He said to the Corinthians this. He said, he warned them against sexual immorality.

He said, every sin that a man commits is outside of himself, but he that sins sexually, that sin is within. He's sinning against his own body, which is not only his own body but the temple of the Spirit. And he says when a man joins himself to a prostitute, he says what that man is doing unwittingly is he's joining Christ to that prostitute.

That's exactly what Paul's referring to here. God is giving us His Holy Spirit presently. The Holy Spirit is present in our lives.

He's working in our lives. So when we go out and involve ourselves in sexual immorality, guess who we take with us? Guess who we drag right into that sin with us? We drag God Himself into that. And of course, these things are abhorrent to God.

These things are abominable to God. These things are the things God hates. These are the things that Jesus was brutalized for.

So Paul says, no, you would never consciously want to drag Jesus into your sexual sin. But in effect, that's what you do. So the strong admonition towards sanctification.

So what if, let's say, you've had a problem in this area? We have today people who actually talk about those who are sexually addicted. They refer to them as sex addicts. And we find that even among some perhaps well-meaning but certainly misled Christian psychologists.

They're talking to Christian people about their sexual addictions and so forth. And then, you know, prescribing various things for them to hopefully someday be able to overcome their addiction. But then, of course, an addiction is something that by nature you can't just walk away from.

So, you know, we'll just sort of try to wean you off of this and hopefully someday you'll be free from that. That is psychobabble at its worst. God has a much better plan.

And it's coming down to the realization that if I do seem to be addicted to something, it's not addiction isn't the right word. A better word is bondage. I'm in the bondage of sin.

But here's the great news. Jesus came to break the bondage of sin in our lives. That's what He comes to do.

And so we come to Him and we fall on our face and we stay there until He does it. We just say, Lord, You've got to set me free from this. And, Lord, I take responsibility for this.

And I know it's nobody else's fault and it's not... Lord, and we call upon the name of the Lord and we trust His word and we begin to explicitly obey what He says in His word. And we disconnect ourselves from all association with anything that has anything whatsoever to do with that. We set ourselves apart from it.

Oh, and it might be that your mind is plagued with those kinds of things for a season. But here's the promise. That your mind can be renewed through the word of God.

But you see, that's only going to happen by taking heavy doses of the word of God at a time. You know, we kind of have a mentality today. You know, sometimes if you tell a person, try to read a chapter a day, you feel like you're laying some great burden on them.

And they say, oh, a chapter a day, you're kidding. Boy, when am I going to fit that in? Because, you know, my favorite TV program, I've got to watch that tonight and then I've got to go out and do this and, you know, all of this kind of stuff. But, of course, that just shows that our thinking is all messed up.

No, I might need ten chapters a day. I might need some mega doses of the word of God. Paul said in Romans chapter 12, he said, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

You know, the word there is metamorphosis. Paul says your mind will go through a metamorphosis. It'll go through a transformation.

But it will take the power of God's word coming consistently in heavy doses to wash and to cleanse and prayer and those kinds of things. You see, the things of the spirit. But I think so much of this stuff goes on today and so much of it is.

A part of everyday life for so many people because. They simply. Will not.

Humble themselves and really obey the Lord. And do what it takes. But God gives a promise.

Jesus came into the world not to. Leave us in our sins. But to deliver us from this present evil age.

Remember that. If we believe in Jesus and we're still living in sin, there's something wrong. Something is radically wrong and guess.

Where the fault lies. It doesn't lie with the Lord. It's not that he's powerless.

It's not that he's unwilling. It's not that he's failed on his end of the deal. It's that somewhere somehow in some way.

I haven't. Responded the way I'm supposed to. But God loves you so much that he'll make sure you understand that if you will.

But come to him and say, Lord, you got to sort me out with this. I was talking to a friend of mine recently who's struggled in some of these areas. And.

He said to me an interesting thing. He said, you know. Got to show me that my main problem.

Is simply that. I love myself too much. The root of all of these problems in my life, he said.

They go back to to me. And my self preservation and my. My tendency to, you know, comfort myself and just to cater to myself.

And he said, God is showing me that the key to victory is complete death to self. That I believe was absolutely right. That's what Jesus said.

We are all to do. We're to die to ourselves. He says, if we seek to save our lives or find our lives, he said, we'll lose him.

But if we lose our life. We hate our life in this world. We give it away for him.

We'll save it. We'll discover it. We'll find it.

And so God calls us. In this corrupted generation in this perverted generation, he calls us to. Stand out to be different.

To abstain. From sexual immorality. People will perhaps mock you.

You know, I have no idea what this movie is about, but you see it advertised on the bus is the 40 year old virgin. I can only imagine that, you know, there's some mockery there. Because, you know, this day and age, you tell somebody that you're pure, you're keeping yourself.

That's just the laughing stock. They can't believe it. And those kinds of things might happen.

But. Rather have. The favor of God and the disfavor of men than the favor of men and the disfavor of God.

I love what the Lord said to the people through Isaiah, the prophet. He said, why do you fear a man whose breath is in his nostrils? Why? Why are you intimidated by what other people think? Those very people

that you're all worried about. They've got their own appointment with God.

They're going to die and stand before him and be judged. So why would we be concerned at all? What they think or how they feel. So may God help us in these days.

Days of uncleanness to be clean. Days of unholiness. To be holy people.

That we would possess our vessel. And one final word on that word vessel. Your body.

Is God's. And again, Paul reminds us of that. He says, you're not your own.

You were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which belong to him. You see, your body is the vessel.

It's the instrument. It's the vehicle. It's the tool.

It's the means through which God wants to accomplish his work. In that sphere of influence that you have. In that dimension of life that you're living in.

God has purchased your body. So he can use your body to glorify himself. Keep that vessel in honor.

And God will do that very thing. He will bless. And he will be glorified through your body and your spirit, which belong to him.

Father, we thank you that. Lord, you have called us to holiness. Lord, many of us are.

Acquainted with the. Miseries of sin. And Lord, to be set free.

What a wonderful thing. Thank you, Lord, that. You have.

You have. A way for us to live, and it's the right way. It's the best way.

It's the good way. Help us, Lord, to. Live that.

Sanctified life. Abstaining from sexual immorality. And presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to you.

And Lord, even. This evening, if there are those that are. Listening over the radio or even those that are here tonight.

That just need a fresh touch of your spirit. Lord, touch them, we pray. Lord, may there not be a person among us.

Or anyone listening tonight. Who would remain in any bondage? To sin in this area. But that they would know the power of the living Christ.

Setting them free. Thank you, Lord, that you came to. Destroy the work of the devil.

And to set the captives free. So free us up. That we might glorify you, we pray.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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