

To Please God; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

I. Walk

- A. A way of living — a settled, practiced lifestyle
 - 1. We all have a walk
 - 2. Some walk their own way — doing what they like, pleasing themselves
 - 3. Others walk in service — teachers, military, first responders, etc.
- B. Often times people who want to, or have, become Christians do not change their walk
- C. A walk to please God

II. Purity

- A. 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 (ESV); ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.
- B. The New Testament uses this word 25 times — God tells us 25 times in the New Testament that sexual immorality is wrong
- C. Yet, we, as a society, continue in this behavior
 - 1. I'm not talking about homosexual behavior, although that is included in the definition of this term
 - 2. I'm talking about any kind of sexual immorality
- D. Just 60 years ago society considered this behavior immoral — but no longer
- E. We have slowly given over to the idea that an intimate relationship outside of marriage is okay
 - 1. With our young children
 - a) We joke with our children about boyfriends or girlfriends — this is no joking matter!
 - b) We allow them to be in situations where temptation can lead to sin — but we have not adequately prepared them for those situations
 - c) We must teach our children that abstinence until marriage is part of 'a life pleasing to God'
 - 2. With young adults
 - a) That is how I grew up — thinking that these pornographic magazines were okay and that there was nothing wrong with lusting after a woman (in today's society we can replace that with 'man')
 - b) "How do you know you can remain married unless you live together before you get married?"
 - c) We see, today, that intimacy starts in the 'boyfriend/girlfriend' phase when it should start after marriage
 - 3. Even older adults fall to temptation
 - a) We need to refrain from being put in those situations unless we can "control our own bodies"
 - b) Control — to gain possession of (BDAG)
- F. 1 Corinthians 6:18–20 (ESV); ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
- G. 1 Corinthians 7:2 (ESV); But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.
- H. We were meant to be holy — to be set apart for a divine purpose

- I. God is very clear here and even gives us this warning about disregarding (rejecting, nullifying) God
- J. This is one of the primary issues in our world today — sexual immorality — and we must understand it and flee from it to please God

III. Love

- A. 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 (ESV); ⁹ Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, ¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.
- B. Wouldn't it be nice to "have no need for anyone" to worry about how we are loving one another
- C. 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV); ⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- D. It is easy to see that the biblical definition of love is not a feeling or emotion, it is action
- E. I think this is what gets us in trouble with sexual immorality — we have incorrectly defined love as an emotion or a feeling
 - 1. That way we can rationalize our behavior when we say, "I am no longer in love with that person," or "I have fallen out of love"
 - 2. We should say to ourselves every morning, "I am determined to love my wife (or husband) today"
 - 3. Or, I am determined to love my future wife (or husband)
 - 4. We often associate this chapter with marriage — and that is a good application
 - 5. But this chapter is a rebuke for the church at Corinth, "and I will show you still a more excellent way" chapter 12:31
 - 6. They were arguing with each other over their gifts, and who had the more important gifts
 - 7. Paul tells us that those things will go away, but love remains, chapter 13:8-13
- F. Love is the hallmark, the calling card, the tell-tale sign of a christian, John 13:35
- G. We must love one another with a self-sacrificing love just as Jesus did in order to please God

IV. More and More

- A. We are told to remain pure (or risk rejecting God)
- B. We are told to love one another
- C. To behave this way "more and more" (vv 1 and 10)
- D. To please God