



# Separated Holiness

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

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For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 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. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.



## **Main Point**

God has called us out from the world to be His holy people and this requires us to be sexually pure by the power of His Holy Spirit.

# Separated Holiness

God's will for us is separated holiness.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3**  
For this is the will of God,  
your sanctification.





# **God's Will: Separated Holiness**

What is separated holiness?

**1 Thessalonians 4:3**  
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The word translated *sanctification* comes from the same word translated *holiness* in 3:13 which refers to separation and dedication for sacred use.

It is an action noun referring to the ***activity*** of separating or dedicating for sacred use.



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For this is the will of God,

your ***sanctifying***.

The word translated *sanctification* comes from the same word translated *holiness* in 3:13 which refers to separation or dedication for sacred use.

It is an action noun referring to the *activity* of separating or dedicating for sacred use.

# The theme...

## 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

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**in sanctifying**. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

We have been called out from the world  
to be a people set apart and distinct,  
dedicated to the service of God.

**Romans 12:1**

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,  
to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable  
to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

*“Renouncing the world, and clearing ourselves from the pollutions of the flesh, we offer ourselves to God as if in sacrifice, for nothing can with propriety be offered to Him, but what is pure and holy.”*

(John Calvin)





# God's Will: Separated Holiness

What is separated holiness?

What is our motivation to be holy?

**1 Thessalonians 4:3**  
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1 Thessalonians 4:3

For **this is the will of God,**  
your sanctifying.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

“...walk so as to please God”



The desire to please God is the strongest and best motivation, and this is implied by Paul in his admonition to the Roman church.

**Romans 12:1**

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

A begrudging sacrifice would not be an acceptable or pleasing sacrifice to God.

## 1 Timothy 1:5

But **the goal of our instruction is love** from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

# Separated Holiness

God's will for us is separated holiness.

Three commands related to sexual purity.



## 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6a

For this is the will of God, your sanctification;  
that is, that you **abstain from sexual immorality**;  
that each of you **know how to possess his own vessel**  
in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion,  
like the Gentiles who do not know God;  
and **that no man transgress and defraud**  
**his brother** in the matter.

Why focus on sexual purity?

Roman culture was immersed in sexual immorality, to the point that it played a key role in their cultic worship, likely leading to persecution of those *prudish* Christians who refused to participate.



# **Commands Related to Sexual Purity**

**Abstain from sexual immorality.**



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## 1 Thessalonians 4:3

For this is the will of God, your sanctifying; that is,

**that you *separate yourself from***

sexual immorality.

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**sexual immorality.**

## **1 Thessalonians 4:3**

For this is the will of God, your sanctifying; that is,  
that you separate yourself from

***porneia***.



*Porneia* refers to the broad spectrum of sexual immorality that would include any sexual relationship outside of marriage and is the application of the command “you shall not commit adultery.”

### **Hebrews 13:4**

Marriage is to be held in honor among all,  
and the marriage bed is to be undefiled;  
for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

We are commanded to  
separate ourselves from the  
whole world of sexual immorality,  
devoting ourselves to purity.





# Commands Related to Sexual Purity

Abstain from sexual immorality.

Learn to control your sexual passions.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification;  
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that each of you know how to possess his own vessel  
in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion,  
like the Gentiles who do not know God.

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For this is the will of God, your sanctification;  
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that each of you know how to ***keep under control*** his own vessel  
in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion,  
like the Gentiles who do not know God.

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that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

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in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion,  
like the Gentiles who do not know God.

# To what does “vessel” refer?

## 2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in **earthen vessels**, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.

## Can it refer to wives?

## 1 Peter 3:7

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman.



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## 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5

...that **each of you** know how to keep **his own** vessel under control in sanctifying and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5

...that each of you know how to keep his own vessel

under control **in sanctifying and honor,**  
**not in lustful passion,**

like the Gentiles who do not know God.

We are commanded to learn how  
to purify and control our sexual  
urges and passions.

“that each of you know how”





# Commands Related to Sexual Purity

Abstain from sexual immorality.

Learn to control your sexual passions.

## Do no wrong to others.

## **1 Thessalonians 4:3-6a**

...abstain from sexual immorality;  
...know how to possess his own vessel  
...that no man transgress and defraud  
his brother in the matter.

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# What harm is there?

## Proverbs 6:32-35

The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense;  
he who would destroy himself does it.

Wounds and disgrace he will find,  
and his reproach will not be blotted out.

For jealousy enrages a man,  
and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

He will not accept any ransom,  
nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.

“Yes, but...”



# **Consider:**

Human trafficking is a key source for pornography and the sex trades.

Use of pornography and the sex trades fuels human trafficking.

# **What about consent?**

We have been indoctrinated to believe that consent is all that matters; and when there is consent, there is no wrong done to anyone.

This is a lie that denies the spiritual nature of the sexual union, individualizes conduct, and ignores the progressive nature of sin.

## **1 Thessalonians 4:3-6a**

...abstain from sexual immorality;  
...know how to possess his own vessel

**...that no man transgress and  
defraud  
his brother in the matter.**

# Separated Holiness

God's will for us is separated holiness.

Three commands related to sexual purity.

## Three reasons to keep ourselves pure.



## **1 Thessalonians 4:6b-8**

...because the Lord is the avenger in all these things,  
just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity,  
but in sanctification. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting  
man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:6b-8

...**because the Lord is the avenger** in all these things,  
just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

For **God has** not **called us** for the purpose of impurity,

but **in sanctification**. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting

man but the **God** who **gives His Holy Spirit to you**.



**Reasons to Keep Ourselves Pure**  
God will avenge wrongdoing.



## **1 Thessalonians 4:6b**

...because the Lord is the avenger in all these things,  
just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.



1 Thessalonians 4:6b

...because **the Lord is the avenger in all  
these things,**

just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:6b

...because the Lord is ***the avenger*** in all these things,  
just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

The Lord is going to intervene as an avenger, as one who will surely bring justice on behalf of those wronged.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:6b

...because the Lord is *the avenger* in all these things,

**just as we also told you before and  
solemnly warned you.**

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## 1 Thessalonians 4:6b

...because the Lord is *the avenger* in all these things,

**just as we also told you before and  
solemnly warned you.**



Take heed and receive  
this warning!



# Reasons to Keep Ourselves Pure

God will avenge wrongdoing.

God has called us to holiness.

## **1 Thessalonians 4:7**

For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity,  
but in sanctifying.

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**For God has** not **called** **us** for the purpose of impurity,  
but in sanctifying.



## **1 Thessalonians 2:12**

...so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God  
**who calls you** into His own kingdom and glory.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:7

**For God has** not **called** **us** for the purpose of impurity,  
but in sanctifying.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:7

For **God has not called us for** the purpose of **impurity**,  
but in sanctifying.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:7

For **God has** not **called us** for the purpose of impurity,  
but **in sanctifying**.

Remember that “sanctifying” has  
at its root *holiness*.



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### **Exodus 19:5-6**

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then **you shall be My distinct people** among all the nations, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**”

### **Leviticus 19:2**

“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.’”

## 1 Thessalonians 2:12 and 7

...who calls you into His own kingdom and glory...  
God has...called us for the purpose of separated holiness.

## 1 Peter 2:9-10

But **you are** *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession*, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were *not a people*, but **now you are the people of God**; you had *not received mercy*, but now you have *received mercy*.



## **1 Thessalonians 4:4-5**

...that each of you know how to keep his own vessel under

control in sanctifying and honor, **not in lustful passion,**

**like the Gentiles who do not know God.**

## 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5

...that each of you know how to keep his own vessel under

control in sanctifying and honor, **not** in lustful passion,

**like the Gentiles** who do not know God.

Paul no longer considered these  
Thessalonian believers to be Gentiles,  
rather he understood them to be the  
called-out people of God!

It is this status that ought to motivate  
us to pure and holy conduct.





# Reasons to Keep Ourselves Pure

God will avenge wrongdoing.

God has called us to holiness.

## God has given us His Holy Spirit.



## **1 Thessalonians 4:8**

So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man  
but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

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So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man

but the God **who gives His *Holy* Spirit** to you.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:8

So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man

but the God who gives His Holy Spirit ***into you.***

God has called us out of the world as a holy people and has indwelt us with His Holy Spirit that we would be empowered to walk in separated holiness.

# Conclusion

Are you separating yourself from the world,  
especially in respect to sexuality.

Are you fighting the temptations of this world  
by the power of the Holy Spirit?

Are you seeking help when you are stuck?