

## SEXUAL MORALITY

**INTRO:** In James 1:18 we are told that God of his own will begat us to a new life, a life of sanctification. The Apostle Paul writes, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication." In the news sex scandals of those in high places abounds. That is the culture that we live in. How we need to hear what God's Word of Truth has to say to us on this matter.

### I. **THE SIN WARNED AGAINST**

- A. The Apostle Paul is discussing one matter: sanctification.
  1. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the justified sinner.
  2. God delivers us from the corruption and dominion of sin as a spiritual power.
  3. God renews us according to the image of Christ and enables us to walk in all good works.
  4. We need to be holy like the God who has called us to be holy in the sphere of covenant fellowship.
  5. Means that we are called to walk according to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures by the power of grace.
- B. The warning regarding sexual immorality.
  1. Perhaps surprised that an exhortation to sexual purity is in the forefront of practical directions to the church!
  2. We find this warning of Paul in many of his letters to the churches: Corinth, Galatia, Ephesians
  3. While we do not read that this was a specific sin rebuked in Thessalonica, yet a general warning to prevent this.
  4. This comes from the prevalence of low standards in the Greek and Roman world.
  5. Recently converted, let God's people remember that they have been called out of darkness to live for God.
- C. The sin exposed specifically:
  1. "Fornication": usually is sexual conduct by those who are not married. Here used as any sexual uncleanness.
  2. Forbidden is sex outside of the marriage bond, or sex before marriage.
  3. Forbidden is touching or fondling the body of someone who is not your spouse.
  4. Forbidden is the flirting of married men or women with others.
  5. Forbidden is the lustful looking at others. (Matt. 5:28).

### II. **THE ADMONITION GIVEN**

- A. Negatively :
  1. "Abstain" —a very strong word meaning to have nothing to do with this vile thing.
  2. The preposition "from" emphasizes the separation: the antithesis.
  3. A sharp line of distinction between the Christian and the unbeliever carries through doctrine and life!
  4. Sex relationships must be viewed in the light that body of a believer belongs to God (I Cor. 6:19).
  5. Run, flee from... this is not being a coward, but prudent, even as Joseph fled from of Potiphar's wife.
- B. Positively:
  1. "Possess his vessel in sanctification and honor."
  2. The **vessel** can be understood to mean "body". In II Cor. 4:7 we read of treasure in earthen vessels.
  3. Many new commentators take vessel to mean wife. The idea then is to acquire a wife in a godly way.
  4. Taking vessel to mean body, the idea is to keep their bodies pure.
  5. "in sanctification and honor": there is a right use of the body which is set apart for the service of God.
- C. The positive state of sanctification and honor is further defined:
  1. The Spirit-filled and empowered person rules his body.
  2. He is not caught in the grip of lustful passions that he cannot control.
  3. '**Lust**' here is passion in a bad sense, an overmastering desire.
  4. '**Concupiscence**' is the idea of an evil desire that is very strong.
  5. This kind of behavior is typical of the Gentiles: the idea is here of the nations, the unbelieving world.
  6. Again it speaks of the lax standards of sexual morality which were prevalent in the world of Paul's day.
  7. It is because of ignorance of God. In Rom. 1:18ff they rejected God's knowledge and are delivered up by God.

### III. **THE REASONS FOR THIS WARNING.**

- A. The first reason for purity is that the Lord is the avenger of all such sin.
  1. The idea is that sexual license is a matter of defrauding another of his rights.
  2. Sexual looseness represents an act of injustice to someone other than the two parties concerned.
  3. Adultery defrauds the marriage partner. Promiscuity before marriage robs the virginity that should be.
  4. Though no one might know what took place, God does, and avenges. There are terrible consequences!
  5. Unless repented of, there is no place in the kingdom of God (Gal. 3:19-21 I Cor. 5:9-13).
- B. The second reason for purity is the whole character of the Christian life.
  1. God has willed our sanctification (vs. 3).
  2. We have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ.
  3. God has called us (vs. 7) a call that involves a rejection of uncleanness, with a definite purpose: sanctification!
  4. Satan is at war with God's church, undermining the Lord's people, their marriages, their homes, their lives!
- C. The third reason for purity is that impurity is a sin against the Holy Spirit.
  1. "**God who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit**". Paul is not thinking of something in the past, but present.
  2. Those believers who carry on impurely are not merely breaking a human code, nor only sinning against God.
  3. He is sinning against God who is present in his Spirit. It is a sin against God's good gift.
  4. It is sin that outrages not only a mighty Spirit, but the Spirit who is holy. Preference for impurity instead of holiness
  5. It is rejecting God. He who holds sexual sin as something indifferent treats God as of no account!