

LIVING PURITY

I THESSALONIANS 4:1-8

The city of Thessalonica is a thriving city – the second largest in Greece today. In Paul's day that meant lots of temptations for the eyes, the mind, and the flesh.

What did he prescribe? Abstinence from anything that feeds the lust.

What would he say to us in the 21st century? The same thing!

Flee, avoid, and run from anything that will infect your soul with the deadly lust virus. It grows and consumes our flesh like the most deadly cancer – only lust attacks the soul, defiles the spirit and robs the life of joy.

Listen to Dr. Paul as he tells us how to get and stay spiritually healthy.

- I. PLEASE GOD BY YOUR CONDUCT. v. 1
 - A. First - holy living is not an option. It's an imperative. "ought"
 - B. Second - holy living is not momentary. It's continuous "to walk"
 - C. Third - holy living is not private. It is [and shall be] public. "to please god"
 - D. Because of these three, look at the end of the road, look at second corinthians 5:10. The day of reckoning.
 1. "must" - no option = compulsory
 2. "all/each one" = personal
 3. "appear" made manifest = public
 4. "recompensed" individually paid = specific
- II. PLAN TO LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD'S COMMANDMENTS v.2
 - A. Don't miss this - that word "C" is a military term for passing on orders.
 - B. Look at John 14:15-21. Because we love we obey!
- III. PURSUE GOD'S WILL. v. 3-4 OUR CALLING IS TO DO GOD'S WILL. This is anarthrous = no article. Indefinite. This is something "God wills". There are others... It is our calling. Holiness is God's

will - The first step to holy living is doing God's will - God's will starts with holy living

- A. God's will is that we be (I Th. 5:18) Thankful
- B. God's will is that we be (Eph 5:18) Be being filled with H.S.
- C. God's will is that we be (I Pet. 2:13-15) Submissive
- D. God's will is that we be (I Pet. 4:19 / 5:10) Suffering
- E. God's will is that we be (2 Pet. 3:9) Saved
- F. God's will is that we be sanctified, holy and pure (I Th. 4:3)
 - 1. PURSUE PERSONAL HOLINESS v. 4 COMMITMENTS to personal holiness - to pure living. Vessel = body 2 Tim. 2:20-22 God says FORNICATION is wrong = any sex contact prior to wedding, mentally or physically. That's videos, magazines, movies, TV, beach watching: girl watching... living together, parking, petting... God says ADULTERY is wrong = any mental/physical contact other than with wife. If started - stop, repent, restore. If not started, - DON'T! You say HARD! Yes, always been that way. How? Mk 7:21-23 Because starts with mind Victory - We have a priority to be holy * Our bodies are God's temple
 - 2. REMEMBER YOU ARE JUST A RENTER! WATCH YOUR DEPOSIT! I Cor. 6:19-20 - bought
 - 3. REGULARLY RENEW YOUR LEASE! Rom. 12:1,2 - So give back to owner
 - a) That means - What we put in our body must be holy to God - not alcohol, drugs, cigarettes.
 - b) What we do with our bodies must be holy to God - no immoral, fornications, adulterous, impure things. No dissipation, overeating/gluttony, No lack of discipline
 - c) What we put on our body must be holy to God - modesty, propriety, sanctity, purity
 - (1) II Cor. 10:5 TAKE thots captive
 - (2) Col. 3:1 LOCK affections upward
 - (3) Eph. 6:17 WEAR helmet / use sword
 - (4) II Tim. 2:22 FLEE lust
 - (5) I Pet 5:9 RESIST devil
 - (6) WOMEN... I Tim. 2:9 = be modest I Pet. 3:3

IV. TURN ON THE NEW COMPUTER! v.5 CONTRAST DON'T LOOK at immodestly... Be holy - be set apart to God. Remember: That

- is...GOD'S MIND, Those are GOD'S EYES, GOD'S BODY... V.5 Holy Living in 5th Century = CONTRAST. Did you know N.T. world exercised nude?How do we live purely in a decadent world? Put Paul's exhortation into our world: That's when you:
- A. FORNICATION is any mental or physical sexual contact prior to marriage. This includes videos, movies, magazines, girl watching, living together, petting, parking.
 - B. ADULTERY is is any mental or physical sexual contact outside your marriage. This includes fantasizing, photos, movies, videos.
 - C. DON'T GET Sports Illustrated, CANCEL Cable, WALK OUT if the show gets bad, TURN OFF TV,
 - D. DETERMINE NOT to watch soaps, NOT WATCH cheerleaders, DON'T LOOK at immodesty...Be holy, be set apart to God. Don't buy clothes in fashion if the fashion reveals and exposes body immodestly. Don't excuse improper dress because of exercise. That's disobeyed.
- V. PROTECT YOUR POWER SOURCE! V. 6 CAUTION Paul says watch out. God chastens!
- A. Accept the reality that somethings are impossible to look at or read without causing us to veer off God's road; so run from them!
 - B. Admit that certain places and situations lead to weakness and vulnerability; so resist them!
 - C. Study the way God made you and learn to apply the power God has given you to Run, Resist and Refuse any defilements.
 - D. Abstain from fleshly lusts, I Peter 2:11. Pretty straight forward isn't it? Listen to the great preacher of last generation, D. Martin Lloyd Jones:

I do not know of a single scripture - and I speak advisedly - which tells me to take my sin, the particular thing that gets me down, to God in prayer and ask Him to deliver me from it and then trust in faith that He will. Now that teaching is often put like this: you must say to {one} who is constantly defeated by a particular sin, "I think your only hope is to take it to Christ and Christ will take it from you." But what does the Scripture say in Ephesians 4:28 to the {one} who finds himself constantly guilty of stealing, to {one} who sees something {they} like and [they] take it? What am I to tell to such a {one}? Am I to say, "Take that sin to Christ and ask Him to deliver you?" No, what the Apostle Paul tells him to do is this: "Let him that stole, steal no more." Just that. STOP DOING IT. And if it is fornication or adultery or lustful thoughts, again: STOP DOING IT, says Paul. He does not say, "Go and

pray to Christ to deliver you." No. You stop doing that, he says, as becomes children of God.¹

1. I Jn. 5 - sin to death
2. Rev. 2 - some dead
3. I Cor. 5 - commit to destruction of the flesh
4. I Cor. 11 - some sick
5. Heb 12:5-7 God chastens
6. Defraud = Start anything can't lawfully complete
7. Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived...

VI. TREAT GOD AS HOLY! v. 7

- A. First = Rejecting God Lit. 'treating God as one who can be disregarded'
- B. Second = Rejecting the Holy Spirit - Fullest statement "The Spirit of Him, the Holy"

VII. AGREE WITH THE BOSS! v. 8 accept the *challenge* to keep growing.

- A. Jonathan Edwards once wrote a resolve in his journal. It still makes sense after 250 years! "Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life!"²

¹ Sanctified Through the Truth: The Assurance of Our Salvation (Wheaton: Crossway, 1989), 54.

² Swindoll, Moral Purity, p. 26.