

Holiness and Sexual Purity

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul's letter shifts from narrative to instruction, exhorting his readers to live according to the authority of and allegiance to Jesus Christ. If God is our authority, the standard of our sexual behavior as a believer is God's desire for our holiness.

Application

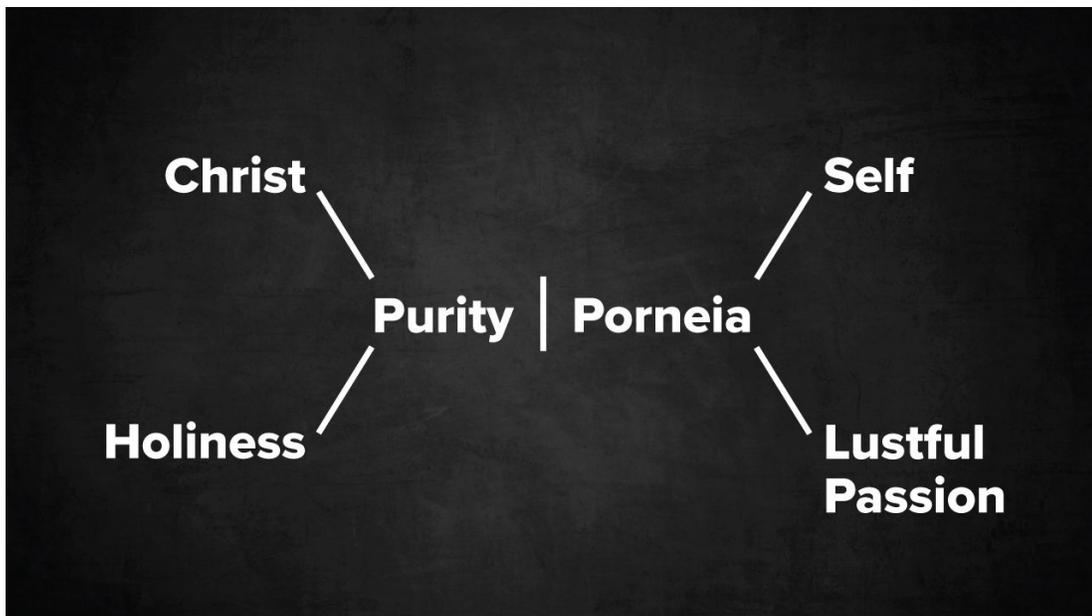
If your discussion is in a group setting, consider separating into men and women.

1. Ask yourself, "Am I living to please God in all areas of my life?" Which area first comes to mind as an area where you might not be pleasing God? (e.g. in marriage, parenting, thought life, relating to others, expressing myself, communication, work life)
2. If we are to obey by controlling our bodies, what are specific boundaries you have set up to purposefully discipline yourself in sexual purity? What are areas where additional boundaries would be beneficial?
3. If you are living in sexual sin, Robby gave some practical steps for moving forward. Which of these steps have you already taken? What do you need to do next?
 1. Come under God's authority instead of your own by recognizing your need for purity.
 2. Understand that it is Jesus, not your behavior, who saves and justifies.
 3. Confess your sin, repent (do the opposite of your sin), and follow his Word.
 4. Seek out and understand that you have help from the Holy Spirit and the church. You can find more information on how the church can help [here](#).

Key Points

- The authority to which we submit determines how we live.
- How we express ourselves sexually is not based on the culture it's based on God's character.
- Paul doesn't give us a list of rules, he just gives the word "holiness".

- Left alone, our desires do not produce holiness in us.
- God’s will for us is to be holy—set apart not only *from* the world but *for* our God.
- The task of the church is not to make women and men happy but to make them holy.
- Paul uses the word “porneia”, which is any sexual sin outside the boundaries God has given us (e.g. watching porn, living together before you are married, homosexuality, sexual activity before you are married, etc.)
- As a single person, you are intentionally controlling your sexual urges and disciplining your body to live in holiness. As a married couple, you are purposefully investing all sexual energy toward your spouse alone.
- If you are a Christ follower, you must control your body and submit to God instead of self. We cannot live in holiness *and* give in to lustful passion; they cannot coincide.



Many of us say we follow Christ (left side) side yet live secretly under our own authority (right side)f. If this is true of you, you are not walking in holiness.

- Faith in Christ cannot coexist with sexual impurity.
- Even in marriage, we pursue purity; if we look to sex for self-gratification, we are hurting our spouse.
- There are spiritual, social, eternal, and physical consequences to sexual immorality. When you live under your own authority, you reject God himself.
- God will avenge those who suffer harm from others who overstep sexual boundaries.
- Holiness is God’s will and purity is his way.
- If you are living in sexual sin, come under God’s authority, understand that Jesus is the one who justifies and saves, confess your sin, repent, follow his Word, and understand you have help from the Holy Spirit and the church.

Scripture References

[John 17:17](#)

[Jeremiah 19:9](#)