

I THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

Review your memory verses (I Thessalonians 1:2-4, 1:6, 2:8, 3:2-3, 3:12).

Memorize I Thessalonians 4:11. Yes ___ Said to _____.

Writing out your verse several times will help you commit it to memory. Try to get key words or phrases in your mind as you learn.

Read I Thessalonians 4:1-12 carefully, asking God to show you the main ideas Paul wants to convey.

1. Verses 1 and 2 set forth the major theme of this section. What is Paul's overall concern for his friends?
2. Comment on the added meaning Paul gives to his main topic by the words "we request (or ask) and exhort (or urge) you in the Lord Jesus" (verse 1). Use verse 2 here also, if you wish.

Reread I Thessalonians 4:2-8. The word translated *vessel* in the NASV and *body* in the NIV (in verse 4) can also be translated *wife*. In fact the Hebrew equivalent (*keli*) for this Greek word (*skeuos*) is used in Rabbinic writings to refer to *wife*, according to Leon Morris in his commentary on Thessalonians from the Tyndale Series.

3. Often we find Christians searching for the will of God. In verse 3 what does Paul emphasize as the will of God for you? What does this mean? Someone has said the will of God is the matter of finding the *upright* path rather than the *right* path.

4. Let's go with the teachings of the Rabbis and consider the word in verse 4 to mean wife rather than body. How do verses 4 and 5 tie in with abstaining from fornication?

5. Explain how the concept of "acquiring a wife in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God" (NASV-verses 4-5) elevates Christian marriage in the midst of a pagan culture.

6. What does Paul mean that you "not defraud your brother in this matter" (NASV-verse 6)?

7. From verses 1-8, in what ways does God fit in with the whole teaching of sexual purity for the Christian?

8. Fornication or sexual impurity includes any sexual relations outside of marriage. This passage gives at least one way to help us abstain from this impurity. What are other ways you can think of to help abstain from sexual impurity?

15. How do these three things (in verse 11) tie in with love for the brethren?

16. In what way is one "taught by God" to love one another?

17. How do questions 9-16 apply to your ambitions for your life? Be as specific as you can.

18. Suppose someone comes to you and says "I love a man deeply. I'm not married and he's not married and we want to be sexually intimate. I've prayed about it and God is telling me it's His will since we love each other." What would you say?

19. What other examples can you think of where the same principle would apply?

20. What can you do to either help yourself abstain from sexual impurity or to love others more by manifesting one or more of the three characteristics of verse 11?