

WORD

³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor . . . **1 THESSALONIANS 4:3,4**

When God created Adam and Eve, His first command to them was, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it . . .*” (Genesis 1:28). God designed sex for a purpose and it is beautiful when it is within the boundaries of marriage. But when sin entered the world, sex became corrupted and misaligned from God’s will. This week, we will look into three questions to help us know whether what we are doing is right.

1 Is it biblical?

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality . . . **1 THESSALONIANS 4:3**

To be sanctified simply means to be “made holy,” or to be set apart for God’s will and purpose. Just like fences that help guard our homes, God gave us boundaries not to withhold something from us but to protect us from being out of His will and protection. Purity is God’s will and it is made possible by continually meditating on His Word and submitting to Him daily. If what you are doing is sinful and goes against what the Bible says, then you need to stop doing it and turn from it (repent). How can we guard our purity? (Psalm 119:9)

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2 Does it honor the other person?

... that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor . . . **1 THESSALONIANS 4:4**

God views marriage as honorable (Hebrews 13:4). Sex inside a covenant relationship honors the other person and the sanctity of marriage; and we honor the other person by exercising self-control over our bodies. Galatians 5:22,23 says that self-control is the fruit of the Spirit. When we let God do His work in us and allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us, we will be better equipped to fight against temptation and guard our purity. When deciding what to do, we should not just think of what is good for us, but also what honors the other person. What should we fill our minds with? (Philippians 4:8)

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3 Is it beneficial?

¹²"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. **1 CORINTHIANS 6:12,13**

God gave sex within the boundaries of marriage as a gift to bless the husband and wife. When we use that gift for a purpose different from God's, we move out of the safe zone. Sometimes we ask, "Shouldn't I be entitled to do anything I want?" However, the right question to ask is, "Will it bring me closer to God?" God gives us standards to follow in our relationships for our own good. What we do should not be based on what's available or permissible, but on what is beneficial. What is God's assurance to us? (Matthew 5:8)

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APPLICATION

- What benefits does the Word of God bring? (Psalm 119:105,130)
What's one thing you can do to go deeper in the Word starting this week?
- In what area of your life do you need to exercise self-control?
What will you do about it starting today?
- How can you honor others in your relationships? Share one thing you will start doing differently.

PRAYER

- Thank God for saving you and calling you to a holy life because of His purpose and His grace (2 Timothy 1:9).
- Ask God to renew your mind daily and help you become more like Christ every day. Pray that you will rely on His strength and grace in honoring your relationships.
- Pray that you will encounter His love in a deeper way and help others know and love God as well.



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