



### Quick Backdrop

One thing is clear throughout Scripture: God doesn't want His people thinking and acting like the world around them. If there's no difference between believers and nonbelievers, how will nonbelievers see God? Beginning in Exodus and continuing throughout the Bible, God said, "Be holy, for I am holy!" the book of 1 Thessalonians is a letter written from the apostle Paul to a group of Christians who were trying to get a handle on this concept—living pure lives in an impure world. Sound familiar?

### 1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Read the passage below. To notice a little more detail you may want to print out the passage so you can mark it up, or paste it into an e-doc to highlight. As you read the verses, circle (or highlight) every mention of the recipients of the letter (look for words like "you" and "us").



#### 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, <sup>5</sup> not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

### 2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

After you've read and marked the passage, see how much you remember. Try to answer these questions as precisely as possible without looking at the passage. You may remember more than you think you do. Then check your responses with the passage and fill in anything you couldn't remember.

What is God's will?

How does Paul define "sanctified" here?

How is "avoid sexual immorality" described?

What did God NOT call us to?

What DID God call us to?

The word "sanctify" may be new or unclear in meaning to you. In its most basic form, the word means to be set apart, to be different from your surroundings. God used the word a lot in the Bible to describe "setting apart" His people to be used on His mission to redeem a lost world.

With that definition in mind, how does abstaining from sexual immorality set you apart from the world? Write out a couple thoughts.

Going by these verses, particularly verse 3, what's a good starting point for discovering God's will for your life?

### 3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

Are you still wondering how far "too far" is? Meditate on 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4 and 7. Say these verses out loud several times a day. Soon God will show you where to draw the line.

Fold or Cut