

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Paul's letter to the church of Thessalonica has been absolutely glowing: in chapter 1 he wrote to them about about their work of faith, labor of love, and their steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:3), citing them as the very example of a model church. In chapter 2, he defended the work he had done amongst them as his opponents called his motives into question. In chapter 3, he warned them against the increasing persecution and affliction they would suffer for their faith, but prayed as well that God would "establish [their] hearts blameless in holiness" before Him (1 Thess. 3:13a), and that he would make them "increase and abound in love for one another and for all". (v.12a)

As Paul draws near to his conclusion in chapter 4, he begins by urging them to walk in a manner that pleases God. He asks them to abstain from sexual immorality (v. 3b), and to control their own bodies "in holiness and honor" (v.4) as God "has not called us for impurity, but in holiness". (v.7) Paul's plea for his brothers and sisters in Christ to love each other with a "brotherly [(or sibling-like)] love" (v.9) applies as much to his original readers as it does to us. One of the effects that sin has on us is that it compels us to take what was originally beautiful and good, and twist and weaponize it for our own selfish gain. That may be why Paul urges his readers to "aspire to live quietly" and to "mind [their] own affairs" (v.11), for walking in integrity and humility is one of the most effective solutions towards the self-centeredness of sin. But in all these we can take heart, for Paul turns ultimately towards the Lord Jesus as he writes that our sanctification is the will of God (v.3a), and He who began this good work in us will bring it to completion (Phil. 1:6).

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

The term “sexual immorality” is one that tends to create a polarizing reaction in the church. What comes to mind when you hear the term “sexual immorality”, both within and without the church? Why do you think it has caused such a strong reaction from people? How can we as a church or as a small group open the conversation surrounding the topic, to discuss it both frankly and freely with one another?

QUESTION TWO:

Go through the passages of Genesis 1:27; 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-6; and 1 Corinthians 6:16-20.

Are there any similarities in these passages? What words and / or phrases stick out?

From these passages, what would your conclusion be about God’s original intent behind sex? What, then, would be the definition of “sexual immorality” from the writers of Scripture? Why would they define it as such?

QUESTION THREE:

Although the brunt of this week’s questions has surrounded the topic of sexual immorality, the thrust of this week’s passage is to surrender and glorify God in all that we do, as we walk in a manner that is befitting of Him.

How would you do so at work, home, or in your studies and with those around you? How would you control your own body in holiness and honor? (v.4) How would you aspire to live quietly and mind your own affairs (v.11), and to live a life that is indicative of the God who is at work within you?