

The Great Wait: Delight and Discernment in the Second Coming

The First Sexual Revolution

1 Thessalonians 4:1–8

August 24, 2025

The Lord's Day Morning

1 Thessalonians is structured like a door on a hinge. In chapters 1–3, Paul establishes his *credibility* with the Thessalonian church by communicating his *compassion* for them, his *competence* in articulating and defending the faith, and his good *character* in all his dealings with them. He will need all that credibility for what comes next, because in chapters 4–5 he gives the church many counter-cultural *commands* and instructions on how to live God-honoring lives while they “wait for his Son from heaven” (1:10). First on the list? Sexual ethics.

Roman Sexual Ethic	Christian Sexual Ethic
1. Marriage unites one man and one woman until they don't want to be.	1. Marriage unites one man and one woman until one dies.
2. Divorce common, for any reason	2. Divorce rare, only for abandonment or adultery.
3. Double standard: Women marry young as virgins; men delay marriage but engage in sex.	3. Single standard: Men and women equal in worth, dignity, and responsibility.
4. Men not expected to control desire	4. Men and women expected to control desire.
5. Roman men, married or not, fulfill desire with prostitutes, male or female slaves, and boys.	5. Men and women forbidden from all sexual relationships except one.
6. Many socially acceptable ways to fulfill sexual desire.	6. One way to fulfill sexual desire: Within heterosexual, monogamous marriage.
7. Losers: Women, children, the poor, slaves.	7. Losers: Promiscuous and pompous men.

These three practices ignited the first sexual revolution and changed the course of history:

1. Abstain from _____.
2. Learn _____.
3. Consider others as you make _____.