

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

## "SUBMIT YOUR BIOLOGY TO YOUR THEOLOGY" | 1 THESSALONIANS 4: 1-12 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

***When you were a teenager, what were the main sources and influences on your lifestyle?***

### ***"Holiness Instructions so Holy Love Wins" (1 Thess 4: 1-8)***

Paul reminds the people to avoid sexual immorality. **What is hard about having sex only in the context of marriage? What are the benefits?**

### ***"Love One Another" (1 Thess 4: 9-10)***

Even though the people have shown love to others, they are encouraged to do this more and more. **What are healthy ways you can show God's love to your community this week?**

### ***"Whistles While You Work" (1 Thess 4: 11-12)***

Paul encourages the people to lead quiet lives and to work hard so that they have a good reputation to others outside the church. **Who do you know is a good example of this kind of worker today? What kind of impact does this kind of lifestyle have?**

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

People saved by the Gospel will be changed by the Gospel in all areas of life: work, friendships, and in sexual relations. Jesus gives His people strength to resist temptation, as well as forgiveness when they fail. **Latently, has your lifestyle been focused on pleasing God or others or yourself? Are there things in your relationships or in your work that you should confess to God and ask for forgiveness? Pray that God would give you the strength to pursue holiness in your life.**

# 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

8-06-23

## Submit your Biology to your Theology

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-8 AL: Prayer. DC. Ladies Night. Men's. F.H.C. Mulligan's. CK.
- B. Slide9 Prayer: Susie Drake. This morning as we talk about *holiness*, I think of Brennan Manning's quote of *his insidious search for shortcuts in holiness*. God forgive us for asking/seeing how close we can get to the edge, rather than how far to stay away from it.

### II. Slide10 Intro: Submit your Biology to your Theology [a life pleasing to God]

- A. Life is full of **questions** and ch.4 is full of **answers**. But let's admit, sometimes we read something in scripture and say, *I don't quite get that*. Or, let's be a little more transparent and admit, *In my heart I'm not sure if I agree with that one*.
- But when this happens, as a christian can we say, *I will obey God because He is my Father, & He always knows best, & always has my best in mind, even when I don't fully understand*.
  - \*Are you willing saints, to submit your **biology** to your **Theology**?
- B. The Big Picture is we see that *a God-pleasing life* has both **moral** and **social dimensions**, characterized by **holiness**, **love**, and **work**.
- Connect Paul's **prayer** (3:11-13) to his **instructions** (ch.4).
- C. Slide11 - **READ ALL** (vs.1-12) [listen to how **practical** Paul goes now]
- D. Slide12 What is repetitive? (walk, & do so more and more)
- Walk** - Paul points to what is important in our **Christian walk** to please God, and how to **walk properly** before outsiders. (see 1,13)
  - Do so more and more** - should be the desire of the dedicated christian. We never arrive, so keep practicing **holiness, love, and work**. (see 1,10)

### III. Slide13a HOLINESS INSTRUCTIONS (1-8)

- A. **Barna Research**: 32% of millennials agreed, *Watching porn is usually or always wrong*. But 56% said, the same thing about *not recycling*. [so 24% more, think it is more morally wrong to *not recycle* rather than to watch porn]. (ages 27-42 now) [gen Z, alpha]
- B. (2) these **instructions**, are *through the Lord Jesus* - Paul's instruction about sexual immorality is not a matter of *human philosophy*. No, as an apostle, he speaks on behalf of *Christ*.
1. So yes, it's going to be "*different wisdom*" than from our day.
- C. In today's **Modern Morality**, the 1 thing **you can't do** is deny yourself.
1. But **Jesus** says that self denial is required for *following Him*, and therefore being **faithful to Him** in our relationship.
- D. (Progressives / Traditionalist?) **Progressivism's Narrative** in our day and age on this issue is remarkably **powerful**. It gives the impression that their position is *inevitable*.
1. *It captures the imagination with its vision of moral "progress"*.  
*They promote, it's only a matter of time before everyone agrees with the new view of sex and marriage! They say, get on board or get left behind, this is where the train of history is going!*
  2. But marriage is a load-bearing wall in the house. You can't tear it down and keep the roof up. Why cuz marriage is a picture of the gospel.
    - a) **Slide13b** Eph.5:25-28 *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.* [marriage is *central* to the gospel]
  3. Marriage is a **living parable**, a **concrete symbol**, that **models** for the world, the **mystical union** of Christ and His people.
  4. We need to understand **Marriage** - not in the story of **self-fulfillment**, but in the story of **God's kingdom** and our **following after Christ**.

5. So if **marriage** occupies this place in God's plan, **and** if intimacy is so important to God's plan for marriage, **we can see the vital importance of obedience to God's standards for sexuality.**

a) **Sexuality is a gift from God, but** it is a gift we can **abuse**. God's intent is that intimacy be used rightly **inside of marriage**. Inside of marriage, its proper use is for **pleasure, procreation**, and is something to be **shared lovingly and with gratitude** to build up the **Unity** of a couple.

E. (3) **Abstain from sexual immorality?** Abstinence **or** to abstain sounds so *archaic, prudish, puritanical, stuffy, even Victorian*, **and YET we all do this every day in some form**. You may **abstain from**: gluten, dessert, sugar in general, alcohol, controlled substances, **or** hopefully *medication* that you're allergic to :) (Vicodin story)

F. **Slide14a** Not all sin is the same (**or, sin** is not created equal). 1 Cor.6:17-20 *But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* [there's something **so different** about sexual sin, that He **warns** us of]

1. **Slide14b** \*When God gave the 7th commandment, **you should not commit adultery** He was building **a wall around marriage** that makes the relationship **not a prison, but a safe and beautiful garden**.

2. Remember **Joseph** went to prison for his **purity** (saying **no** to Potiphar's wife). That's how important it was to him.

a) **Purity** is a **restriction** on your liberties. A self-imposed restriction. 1 Cor.6:12 Paul said, **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.**

G. We as a church not only should **Warn** all our men/women, young/old, of looking at pornography, **but** we should **ALSO** explain how each of us can **contribute to the cause of helping those caught up or forced into the porn industry** (i.e. loving &

caring for those hurting from this lifestyle/life. Protecting/Caring for children and women and young men getting harmed in the posing & filming of porn).

H. Who among us has walked rightly and *pleased God without fail*? Who among us has *abstained from sexual immorality* not only in action but also in **thought**? Who among us has not fallen into various forms of *impurity*? (see vs.7)

1. **Praise God then**, for **the One** who is **gloriously unlike us**.

a) A Christian is someone who reads vs.1-8 and finds a fountain of exhortation but not a drop of condemnation.

2. The *moral spotlessness of Jesus* - freely given to *moral-wrecks like us* through **faith** - is the foundation of a *Spirit-empowered, grace-fueled life*.

#### IV. Slide15 **LOVE ONE ANOTHER (9,10)**

A. I heard this last week, *Jesus doesn't love you like a Group Insurance Policy. He sees the one*. Thus as we have been taught by God to love one another, do we see **the one**, that's right in front of us, that He brought our way, that needs us the most? *Do this more and more!* (none of us have *arrived!*)

#### V. Slide16 **WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK (11,12)**

A. Msg, *Stay calm; mind your own business; do your own job*. You've heard all this from us before, but a reminder never hurts. We want you *living in a way that will command the respect of outsiders, not lying around sponging off your friends*.

B. Because they expected **the Lord to return any day**, some believers quit their jobs & became idlers & meddlers. What type of testimony would this be to the lost? **So ...**

C. *Aspire to live quietly* - the opposite of *restlessness*. Tranquility of mind.

1. It's an interesting paradox: *restlessly strive to be quiet*.

D. *Mind your own affairs* - don't be a Christian *sponge, free loader, or a barnacle*.

1. **Christians are to help others**. [obviously some people cannot work, it is not their fault because of circumstances, health, a disability, etc.]

E. **Work w/your own hands** - Not necessarily manual labor, **but** working as opposed to idling. **Be faithful to your job ... to your *Monday morning Pulpits*.**

1. At a bible conference 1 speaker said "**regardless of employment your job is sacred**". A man afterward asked the man next to him, "**What's your job?**" He answered "***I am an ordained plumber!***"

## VI. Slide17a **HOLY LOVE WINS!**

A. *Jesus did not resist temptation in order to **condemn you** for giving into yours. He resisted the temptation in order to **save you** from yours.* Tim Chaddick

1. **Legalist and religious people** they resist temptation as a way of thinking of themselves of being **better than** other people. **Like, Wow, I resisted. Oh you do those sins, oh, I don't do those sins.**
2. They resist so they can have **bragging rights**. They resist so they can **condemn** other people. **But not so with Jesus.**
3. *Jesus did not resist temptation in order to **condemn you** for giving into yours. He resisted the temptation in order to **save you** from yours.*
4. **That is why Jesus came!**

B. **Slide17b** He not only provides *a way of escape* from giving in, **but also** provides *forgiveness for when we do give in*. That's why He lived a perfect life, **and** died that terrible death, **and** rose the 3rd day as promised.

1. **Slide17c** So that we might say to God, **accept me not on the basis for what I have done, but on the basis of what you've done.**

C. There are 2 kingdoms vying for your allegiance. Satan says, *Give me your life*. God's kingdom says, *I have given you mine*. **Which one will you follow?**

D. **Slide17d** As the Bible's storyline unfolds, a number of social issues seem to **develop** in a more "**progressive**" direction. **In the NT**, for example, both women and ethnic minorities are elevated and liberated in **countercultural ways**.

1. Yet there is one significant **exception** to this overall “*progressive*” trend: **sexual ethics**. **Actually**, Scripture’s **sexual ethics** develop in a more conservative direction as we enter the NT.
2. In the OT polygamy was *permitted*, for example, though never condoned. Likewise, OT concessions for divorce had been abused into licenses to leave one’s wife “*for any cause*” (Matt. 19:3).
3. **But** once we get to **the Gospels**, **Jesus is strikingly restrictive on sexual matters**. As **Jesus and the apostles** liberate slaves and women by undermining the institution of slavery and cultural habits of chauvinism, **not once do they “liberate” anyone sexually**. Even the adulterous woman in John 8 is told to, *go, and from now on sin no more*.
4. Whether the issue is *polygamy or divorce or fornication or adultery or homosexuality*, **the NT tightens the standards by summoning us back to God’s good creation design**. Paul’s language then, is neither prudish nor at odds with Jesus’ teaching, it is par for the course in the NT.

E. **Slide 17e Tip:** Don’t always answer the **question**, answer the **questioner**. If someone says, *I’m a lesbian, or adulterer, What do you think?* Your answer can be, *Well Jesus has a lot to say about sexuality and that we are all broken in this area.* (you don’t have to single out their sin, placed *yourself* in the fray). **We all need to repent & believe.**

Get in the same boat/box w/them. **And ...**

1. **Show them** the **goodness** of God.
2. **Show there** is a **rationality** to what God says to us.
3. **Show why** there is a **yes** to everything He says **no** to. **Ask**, what is God **protecting?** What **kindness** is He showing? What is the **positive?**
4. **Show the bigger story/narrative**. **Ask**, why does the Bible start with a guy and girl getting together, which is the main story of being His bride, His beloved. It’s a Love Story. It points beyond itself.
5. **Ask them** are you asking me to not follow Jesus?

6. **Point Them to Jesus.** Use the gospel. Their issue is with Jesus.

F. **Communion:** Lk.22:19,20 *And he took **bread**, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my **body**, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”* 20 *And likewise **the cup** after they had eaten, saying, “This **cup** that is poured out for you is **the new covenant in my blood**.”*

G. **Wrap up:** Take time to **Reflect** on the implications of this text for your own life today. **Consider** in what you have learned **and** allow it to lead you to **praise God, repent of sin, and trust in His gracious promises.**

H. **Keywords:** sexual immorality, love, work.

I. **Title:** a play off of *Keep your Theology off my Biology.* pro-choice