

Monday, February 11 - It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5) In the first century moral standards were generally very low, and chastity was regarded as an unreasonable restriction. Paul, however, would not compromise God's clear and demanding standards. The warning was needed, for Christians were not immune to the temptation.

Tuesday, February 12 – 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. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. (1 Thessalonians 4:6-7) Sexual sin harms others besides those who engage in it. In adultery, for example, the spouse is always wronged. Premarital sex wrongs the future partner by robbing him or her of the virginity that ought to be brought to marriage. God created sex for procreation and pleasure, and as an expression of love between a husband and wife. Sexual experience must be limited to the marriage relationship to avoid hurting ourselves, our relationship to God, and our relationship with others. God's call to holiness is for *all* of a person. Not just certain parts.

Wednesday, February 13 – Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:8) Still another reason for chastity is that sexual sin is against God, who gives the Holy Spirit to believers for their sanctification. To live in sexual immorality is to reject God, specifically in regard to the Holy Spirit. *Prayer: Father, I offer You all of me. I want to please You more than make myself momentarily happy. Help me to pursue holiness in my mind, in my actions, and in my interactions with others. Give me strength to say no to myself and yes to You. Amen.*

Thursday, February 14 – Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more. (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10) The love mentioned here is "brotherly" love (you heard it as philadelphia). This is a greek word that outside of the New Testament almost without exception denoted the mutual love of children of the same father. In the New Testament it always means love of fellow believers in Christ, all of whom have the same heavenly father. How do we love other believers with this kind of love? And how do we do it "more?"

Friday, February 15 – ...and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12) Some of the people, probably because of idleness, were taking undue interest in other people's affairs. Think of a time when you got into someone else's business? It probably didn't go well. What was your motivation? What was the end result? The idea in these verses is to go about your life in a godly way and there is a good chance you will be 'invited' in to share in another person's life that may be going through a difficult time. You can't be effective in sharing your faith with others if they don't respect you. Whatever you do, do it faithfully and be a positive force in society. Also, consider Christians took seriously the need for earning their own living, but some of them, perhaps as a result of their belief in the imminent return of Christ, were neglecting work and relying on others to support them.