

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**

**1** Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. **2** For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

**3** God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. **4** Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor— **5** not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. **6** Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. **7** God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. **8** Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

**Discussion Questions**

**1. How have you grown in your sanctification since school started?**

**Leader Tip:** Encourage each kid to answer thoughtfully. Depending on the group's ability, ask them to give encouraging input on each other's growth. PS... do your kids even know the definition of sanctification? They might not. If so, look up the definition and talk about it with them!

**2. Discussion: What is God's will for your life?**

**Leader Tip:** This question is intentionally lofty. Tonight's passage outlines a direct aspect of God's will for our lives, but it might be helpful to hear what the kids think His will is first. Ask follow up questions regarding their answers... even take the time to lovingly correct some of their views if they say anything that mis-aligns with scripture.

**3. Read verse 2-6. What does Paul say that God's will is for our lives?**

**Theological Thought:** Paul says that God's will for our lives is to be Holy. To be Holy is to be set-apart. Some Bibles say sanctified instead of Holy. Regarding God's Will, scripture refers to his will often-- both what to do and what not to do. This includes: *salvation* (1 Tim. 2:4), *self sacrifice* (Rom. 12:1), *being spirit filled* (Eph. 5:18), *submission* (1 Pe. 2:13), *suffering* (1 Pe. 3:17), *satisfaction* (1 Thess. 5:18), and particularly here -- **sanctification**. Sanctification literally refers to a state of being set apart from sin to **holiness**.

#### **4. What is the way we are called to be holy in v. 3?**

**Leader Tip:** Abstain from sexual sin! Here, you could ask your kids, “why do you think it is important to do this,” and have a short discussion. This time should help to dispel any notion of legalism, and replace it with a gracious hunger and thirst for righteousness.

#### **5. In v. 4-6, Paul is further clarifying how to abstain from sexual immorality. What are his two challenges for how we should live?**

**Theological Thought:** Holiness and Honor are two great ways to understand sexual morality, or sexual integrity. If the opposite of Holiness and Honor in this passage was Indulgence and Shame, how would that help to clarify what Paul is urging the church to do?

Sanctification involves abstinence (self-denial) from all kinds of sexual behavior that are outside the prescribed will of God, including adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, etc. Rather than participating in these acts, the believer should learn how to control his (or her) body and its passions, both in holiness and in honor.

#### **6. Read verse 7. What kind of lives does God call us to live?**

**Theological Thought:** Notice how Paul uses the word “holy” to oppose the word impure. Isn’t it interesting that our holiness given to us by God plays such a huge part in our own purity? The general principle the Thessalonians were to keep in mind was that God's purpose for all Christians is “not ... impurity,” but purity (“sanctification”). It is a life set apart from sin unto holiness.

#### **7. Read verse 8. How have you disregarded your holiness lately?**

#### **8. Pray for each person in your group to regard the Holy Spirit and live morally set-apart lives.**