

## **1 Thess. 4:3-8 (LD 41) “Not in Lustful Passion”**

**For the Children:** What would help a policeman to resist temptation if he were offered a bribe? Perhaps it would help to think about the consequences if he were caught – he would lose his job and possibly end up in jail himself. Better still, if he thinks about what he is there for: to uphold the law, prevent crime and protect the citizens of his country. Thinking about our God and His calling to us is one of the best ways to resist temptation to sin. God is holy and He calls us to be holy and pure in the way we deal with boyfriend/girlfriend relationships; and, for many, in marriage. We might meet people who try to “bribe” us to turn against God and go with them into wrongdoing. Then we must remember who our God is and what He calls us to. Questions: What is your purpose in life? How does breaking the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment go against God and our neighbour? Why does the Lord take this matter so seriously?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: God’s Will for Us in the Seventh Commandment**

- 1) Abstaining from Immorality: “Immorality” here refers to any kind of sexual sin – not just adultery, but also fornication; the various perversions that sinners practice; and pornography.
- 2) Sanctification and Honour: In addition to avoiding those things that the commandment forbids, upholding this law has a “positive” side – expressed by the instruction in v. 4. This could be paraphrased, “Get your own body under control, so that instead of being carried away by various lusts, you can dedicate your body to sanctification and honour. This is a self-control that arises from love of God, rather than from love of self. It is self-control for the purpose of service to God.
- 3) Love of Neighbour: Service to God involves service for our neighbour. Hence the warning against transgressing and defrauding our neighbour (v. 6). “Defraud” implies excess and coveting. When the immoral person involves others in his immorality, he is harming them as well as himself. For example, adultery harms both parties involved, as well as “cheating” (defrauding) the spouse(s) of those involved.
- 4) A Matter of Attitude: Ignoring this commandment betrays a wrong attitude to God, to neighbour, to self, to church (for the believer) and to family. That applies not only to immoral deeds, but also words, looks and desires. See Mt. 5:27-28.

#### **Second Point: Reasons to Abide by This**

- 1) Remember Whom You Serve: We need better reasons to uphold this commandment than the usual pragmatic ones – the consequences of getting caught, the shame, the guilt, the broken relationships etc. We must strive to remember that when we act against certain rules, we are actually acting against the Lord Himself – against His calling, His Son’s work for His people, and the Spirit’s work of sanctification (v. 8).
- 2) The Lord Is the Avenger: Having said that fear of consequences should not come first, it is important to realize that there *are* consequences. Most seriously, the Lord will avenge wrong-doing on the Day of Judgement (v. 6) – unless the sinner turns to Christ for forgiveness. He does not take it lightly when His people break their covenant with Him and with their marriage-partner (Mal. 2).
- 3) Remember Your Calling: We are to keep before us the purpose for which the Lord has chosen and called us – for sanctification, not impurity (vss. 3 and 7). That means renouncing the world, offering ourselves to God, in Christ and with His Spirit indwelling us, as a clean sacrifice. Sanctification is God’s will for us (v. 3), and He therefore gives us help to do what He calls us to do. We are not alone in this struggle.

### **Conclusion:**