

# Grow and Discern Resource Sheet

Series: *Formed for the Future, Faithful for Now*

Date: 6/29/25

Title: More and More

Text: 1 Thess. 4:1-8

Many of the letters written by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament contain a large amount of ‘polemic’ elements, meaning they were written to address specific problems concerning Paul’s audience. First Thessalonians is unique however in that Paul is primarily writing to encourage and strengthen a young church that is currently walking closely and pleasing the Lord. This leads to an interesting question, what counsel would Paul have to share with a church that is already fruitful and living faithfully?

## Key Sermon Points

There are two main ideas emphasized by Paul in this passage:

**Verses 1 and 2** commend these faithful believers for pleasing God by receiving and practicing all of the instruction given to them by Paul when he initially planted the Thessalonian church. How can they remain faithful and grow? Paul urges them to remember the instructions given to them by the authority of Jesus and do them **More and More!**

- **Becoming complacent is a real spiritual threat.** Paul urges the saints to grow in spiritual maturity by leaning even more and more into faithful obedience. Considering examples like King Asa in the OT and the Apostle Peter’s retreat from gospel-centered fellowship with the new Gentile believers, the bible is replete with examples that if we are not pursuing growth in our faith “*more and more*” the result will not be stagnation, the result will be **drifting** away from the Lord and His call upon our lives.

**Verses 3-8** encourage the Thessalonians by reminding them that it is indeed God’s will that they be sanctified and Paul places a particular emphasis on the importance of avoiding sexual immorality.

- **Holiness is not repression, but restoration.** God's will for your life is your sanctification—not the denial of desire, but the reordering of desire around His design. The Christian sexual ethic is not arbitrary; it's rooted in a vision of wholeness and human flourishing.
- **To misuse sex is to dishonor both self and others.** Paul frames sexual immorality not just as rule-breaking but as relational violation. The gospel compels us to treat every person not as an object to consume, but as someone made in the image of God.
- **The call to purity is empowered by grace.** This command isn't grounded in fear or shame, but in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is not primarily about moral effort, but about living into the new identity we’ve been given in Christ.

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## Discussion Questions

1. **What does it mean that God's will is our sanctification?** In what ways does the gospel reframe the concept of holiness as beautiful rather than burdensome?
2. **What does it look like to 'control your own body in holiness and honor' in today's world?** How can Christians live distinctly yet compassionately in a culture with very different sexual ethics? How might our culture's view of sex impact our own perception of who I think is "the real me?" How might this passage speak to both singles and married individuals in our community?
3. **Why does Paul connect sexual immorality with dishonoring others?** What does it mean to view others through the lens of the imago Dei in matters of sexuality?
4. **What role does the Holy Spirit play in our pursuit of purity?** How does knowing that God has given us His Spirit (v. 8) change the way we fight temptation?