

# Premarital Sex

By Evan Lenow

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read the comments related to Hebrews 13:4 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What does it mean to hold marriage in honor?

### Assignment Two

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and the comments related to verses 1-6 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: Why is it important to abstain from sexual immorality?

### Assignment Three

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and the comments related to verses 7-8 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share the contrast between holiness and impurity in sexual relationships.

### Scripture to Memorize

*"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;"*

1 Thessalonians 4:3

### Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that premarital sex is a violation of God's design for sexuality.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

You recently started a new relationship and everything is perfect. The two of you always have something to talk about, really enjoy spending time together and feel the flutter of butterflies in your stomach anytime you are together. One day you find yourselves alone at your house and you start to become more intimate physically. What should you do? Should you stop before things get out of hand? Or is it fine to have sex if you both love each other?

Read Hebrews 13:4 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 4. Let marriage be held in honor.** The author of Hebrews gave his readers several different instructions and told them to hold marriage in honor. This means that all aspects of marriage are to be honored as God designed them. In Genesis 2:24, we learn that God designed sexual expression to be part of the marriage covenant. Thus, honoring marriage means maintaining sexual faithfulness within marriage. **undefiled.** This term means clean, pure and pristine. Specifically, the author of Hebrews spoke of “the marriage bed,” or the sexual relationship in marriage. He emphasized the obligation to the pledge of marriage. **Immoral and adulterous.** Scripture often uses these terms together. Fornicators are those who participate in sexual relationships without being married. Adulterers are married individuals who have sex with someone who is not their spouse.

This verse concludes with the statement that **God will judge** those who engage in fornication and adultery. Because God designed marriage and set the parameters for the sexual relationship within marriage, He reserves the right to judge those who violate His standards. God judges these sins just like other sins. Thankfully, He has also provided redemption from sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

### Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on the meaning of holding marriage in honor.

### Discussion Question

How can you hold marriage in honor in your own relationships?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 1. we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus.** In this part of 1 Thessalonians, Paul moved to the practical application of the letter. He was about to give them specific instructions on how to live. The double appeal of **ask and urge** draws attention to the serious nature of what he was about to tell them. His appeal came in the power of Christ as he called on them to listen. **how you ought to walk and to please God.** Paul often used the metaphor of walking to describe life. He specifically wanted their lives to please God.

**Verse 2. Instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.** Once again he appealed to the authority of Christ. This time he stated that his exhortation was in keeping with the commands of Christ.

**Verse 3. sanctification.** The commands Paul gave the Thessalonians were for their sanctification. This was their continual separation from the pagan world and growth in holiness. **abstain from sexual immorality.** The command to avoid sexual immorality entirely is common in the New Testament (Acts 15:20; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; and Colossians 3:5).

“Sexual immorality” is a general term for sexual sin, most often describing sexual intercourse between unmarried individuals. It is also translated as fornication, similar to Hebrews 13:4. The word is distinct from the Greek term for *adultery*, but as noted above, it is often paired with *adultery* to represent a range of sexual sin. The command to abstain is a strong verb that means a complete break. Thus, Paul emphasized that it is Christ’s command to abstain from all sexual activity outside of marriage.

**Verse 4. know how to control his own body.** There is significant discussion over what this phrase means. It could refer to how we use our own bodies, or Paul could be describing the relationship of a man with his wife. A third possibility is that Paul was referring to acquiring a wife. This would be similar to the instruction in Hebrews 13:4 about holding marriage in honor. Acquiring a wife **in sanctification and honor** would be a clear contrast to the sexual immorality that believers were told to avoid.

**Verse 5. not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.** Abstaining from sexual immorality placed followers of Christ in stark contrast to the Gentiles of the area, but that was a good thing because those Gentiles did not know God.

**Verse 6. that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter.** Part of the rationale for abstaining from sexual immorality is that it defrauds one’s future spouse. To engage in sexual intercourse with someone who is not your spouse abuses the one-flesh union God reserved only for your spouse.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on the importance of abstaining from sexual immorality.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 7. God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.** Paul provided another contrast between impurity and sanctification. Sexual immorality results in impurity, but sanctification leads to holiness. God has called us to holiness. Thus, we must avoid what makes us impure.

**Verse 8. whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God.** Paul was not worried about his teaching being rejected. He recognized that he was not the source of the command. Instead, those who reject the teaching about abstaining from sexual immorality are actually rejecting God.

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on the contrast between holiness and impurity in sexual relationships.

### **Discussion Question**

How does abstaining from premarital sex make you different from the people in the world around you?

## **On Your Own**

In the space below, write down practical ways you can avoid sexual immorality.

## **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

## **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

## **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

## **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

## **Prayer**

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

One of the greatest temptations people face is to engage in sexual intercourse before marriage. Our culture is saturated with messages about sex without commitment. Why not enjoy the pleasures of sex without any consequences? Even though this is what the culture is telling you to do, it stands in contrast to what God has called us to—holiness.

From the earliest days of the church, the apostles gave instructions to believers in pagan cultures to abstain from sexual immorality. In Acts 15:20, James sent word to Gentile believers that “they abstain from . . . sexual immorality.” Paul described sexual immorality as a deed of the flesh in Galatians 5:19. Ephesians 5:3 says that sexual immorality “must not even be named among you,” and Colossians 3:5 says that our bodies should be dead to immorality. These are specific commands regarding sexual immorality.

Everyone will face the temptation of premarital or extramarital sex. Even if you do your best to maintain godliness in your relationships, the temptation will still most likely be present. Therefore, you should take practical steps to avoid sexual immorality. This might include avoiding being alone with someone of the opposite sex in private. It should certainly include avoiding behaviors that would heighten your sexual temptation. Simply put, pursue holiness and flee sexual immorality.

Sexual intercourse is a wonderful gift designed by God to be enjoyed by a man and a woman in marriage.

### **Follow up Question**

*Why is it important to abstain from sex outside of God's parameters?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.