



# Sex and work

Paul now turns to issues the church seems to be struggling with. First, sex and work. Still today, most Christians struggle with one or the other, or both, in different ways.

## Sex

### Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v 3-8

- ❓ What is God's will for Christians, both positively and negatively (v 3)?

A useful biblical definition of sexual immorality is any sexual activity outside heterosexual marriage, including both what we do with our minds and with our bodies.

- ❓ How does the apostle Paul tell us to view, and use, our own bodies (v 4)?

Verse 4 is difficult to translate; it could just as easily mean “learn to live with your own wife” (see NIV footnote). But the key word here is “holy”. To live holy is to live in a pure, distinctive, indeed God-like way. To be called to be holy is to be called to live like God (see Lev 19 v 2); here, therefore, we are being called to love like God. And God's love is sacrificial and self-giving. When it comes to sex, the way we use our own bodies, and the way we treat our spouses, is to be holy—self-giving. We are not to be dominated by our feelings-driven lust (v 5), ie: by what we can get. We're to be directed by our faith-driven holy love, ie: by how we can give.

## Apply

- ❓ If you are married, why not ask your spouse: How can I love you in a more holy, giving way? Does anything need to change?

- ❓ If you are not married, are you controlling yourself in a sacrificial, holy way? Does anything need to change?

This may be hard, uncomfortable, or hugely sacrificial. But remember, it is a way you can please your heavenly Father (v 1).

## Love

### Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v 9-10

- ❓ How does Paul describe the people the Thessalonians are to love (beg. v 10)?

There is nothing the members of a good family won't do for each other—no lengths they won't go to in order to help each other. That is how we are to love one another in our churches. If we're already doing it, Paul tells us to “do so more and more” (v 10)!

## Work

### Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v 11-12

- ❓ How is a Christian's “ambition” in the workplace to be very different from the ambitions of those around us?

## Pray

Identify one way in which you need to change—or do something “more and more”—in your sex life, your church life, and your work life. Then ask God for forgiveness if it's needed, and strength where it's needed to change and please him.