

Speaking to the soul



Holy life

God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honour— not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

Life in Thessalonica in the 1st century would have been massively different from our life today. And yet I have no doubt that if the apostle Paul were to write a letter to our churches he would address precisely this same issue – sexual purity. The Greeks were famous for their free attitude to sexual matters. Paul was concerned that the people in this church should not be damaged by the widespread sexual promiscuity that surrounded them. They needed to live holy lives. The word holy means set apart. God wants us to live life to the full without being damaged and cheapened by sin. Holy life is life as God intended. Life at its best.

This teaching is often mocked by our critics, who would suggest that Christian sexual teaching is given to us by a kill-joy God who seeks to confine and limit human pleasure. The Bible is clear that the truth is the exact opposite. God made us and he created sexuality in order to enable us to find fulfilment. You have only to read the Song of Solomon in the Old Testament to recognise the high importance that God places on human sexuality. It is a beautiful gift from a loving heavenly Father who desires only the best for his children.

Living a holy life is always difficult. We are not naturally holy, and we live in a deeply unholy society that will always be tempting us to slip up. Paul shared his teaching with the whole church because he knew that they would need to support one another in this. In the verses that follow he talked about the way in which they loved one another in the church, and he praised them for their love. But he urged them to love one another more deeply. He would, I am sure, say the same to us today and urge us to go out of our way

to support one another in living holy lives in a society that will always make that a challenge.

QUESTION

In what way do you need to be supported to live a holy life?

PRAYER

Loving Father, I pray that your Holy Spirit will give me the strength and wisdom to live a holy life. Amen

