

## SERMON PRACTICES

### Houses of Hope: A Study of 1 Thessalonians Week Five: A Life Pleasing to the Lord

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**Welcome, we're delighted you've chosen to dig more deeply into the Scriptures and consider what God has for you through this sermon.** These sermon practices are ideally intended to be discussed with others, so find a friend, family member, or roommate to join you. If you haven't yet joined a life group yet, check out our website at [vchurch.org/groups](http://vchurch.org/groups) or stop at the Welcome Center for more info.

#### **Getting Started**

Before you start today's study, be sure you take a moment to sit quietly before the Lord, then have one person pray, asking the Holy Spirit to give you all deep insight into the Scriptures and the ability to receive his teaching and direction in your time together.

- This week's sermon talked about "formation" in our lives. As a lighthearted way to frame up the subject, what was a silly fad you conformed to as a kid?

#### **Exploring Scripture: Why It Matters**

##### **Read aloud 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8**

- What are two or three ideas that most caught your attention? What was confusing? What was challenging?

##### **We live in a culture saturated with sexual experience and brokenness**

- Christian Men 18-30 years: 77% view porn monthly / 36% view porn daily / 32 % admitted to being addicted
- 3 out of every 10 Pornhub consumers are female
- Every second \$3,075 is being spent on pornography
- 1 in every 4 females have been sexually abused
- 1 in 6 males have been sexually abused
- 100 billion dollars a year are generated from human trafficking through commercial sexual exploitation
- About 40% of marriages end in divorce

**As you reflect on these statistics, ask yourself the same questions we asked about the Scriptures.**

- What stood out to you? What was confusing? What was challenging?

### **Read aloud 1 Corinthians 6:12–20**

- Why is God so passionate about sexual purity?
- What do we learn about the uniqueness of sexual immorality?
- Who owns your body and how does that play into this discussion of purity?

### **Reflection: Our Battles & Boundaries**

**In 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul stated that Satan had opposed them.** In the area of sexual purity, we know the enemy works hard to destroy our lives. The temptation is to be formed by the values of the world around us.

- How well do you battle the enemy in this area?
- How often do you pray that God will protect you from the enemy? How often do you pray for strength beyond your own?
- Who can you speak honestly with when you fail in this area? Who can help you grow strong in this sexual purity?

**Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, authors of the “Boundaries” book series, define boundaries as,** “The limits we set to protect our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.”

- What are some healthy boundaries you have set for your own life as it relates to sexual purity? Who is aware of those boundaries?
- What are some additional boundaries that may be helpful? Who could help you keep those boundaries?

### **Wrapping Up**

1 Corinthians 10:13 says *“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”* God will make a way of success for anyone who runs to him for help, especially when fleeing for sexual temptation. But, we’ve got to run away from sin and toward purity.

As you pray for each other, declare what your weakness is in this area, and what it would look like to run the opposite direction. Then pray for one another. As always, be sure to give time for silence and listen for anything the Holy Spirit may specifically bring to your mind as you pray for one another.