



MORE HOLINESS. LESS NAUGHTINESS.

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All right, I'm in a bit of a mood, so this is gonna be a sassy one, okay? We're gonna have some fun. All right. Hey, let's show you where we're at. So we don't put this one on the internet. It's a new service. Thanks for joining us. We're a little light tonight. It may be spring break or my personality, but either way, we're gonna have a good time, okay? We're gonna have a good time together. So if you got a Bible, open it up. We're going through a book of the Bible called First Thessalonians. We're in chapter four. Let me say two things, then pray, and then say a lot of other things. So first one is, uh, when you wake up and you turn on your phone, or you check out the news, it's usually just a bunch of bad news that just takes all of your attention into distraction of things that you just have no control over, but you can have fear of. So I'll give you an example. Like today, I turn on, uh, the news. I'm slugging with grace. Boom, Israel gets invaded by Hamas, uh, Palestinian invasion of Israel. Like, ah, here we go again. If you've read the Old Testament, this happened before and it's never good. But lemme tell you what it is. Ultimately, the invasion today of Israel, this has nothing to do with the sermon. This is just bonus round, um, the invasion of, uh, Israel today. It's before it was a political problem. It was a pants problem. In the Old Testament, there's a guy named Abraham. He had a wife. He took another wife, had two kids. That's two women. That's two many. And then, and then out of that, you get the Palestinians and the Jews. Here we're thousands of years later. This political problem was a pants problem. If, if Father Abraham would've just bought a belt, we wouldn't even be dealing with all of this. Okay? So what we're gonna talk about today is sex. This is a little bit of an introduction. So that being said, uh, I can't answer all of your questions, but I will do my best. So I wanna give you a free gift to take with you if, uh, you're single and not seeing anyone download it, but don't read it. It'll just be frustrating. You gotta wait. If you're in a serious dating relationship, it'll be super helpful. If you're married, you need to read it twice. So I'm gonna give it to you as a gift. It's real romance, sex in the Song of Songs. It's a, a book on sex for my wife and I. If you don't know where we're going to today, we're going to talk about sex. So I should pray before I say something disqualifying, okay? And if you've got a Bible, go to one Thessalonians four. Lord, as we open your word, we ask that you would open our hearts and our minds and our ears to receive your word. God, we live in a world that has lost its mind. And so we wanna be transformed by the renewing of our mind. And God, as we come to a subject that in some circles is taboo or forbidden, God, we want it to be, uh, subjected to your word so that we could live in the freedom that you have for your children. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. All right, so we're gonna talk about sex. Lemme talk about Dr. Start with the story. Man, I'm really caffeinated. Um, so, so I, uh, I've been a senior pa, I've been a pastor about 30 years. And I started with a Bible study back, uh, in the grunge era. And, uh, and it was a bunch of punk rock kids and college students, and a bunch of homeless runaway kids. So I thought, you know, they need Jesus. I'm a brand new pastor, brand new Christian. So I wanted to start a Bible study for them. So I went and rented a room at a Baptist church, and a group of older grandmothers gave me approval to rent their room. So I started a bible study, and some church kids showed up to the Baptist church. And then I started inviting punk rock kids and these runaway homeless kids and these anarchist kids. And, uh, here, here's literally what they said. They're like, they were smoking cigarettes. They're like, Hey, where's the Bible study? He is like, it's at the Baptist Church. And they're like, yeah, we can't do that. Uh, can you smoke? I was like,

at the Bible study. They're like, yeah. I was like, there is no Baptist church with a smoking section, right? Like, there is not, there is none. I there's no way I'm gonna get the Baptist grandmas to sign off on the smoking section for the punk rock bible study. But I was like, I gotta reach these kids for Christ. 'cause they don't know it. They're in the eternal smoking section. Like, they really need Jesus in a big way. So I, I told 'em, I said, well, hey, if I start a Bible study with a smoking section, will you come? And they're like, okay. So I found a public park, and I started a bible study, and I invited all the college kids who grew up in the Christian homes, and then all the punk rock, homeless anarchist kids, we all got together. A couple of the kids played guitar. It wasn't really worship, they're just kind of jamming. And then I got up and I was like, all right, I'm here to teach here to teach the word of God. So I started in the book of Revelation. I thought, what else for punk, rock, goth kids would they want? Then the book of Revelation, I think we're gonna nail this. These kids got black painted fingernails, guy liner, they hate their dad, like they're smoking cigarettes. Like, this is it. This is their book. I start teaching, I kid you not the punk rock kids interrupt me. Like, yeah, we don't wanna talk about this. I was like, what? I was like, I'm the pastor. Like, we don't care. I was like, well, what do you guys wanna talk about? They're like, let's do q and a. I was like, okay, let's do q and a. Every question from the smoking section was, guess what? A very specific sexual question. Very, very, very specific. Okay? And at this point, I'm trying to answer the questions. And at this point, the kids that grew up in the Christian home, they're not even making eye contact with me. And they're all blushing, and they're trying not to blink and look awkward. And, and, and, and so I'm answering the questions of the punk rock kids, and I assume they're just trying to, Hey, let's just embarrass the pastor. So I was like, Hey guys. Haha, that was funny. Can I get back to the book of Revelation? They're like, no, we have a lot of other questions. Here's what I learned. All their questions are about sex. Can I smoke weed? Were there dinosaurs? And are aliens real? That's it. Those are the, that's it. Like, if I had sexy, alien smoking weed, riding dinosaurs, it would've been like a revival like that, that those are the things that they really cared about. And so I, I taught the Bible study, answered all the very specific questions, and then we took a break and it was over all the kids that grew up in a Christian home. They went to play volleyball. Uh, they brought a volleyball net and a volleyball, and they were, um, they were wanting to just pretend like this didn't ever happen. And so I, then all the punk rock kids got together to smoke cigarettes and talk about their dad and how much they hated 'em. So I went over and I hung out with the punk rock kids, and I came to find that their questions were actually totally genuine. They weren't like just trying to get me in trouble or make me feel embarrassed. And if you haven't learned yet, you can't. Um, and, um, and so I go over to the Christian kids. I was like, well, how are you guys doing? They're like, that was the weirdest bible study I've ever been like, they got, they got total trauma. And I looked at one of the guys, I said, do you even know what the questions were? He is like, no, I I am, I'm a virgin. I don't, I don't even know what they were talking about, but it seemed naughty. It did. Okay. So, and the point is this, if you grew up in a religious home or a church environment or Bible teaching, there are certain questions you don't ask. 'cause they've already been answered. You're like, you don't ask that question. We all know the answer. If you didn't grow up in a Christian home or a Bible teaching environment or a religious subculture, you, you're just raised by

wolves. You're like, I, I don't know. I I just got questions. This is what happened in the early church. There is a point to all of this later in the sermon. I'll just say some crazy stuff. Probably doesn't have a point, but this one does. So in this one, the point is this, they, when, when they started bringing the message of Jesus, they came to the Jew first, then the Gentile, the Jew would be religious tradition, grew up studying the Old Testament. We have these questions answered. Paul started the church in Thessalonians, uh, when he went to Thessalonica in Acts 17. And it says he went to a certain place. The synagogue talked to all the Jewish people about Jesus. They became Christians, followers of Christ. Then over time, the Gentiles, the non-Christians, the people, the punk rock kids who grew up with guide liner and Marlboro Lights, those kids all started coming to the church. And they had a bunch of questions. So they wrote Paul a letter, and they said, Hey, here's all of our questions. Paul writes, first Thessalonians as the q and a. It's his response to their questions. And these people that are asking the questions, a lot of 'em are sexual. They grew up in the Roman Empire dominated by Greek culture. So if you don't know anything, let me just ask you one thing. Was the Roman empire with Greek culture, was it naughty? Yes. Very naughty. Very, very, very naughty. There's this whole trend on social media right now. Uh, gals going up to their boyfriend. Do you think about the Roman Empire? Lemme tell you this, your boyfriend is probably Roman, okay? In his behavior, they were naughty. And so in Roman culture, Greek thought the best sexual relationship was between an older man and a younger boy. So they groomed them. There was adultery, there was fornication, living and sleeping together before and outside of marriage, they had transgenderism, cross dressing, every sort of craziness that we're dealing with. They actually had temples devoted to illicit sexual activity. The one in Corinth had a thousand male and female prostitutes. They had every problem that we do, and they just met Jesus. And so they're like, okay, we got a lot of questions about what we can do and not do. And so Paul writes the letter, and let me just say this, the culture we live in is identical, just as corrupt and confused. So the word that he gives them is a word for us. I'll, I'll share it with you. 2023 Gallup poll on morally acceptable behavior. Here's the average American. This is not morally neutral. This is morally acceptable. This isn't negative or neutral. People think it's positive. 72% say that fornication is moral. This is a guy and a gal living or sleeping together before marriage. Okay? So let's just vote on this whether we think it's moral or immoral, but only the fathers of daughters can vote. Are you ready? Okay. Okay. All, how many of you, fathers would say moral or immoral? 1, 2, 3, immoral. You're terrible fathers. That was very weak. We need to do that again. Your daughter needs to hear it loud and proud. 1, 2, 3, immoral. Much better immoral. Okay, how about this one? 64% support, same-sex marriage, 52% are pro-abortion. 43% support, teen sex, 39% support pornography, 23% support. Polygamy. I think that's probably almost, holy husbands. I don't think the wives really got to take that survey and 9% support a marital affair. So we live in a day. And, and lemme say this as I'm talking, I can just tell right now some of you're like, we're talking about sex in church. True or false? A little bit awkward. It's particularly awkward with me, and I know that. But the point is that if we don't talk about it here and they're doing it out there, then the ultimate issue becomes, well, if God doesn't speak into this, then the only people that have a voice are the people who are saying exactly what should never be said. Okay? So, alright. So both of you are excited. I'm very glad to hear that the rest of you are pretending like

you have a phone call so you can leave. All right, that's great. So here we go. We're gonna jump right in. How to stop a wildfire. First Thessalonians 4, 1, 3, 8. Finally, then brothers, he's writing to the church. What he's saying is, not the people in the world, but the people in the church. We ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus. So he's saying, live your life in relationship with the Lord Jesus, that you receive from us how you ought to walk into please God. That's the big idea. Not what would make you happy, what would make him happy. Just as you are doing that, you do so more and more for you know what instruction we gave you through the Lord Jesus. This is a really important statement. What he says is, when I showed up and taught, I wasn't just casting out my opinion, I was bringing you a word from Jesus Christ. So if you don't like it, ultimately you're disagreeing with him. For this is the will of God. And this is the most important thing. God, what is your will? This is the will of God, your sanctification. We'll talk about that. That you abstain from. See, it feels weird to read it in church. I like sexual immorality. Okay? Oh, here's one thing to remember. Some sex is immoral. Just throwing it out there. Alright? That each one of you should control his own body and holiness and honor not in passionate lust like the punk rock. Kids who do not know God, that no one transgress or wrong his brother in this matter, he says it's particularly true if two people say they're Christians, the way they treat one another should be as brother and sister. It shouldn't be anything naughty because the Lord is an avenger. And all these things, as we told you before and solemnly warned you, for God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this disregards, not man, but God who gives this Holy Spirit to you. So what he's saying is that these people, their whole life, all they've done and all they've been taught was wrong, sexually wrong. What he's saying is that's going to need to be course corrected. And he's gonna deal with three things here. Authority, identity, and sexuality. These are still massive issues in our day. So the first is authority. And up until this point, when they met Jesus and became Christians, the highest authority in their life was them. That's what I want. Now they're like, no, it's not what you want, it's what he wants. It's not your will, it's his will. That's ultimately the question. Now, there's a guy named Tran when he is bright guy, he wrote a big book, and then he wrote a summary called Strange New World. And he traces philosophically, the day that we live in is aca in its shift from reality and truth that you and I are born into a social experiment that has never been tried and will end in tremendous misery. And the question is, this is the highest authority, external or internal? That's the big question. If the highest authority is external, okay, there is a God and he wrote a book, so then that's the authority, or is the authority internal? And so the question is, is is the highest authority, facts or feelings? This is the world we live in. And these people are like, we feel like we should be able to do whatever we wanna do. And he's like, no. The fact is it's God's will, not your will. That is the highest authority. Okay? This is the issue. So our whole world has lost its mind to where now most people believe that what you feel is more real than the facts. Okay? So let me give you an example. So, um, can I ask you a question? Yeah, yeah. You guys can participate. Okay? Okay. And we're gonna do this. So am I a 13 year old Asian girl? No, it feels judgy. It just feels very judgy. I feel triggered. I feel like this is an unsafe space, and I'm, I'm just feeling a bit of hostility. So let's just do this. What if I feel I feel 13? No. How, okay, do Asian, oh, no, no. Oh, wait, I feel Asian in my heart. I I had sushi for lunch. You, you should judge me. I, hey, we're gonna do this all night. So 13 year

old Asian girl. Am I a girl? Answer? No, no, no. But what if I feel like it? No, no. Maybe I'm a 13 year old Asian girl. Maybe I just had a rough night, you know? And, and, and maybe, maybe I'm just haggard today. It was a rough night for me. Hey, because the point is this. Those aren't, those aren't congruent with the facts. So somebody's like, well, we're married in our heart. No, you're not. That's not a fact, that's a feeling. Well, it's not adultery, you know, we're, we're falling in love with someone we're not married to. No, no, that's not a fact. And, and we live in this day. It is just such a bizarre day because it's a bizarre day where as long as you say, that's how I feel, no one gets to tell you, no, you're wrong. That's not how this works. And so there is this head-on collision for these new believers regarding authority and also then identity. And your identity is either established by your sin or your savior. For them, they would've said, well, you know, we're fornicators, we're adulterers, we're, here's who we are, this is what we do. And he said, no, no, no, not anymore. Now you belong to Jesus. You're for holiness. He's given you the Holy Spirit so you can find the will of God. And you and I have gotta decide, is our identity gonna be shaped by our sin or our savior? And when you get a savior, you get a new identity. That's not who you are. That's not what you do. Things have changed. Jesus is made you new, and this leads to your sexuality. So it's authority, identity, sexuality. And what he says is that some people are practicing sexual immorality. Let's talk about that. So there are certain things that are immoral that are not illegal. I'm using Paul's words. Illegal is the government, immoral is God. And usually people will say, well, it's not a crime. No, but it's immoral. It's a sin. You see a difference. So what he's saying is that the government is going to have laws, but God's laws are actually a higher standard. Yeah. That you can be some doing something that is not illegal, but it is immoral. They can't put you in jail for it, but he can put you in hell for it. Yeah. And you just need to know this. Sometimes the government isn't moral either. Come on. Okay? And so, but the difference is this. Let's say you're in a, let's say you're in a dating relationship and your boyfriend is a jerk, and he's running around on you. Can you call 9 1 1? No. Can you call? Yeah, my boyfriend is being unfaithful. Please come and taser him. You know? And the answer is no, because that's not illegal. That's immoral. That's immoral. Immoral. And so what he's saying is, in the church and how God's people treat one another, we need to think not just in terms of what is legal and illegal, but what is moral and immoral. Not just what is right or wrong in the sight of the government, but what is right or wrong in the sight of God. Now, what happens is, as soon as we start having this conversation about authority in God, identity established by our savior and our sexuality be being subjugated to our savior and the word of God, immediately people get very defensive. Like, you have no right to speak into my life. This is my private affairs. I'm an adult, and we're not hurting anyone. The truth is, that's not true. Think of it this way. Um, I was up, uh, in the woods, uh, this week, and, uh, one night I, I sat by the fire. I liked the fire. Uh, fire is one of my love languages. So I sat by the fire and uh, and I started the fire. But guess what? The fire had around it? A ring. Otherwise, what happens is the fire burns the whole forest down. That's what it does. So what the ring does, the ring ultimately, it contains the fire and it directs it toward a good purpose so that it doesn't just burn down the whole forest in the Bible. Your marriage is literally that ring when, when you think of it. I mean, I'm wearing a wedding ring, and it's to remind me that not only do I wear a ring for the marriage, but the marriage is the ring. And when you think of passion and pleasure and

the fires of intimacy, some people are like, I really like my fire. And don't judge me. Like, well, if you don't have a ring around your fire, you're gonna burn my house down in the rest of the neighborhood. Yeah, I'll give you guys an example. And here the point is that the Bible is not against sex, but it's for marriage to contain the passions. So let me share this with you. This is the Idaho moose fire. It, uh, burned last year. And, uh, 1000 th excuse me, 130,225 acres were burned to the ground. It cost a hundred million dollars. It killed five firefighters. And guess what? It was one guy who didn't mind his fire, just one guy. He didn't ring his fire. And as a result, five people died. A hundred million dollars was spent and 130 acres were destroyed. Now, if you would've walked up to that guy and said, Hey, that's not what you do with fire, you would've said, this is my fire. Don't judge me. I'm not hurting anyone. This is none of your business. Yes it is. Yeah. Let me just tell you that what we have done is what they were doing in the Roman Empire. They had taken the passion of intimacy out of the ring of marriage, and it literally ended up burning Roman civilization to the ground that ultimately it was self-indulgence, not invasion that destroyed the nation. You need to know the world that we're in is exactly like that. We are burning Western culture to the ground because people love fire, but they don't believe in the ring. So let me just explain what the ring is. The ring is marriage and marriage is, this is crazy. Marriage is one man, man, and one woman. You're like, they're different. They are the one man and one woman in a covenant that is consummated, and that consummation is to then ring the passion so that it doesn't ruin the world. So he says it this way, uh, you should know how to control your body and holiness and honor not in the passion, just like the Gentiles who did not know God. So the big idea is this heterosexual marriage, one man, one woman, consummated covenant. Everything outside of that is a sin. That's what Paul is telling them. And this is new for them. And let me just explain it this way, and then we're gonna go deep into the pool on some of these issues. So what you have is passion, but what you need is purpose. This is the issue. They have passion, but they don't have purpose. And here's the, here's the facts. If you live for passion, two things will happen. Or, or say it this way, if you live for pleasure, call it pleasure. If you live for pleasure, eventually two things will happen. You will not enjoy your life and you will destroy it. If you put purpose over pleasure, you will enjoy your life. Give you an example. Let's say your pleasure is alcohol. If all you do is pursue pleasure, you're not going to enjoy your life and you're going to destroy yourself. If your pleasure is food and all you do is eat, you are not going to enjoy your life. You're going to destroy yourself. If your pleasure is, let's say drugs, eventually you're going to become addictive and then self-destructive. And the point is this, we live in a world where people live for pleasure and two things happen. They don't enjoy their life and they destroy themselves. Yeah, this is the heart of what Paul is saying. He's like, don't be like those people. He calls them the Gentiles. All they do is they just live every day. They wake up and they're like, what feels good? That's what I'm doing. You need to know that pleasure isn't bad. But ultimately without purpose, it is deadly. So God isn't against pleasure. He's saying put purpose over the pleasure. And ultimately here he says it is for holiness and the will of God. That's what he says. The purpose is holiness, living for God and finding the will of God. Um, and just ask you this, in our world, are most people living with purpose or just chasing pleasure, pleasure, pleasure. This is the world. This is the world we live in. And let's just say we've all got our struggle. Like, can we just be

honest about that? Yeah. Like everybody's got one thing that feels good, that is their struggle. For some people it's alcohol. For some people it's drugs. For some people it's sex. For some people it's gambling. For some people it's just getting angry and emotional venting. So we don't wanna judge each other. 'cause ultimately your pleasure and their pleasure are both wrong and one's not better than the other. But the question is, do you understand the purpose for the pleasure so that the purpose can rule over the pleasure? So lemme talk about sex within marriage. And there are six purposes. And again, we're gonna, we're gonna look at what the Bible says and then come back to the book of Thessalonians. But there are six reasons that God made and gave the gift of sex for marriage. And like every gift, you gotta know when to open the gift. Right? When's the best time to open your Christmas present? Christmas. When's the best time to open your birthday? Present your birthday. When's the best time to open God's gift to your marriage when you're married? Okay, just throwing it out there. Okay, the first one, pleasure says in the song of songs that they had pleasure and it never mentions children. So one of the purposes for sex is for a husband and wife to have fun together. Amen. Amen. All right. The men were excited. The women are like, I don't know, I'll pray about it. Okay, that's fine. Number two, children be fruitful, multiply, increase in numbers. So if you're like, you know what, we want to have kids, so we're gonna do the things that caused kids to come into the world. Uh, is that okay? Yes. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, so number three, oneness. It says, uh, that they were one flesh. And literally, I'm gonna get into this in a moment. What happens when there's intimacy within marriage? It literally, neurologically, biochemically bonds a husband and wife together as one. It's a gift and a blessing that God gives purpose. Number four, knowledge. It says that Adam lay with his wife and he knew her. When you're married, you know each other in a way that nobody else is supposed to know you. There's a private intimacy that comes in addition. Number five, it's protection. Paul says in one Corinthians seven, do not deprive one another, but by mutual consent and for a short season to devote yourselves to prayer and then come together again so that Satan doesn't come in and tempt you and test you, gets you into a lot of trouble. So here's kind of what he's saying is the best defense is a good offense. Yeah. That a couple that is busy doesn't have time to go wander into trouble. That's good. Something to pray about. Write that down. Um, it's, it's almost happy hour. You can do this. I have faith in you. And then lastly, comfort. There's a story in two Samuel 12 where the, uh, there the child dies. And so the man and the woman, they come together to comfort one another. And sometimes it's the ministry of presence and just being there with and for one another. So the passion and pleasure of marriage needs to be driven not by the internal feelings, but the external facts of God's purposes. And as long as any of these things are being met, it's within God's will and intent. And what's really interesting is brain science is finally caught up with the Bible. What I love is the Bible's true. And eventually the researchers catch up. They're like, oh my goodness. Did you not like recently it was, uh, nasa, uh, I'm just kinda roll frosting. But NASA came out and they're like, our telescopes have come to the conclusion that the world had a beginning. Yep. We know. Thanks for joining us. The Jews told us that thousands of years ago, our book actually starts in the beginning. We could have saved you guys a ton of money on that telescope. But anyways, I just love it when science catches up with the Bible. And what science and brain science is telling us now is that literally as you chase pleasure, you create a neural pathway, it

literally re hardwires your brain. Okay? This, this is what leads to the addiction cycle. So what happens is your body is hardwired for pleasure. And most people, two things drive their decision making. I want to get away from pain and I want to get close to pleasure. The problem with that is you'll never become an adult. Yeah, that's good, right? How many of you, you, you, you're married and sometimes you need to give up your pleasure so that you can serve your spouse. How many of you are a parent and you're like, you know what? Being a parent has some painful moments and I give up some pleasure for the pain. If you're gonna love someone, if you're gonna serve someone, if you're gonna do something, accomplish something, you're gonna be something at certain points. You need to deny the pleasure, accept the pain so that you can be an adult. An adult. If you wake up every day and you're like, today I'm just living for pleasure, you're gonna self-destruct. I, I see. And and this is a whole generation of just worthless young men. They just wake up at their mom's house and they just vape and they watch social media and play video games. And these guys show up at the grocery store like four o'clock in their pajamas with bedhead. 'cause getting up by the crack of dinner is just too much to ask. And it's like, this is not a plan. This is a disaster. Okay? So anyways, um, all the single guys are leaving and their, their moms aren't sure, but their dads are. So what happens is, if you are living for pleasure, your body and brain will literally create a neural pathway to where you will condition and habituate yourself to get to that pleasure as fast and effortlessly as possible. The problem becomes the pleasure then diminishes. So now you need more intensity and more frequency. So you're like, I used to get drunk on Friday, but now it takes four drinks. It used to take one, and now I'm drinking on Saturday and Sunday and Monday too. That's the addiction cycle. This can be true if food, sex, gambling, drugs, alcohol, whatever the case may be. And so what he is telling them here is, put your pleasure, um, under your purpose. And then what you'll be doing is building a brand new pathway. The way to get out of addiction, the way to get out of sin, the way to get out of self-destruction is number one, just be honest and say, that's my temptation. That pleasure, that that is difficult for me. And I, and I have done that so many times. I've run down that path. It's like a well-worn path. I can go do that unconsciously. Like how many of you, for example, like in your house, you could close your eyes and walk from your bedroom to the fridge and get the ice cream without even looking, right? You're like, I've done that so many times. Right? Right, left, left fudge fudge. Right? You just know how to do that. Preach. This happens. So the key then is to get off of the old pathways and build new pathways. Yeah, because what, what if you exchange the old pathway for the new pathway? That's what he's telling them to do. The Bible says this elsewhere, talks about put off and put on. So it may be, well, when I, when I get stressed, I drink. Okay, pray. That's a new pathway. Um, what, when I, when I would get frightful and didn't want to do something, I would flee and retreat. No, no, no. Be courageous and go have that conflict. Uh, when I, when I had a little bit of money, I would go gambling, tithe, right? Tithe invested in God's house, not the casino. Right? That's a better investment. You're like, well, every time I'm together with my girlfriend, uh, I put my hands on her. All right? Then stay in public, um, you know, with her dad, um, just, you know, keep an eye on it. So whatever it is, what's the new pathway? And sometimes it's like, when I'm feeling really tempted, I isolate No, no, then call somebody who loves God and is gonna be accountable and a good friend and walk with you and invite them into the

situation. And so these people that he's writing to, and Thessalonians, all they have is just these well-worn pleasure paths. And what happens at the end, it triggers brain pleasure centers, including dopamine, oxytocin, and vasopressin. But what if you were as into your spouse and into prayer and into worship and into scripture, as some people are to alcohol or drugs or pornography or gambling, you can, you can connect yourself either with pleasure that leads to life or pleasure that leads to death. And the question is, will you allow God's purposes to direct your pleasures? Okay. Um, this is the beginning of my first point. So, um, the, no, there's two points and we're still in the first one. So, um, so there are three views of sex. And it's, it's awkward, right? To talk about sex and church. No, no, no. Okay, one guy's glad to be here. His wife, I don't know, could go either way. So here we go. So there are three views of sex. Some see sex as God, it's like the most important thing. Like, it, it's the center of your life. Everything orbits, surrounded. It's all you're ever thinking about. It's all you want to do, right? And, and you hear a sermon like this, you're like, finally, finally, I'm sending this to my wife. You know? So we're pulling the e-brake on date night. This is gonna be great. Okay? So, and, and for these people, it's like God isn't in charge. Sex is, and it's too important. It's too obsessive. And this leads to addiction in addition, then the overreaction to that is sex is gross. It's disgusting. Okay? There are two ways that people come to this conclusion. Number one, they grow up in a very conservative religious environment. How many of you grew up in a very religious, conservative environment? Okay? And, and what happens in those environments? You want your kids to be pure. So you scare them. Like Halloween, you are like, oh, do you know what an s t d is? Ooh, yeah. Oh, oh. Do you wanna have a baby outta wedlock? Do you want to be single parent? Ooh, you just, you're terrified. Okay? Um, and it's this weird message, I've said it before, but it's, here's what we tell kids, like, sex is dirty, nasty, violent, wrong. Save it for the one you love. It's a very, it's a very confusing message, right? And or sexist, gross comes from abuse or trauma or sin. You did something, you're like, I just, I just have got so many bad things I've done. I feel so bad. Or what they did, you were abused as a child or there was some sort of trauma or assault. And let me say this, um, God forgives whatever you've done, and he cleanses whatever they've done. See, it says this in one John, if we confess the sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. There's no condemnation in Christ. Right there, there there is only forgiveness and cleansing and freedom. Some of you need to know that, okay? Because the goal is this, the goal is that our children would have purity until marriage and then passion in marriage. So the ultimate goal is not purity. Like if, if you're a parent, you're like, man, I've really nailed purity. My kid's 47 and been married 23 years, and they're, they're still a virgin. Praise the Lord. You're a weirdo with a disappointed in-law. Uh, you know, and so the goal is purity, so that then we can have pleasure. That has a purpose. The goal is not no pleasure, no pleasure is not bad. This is where religion and trauma and abuse and sin, it confuses people. It's like, well, you know what your problem is, pleasure. No, no, no, no, no. Your problem is not pleasure. Your problem is purpose. The pleasure is not bad. It's only bad if it's outside of the purpose. So that leads to the third view. And that is that sex is not God. And it's not gross. It's a gift. It's a gift that God gives for all these purposes that we just talked about. It's gift that God gives to a married couple. And he puts literally the, the ring around the passionate flames so that it can be contained and directed, and it

leads to warmth and life and flourishing and closeness. That being said, um, everybody struggles with this. Can we just be honest? Yeah. There's only two kinds of people that don't struggle sexually. Do you want who they are? Dead people and liars. There's the, there's the only ones. So it's okay if you're married to be like, okay, you know, yeah, there are things that we're working through. If you're single, you're like, yeah, there's some things that I need to, I've been conformed to the power in the world. I need be transformed by the renewing of my mind. Yeah. When they first heard this letter, there was a bunch of people sitting there going, this is crazy. We never heard this before. It's like, well, welcome to the new path. Welcome to the new path. Now lemme just ask this. And what he's talking about here is, is, is holiness, but let me just ask this. Um, and this is where we can have an honest conversation. Um, so this is the word of God. What if everybody on the earth just woke up tomorrow and said, you know what? I'm not gonna obey the Bible on everything, but I will with my sexuality. Just that one area. What would change in our world? No more abortion. No more abortion. Keep going. The population increase, population would increase. We'd have, we'd have a booming economy and hope for a future. We would have no sexual assault and no trauma victims. What else? The porn industry would design. Porn industry would go away. Sex industry, adult entertainment industry gone. Most of what's on television would evaporate, which would be fine. Right now everybody's like, oh my gosh, they're gonna close the government and Hollywood. I'm like, please, you know, please, please, please do that. Um, so what, what else would go away if we all just did what the Bible said, marriages, better marriages, fidelity, no adultery, less divorce. Children would go up with a father, which means they would not be in poverty. Less mental illness, less mental illness, less trauma, less anxiety, less sexually transmitted diseases, no more sex trafficking. True or false? It would get better. Like the, the whole world would get better. Yeah. You know why? Nobody's gonna do it. They're like, it feels nice. This is what happens when you take pleasure away from purpose. Everybody lives for pleasure and everybody's just thinking, well, what's the big deal? This is just my little fire. Well, we're burning the whole world to the ground. And the point is this, God loves you. God wants good for you. God wants you to have pleasure. And here's the truth. If you don't obey God, the pleasure is no longer pleasurable. It's not. That's why the whole world is depressed, anxious, suicidal and angry. And you're like, why are you guys so frustrated? You're doing exactly what you want, but it's not working right? Because pleasure without purpose only leads to pain. It only leads to pain. Let me, uh, speak to the men, uh, young guys. Can I speak to the young guys? This will be a rant. Um, so there's a guy named George Gilder. He wrote a interesting book. Uh, he, it's called, uh, men in Marriage. And then the subtitle is, civilization is Built by Men With Families to Feed. And, uh, the book was recently republished by Pastor. I've known Doug Wilson. He sent me a copy. And here's the thesis of George Gilder. He's been arguing this for a long time. Um, that young, that men, that young men passion, courage, enthusiasm, ambition, testosterone flowing, amen, amen. Amen. Okay. And we have no idea what to do with it. And what he says is, a, a young, strong, healthy man starts off, he calls 'em barbarians. They are barbarians. Do you know what happens if you don't instruct and correct and direct a barbarian? It's just, it looks, it's, it's a zombie apocalypse. It's the purge. That's what it is. Okay? And so what happens is our culture doesn't know what to do with men who are strong and, and ambitious

and vigorous and courageous. So we give 'em one or two options. Drag queen or drug cartel. Those are your options. Drag queen is, man, you're strong, you're loud, you're intense. Um, the girls are a little more compliant and docile, why don't you be a girl? So then we start medicating the boys. Then we start castrating the boys, and then we start telling the boys that they're really girls. And that is a denial of reality. Yeah. Well, what if you feel like a girl? It doesn't matter if you feel like something you're not, you have a mental illness, right? Like, I'm not a unicorn. I'm not a princess. I'm not a ballerina. I'm not a fudge cookie. I'm a man, okay? I'm a man. Okay? So, so how many, how many guys? There's a whole generation of young men now that are like, I don't wanna be a drag queen. I don't, I'm not a girl. I don't wanna be a girl. Their only option is then act like drug cartel. Just be a thug and a bully and abuse women and stack your body count of, of all of your illicit relationships and go steal and pillage and domineering and overbearing and Andrew Tate and Joe Rogan, and guys who don't know Jesus. So they don't know what it is to be a real man. And these are all the thugs and bullies and, and problems in society. And so what Gilder argues and what Paul is here doing with the Thessalonian is he is saying, Hey, everyone, but especially the young men, take all of that courage, all of that passion, all of that vigor, all of that energy, and put a purpose over it. And that is marriage under the will of God. Fatherhood under the will of God. If you wanna go to war, get into business, go start a company, don't go steal from your neighbor. Go close a deal. Go build a corporation. Take all that competitive spirit, put it into business. And if a young man's like, well, I like pleasure, okay, you need a wife, a wife, not, not a spouse, a wife, you need a girl. But here's what the girl will do. She will start to civilize you. She's only like, I'm barbarian. First question she's gonna have, is she smartest? Do you have a job? Because I don't wanna be with a homeless barbarian. That is not a plan for me. Hey. And if you're like, I have a job, she's like, great, okay, let's get married. Now he's gotta direct all of his passion toward his wife, because if he obeys the Bible, he is like, okay, I can't, I can't, I can't navigate my life outside of God's guardrails. So now he's like, okay, I wanna be with my wife, but here's what you're gonna learn if you're a single guy. She's complicated. Okay? She just is because you're gonna be like, Hey, let's be together. She's like, uh, you didn't put the lid down. You're like, I didn't think that. How did the lid relate? What the, okay, I'll put the lid down. And the toilet paper doesn't go this way, it goes this way. And you need to be nice and you need to brush your teeth and you need to have two eyebrows, and you need to buy a breath mint. And you need to learn to speak in sentences and listen, which is so painful. And, and the barbarian's just like, I want to be together. She's like, well, there's a few things on my checklist for that to happen. Is it just me? Like this is what happened. So, so what happens is, you know, if you are a man, you're like, I don't, I don't wanna be a girl. And, and I don't wanna be a barbarian. What I need to be is a civilized, cultured barbarian who takes all of that God-given desire and drive toward godliness, love my wife. And then let's say you're a barbarian, that finally you're like, okay, I did it. I got a breath mint, I got a job, I got a house. I put the lid down, she likes me. Woo, we're together. Next thing you know, you got babysitter. I gotta go make more money. I gotta go make more money. So then what it does, it drives a man, like, I gotta go make more money so I can take care of this woman and I could take care of these children. And it takes all of the masculine energy and strength and it drives it toward a purpose called civilization. Called civilization. And so if you

eradicate this directive of male strength, you eliminate civilization and human growth. This is exactly where we find ourselves in the west. Young men, not in the labor force, not working, not launching, not getting married, still living with their mother, not making money, no sense of urgency, just living for pleasure, no purpose whatsoever. That's the problem. And um, let me just, young men are one of two things. They're either a problem or they become a patriarch. That's it. And we live in this state where it's like, that's patriarchal. I'm like, you know what patriarchal means? Heterosexual guy got married, goes to work and takes care of his kids. We need a lot more of that. That's exactly what we need. That's exactly what we need. And let me just say this, um, and then I'll get to my second point. Um, it's true. I just wanna honor the men at this church. 'cause you know what, we are, we are the barbarians with a bible. Those are the guys that we are like, we have a high percentage of men. Our largest ministry is men's. Our men's ministry is bigger than our children's ministry, but it'll catch up. Um, and I, I had a pastor drive by recently. He's like, it looks like you pastor, like a monster truck rally. It's just all these lifted tr I said, yeah, and beards and open carry and tattoos because we are barbarians with a Bible. We will fight for women and children, but we will not fight with women and children. We're the defenders, we're the protectors. We're the sheep dog. And if you want to castrate my kid, or you want to date my wife, there is going to be a conflict with me. That's how this works. And so ultimately at the end of the day, what Paul is doing, he's giving young men permission to live for pleasure, but to live with purpose. Alright, my second point, um, there's two points. Here's the second one. So how do you live on purpose? And I'll close with this first, here's six ways to live on purpose. First Thessalonians four, nine through trial. Lemme lemme just say this, I'm just thinking about it. Our world is so stupid. It's like, well what's the purpose of life? I don't know. What do you think? I think I ask 'cause I don't know what's the purpose of sex? I don't know. What's the purpose of parenting? I don't know. What's the purpose of money? I don't know. I mean, you can, you can go get a master's degree and not know how to be a functional adult. That's right. You know, and that's the world we live in. And so you go to the word of God and what it does, it says, okay, here's your life and here's the purpose. Holiness the will of God. Let your life obey him and let his grace bless you. Okay? Now, concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for yourselves have been taught by God, how to love one another for that indeed is what you are all doing to all the brothers throughout Macedon. But we urge you brothers to do this more and more. And aspire to live quietly, mind your own affairs, mind your own business. Work with your hands as we instructed you so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. Lemme just unpack this. Number one, relationally, how do you live on purpose? He says, uh, love one another. The world's just, it's a mess. It's a disaster. It's collision. But among God's people love one another. I love you. I forgive you. I'm gonna pray for you. I'm gonna support you. And let me just say this, I want to encourage the men. I see this starting in our church with the men. And it's cool 'cause you show up and like the guys hug each other. And you're gonna hear this from guys with beards, tattoos that do leg day and drive diesels. I love you. That's what they say to each other. I had a guy come recently. He's like, I, well the guys at my table said they love me. He's like, I never had a dad. This is the first time I've ever had a man in my life tell me he loves me. Okay? And, and this is masculine love. This is father, son

affection, right? We're not talking about guys who are soft. We're talking about guys who are strong and they're strong in love. He says, love one another relationally, mentally. He says, live quietly, right? Don't worry about everything. Don't get into everything. Just figure out what you have responsibility for. Some people are looking over their life, over their job, over their spouse, over their kids, over their responsibilities for things that they have nothing to do with. Yeah, right? Five conversations this week with men. They're like, oh my gosh, jobs report was bad. Interest rates are going up. I was like, I have, I, there's nothing I can do about the interest rate, but I can be nice to my wife and she would like that. You know? And I can't pray for my grandkids. I can do that. Live quietly. In addition, uh, to relationally and mentally, emotionally, mind your own affairs. What he's saying is don't worry about everybody else, right? I, people are like, oh, who are the Kardashians dating? I don't care. Pray for those girls. They think underwear is outerwear. I don't care who they're dating and they're dead. Wow. I mean, you know, I just, but just shut your social media off. Stop following people. Stop obsessing. Just pick up your bible. Hug your wife, play with your kids. Change your oils. Shut your mouth. Grill a burger. Take a nap. Anything else? Anyways, okay, so, um, woo. Physically, physically, he says, work with your hands. Do something we live in this day where, where nobody knows how to do anything. That's right. No, it's like people are like, uh, DoorDash, like, what are you talking? What the heck? Like you getting up to go to the door is probably not enough exercise to burn off the calories from whatever they're delivering, right? Go hunt something. Go grow something. Go do something with your hands. Change your oil. Change your own filters on your H V A C system. Go out and cut your grass. Here's something crazy. Don't hire everyone to do everything. Just do something. Get yourself busy with your hands. In addition, spiritually, walk properly before outsiders. What he's saying is live your life in such a way that when the non-Christians get to know you, it's interesting. Like, Hey, I love Jesus. I believe the Bible. I'm heterosexual. We made kids. We're making more kids. I go to church. I hate the government. I like to sing. And they're like, you're a weirdo. Yeah, but I'm happy and it's working. Would you like to come to church? We'll give you a Bible. We'll yell at you for an hour. And it's free. Right? It's free. And then lastly, financially, be dependent on no one. This is what our world doesn't understand. The Bible says that the borrower is slave to the lender. If someone, if you owe them, they own you. We now have record debt. \$22,000 per American and largely credit card debt, interest rates, catastrophic national debt, a hundred thousand dollars for every man, woman, and child. We're at a place where people are like, freedom, freedom, freedom. You're not free unless you are independent. And if you are a dependent, you are by definition not free. And so it's living within your means. It's making your decisions based upon your purposes, not your pleasures. And sometimes that comes right down to your financial spending. You're like, oh, that'd be great. Can you afford it? Is there a purpose in it? And, and lemme just say this, the result is a whole generation that is gravitating towards socialism, which is so stupid. Socialism is, I want things, but I don't want to do things. Can I vote for someone to go steal things? And the answer is, you can. But eventually you run out of people to rob. Now you may call it taxes, but it's thievery. It's taking from people who are working and giving to people who aren't working. And what he's saying is, don't be dependent on people. Provide for yourself. So I think that's good. I'll just leave it right there. Thank you guys for, I had fun. I

don't know about you, but I had fun. Um, I'm just, in most churches I would get fired for this sermon. And instead we're gonna sing. Okay? So, uh, let me bring the band up and here's what we're gonna do. What we're going to do is we're gonna just spend some time with God. And I want you to ask yourself, okay, what is the Holy Spirit saying to me? What is the thing in my life where I need to bring my pleasures into alignment with God's purposes? And let me tell you what this looks like. Can I share with you my week? I didn't wanna be hypocrite. I want to practice what I preached and I wanna preach what I practice. So here's what I did this week. I took a day off. 'cause the Bible says to Sabbath, and sometimes I'm not good about that. So I did. And I was like, okay, first Thessalonians four, how do I enjoy my life and live according to God's purposes? So first thing I did, I turned my phone off. You. Some of you need to know this. This is gonna shock you. Your phone can turn off. You should try it. It's crazy. I turned my phone off and then I was like, okay, what am I gonna do today. So first thing I did, I leaf blowed. It was awesome. How? How many, if you don't have a leaf blower, you need one, right? Because it's awesome. You're like such immediate results. It's fantastic. Okay, so I leaf blowed for a while and it just felt good. And then I thought, you know what? I'm gonna go next level. I pressure washed, it will change your life. You need Jesus and pressure washing, I'm just telling you. And there's something about the immediate response and the progress and I'm pressure washing like, oh this is great. I just felt like the anointing. And then I decided, you know what? Now that everything is clean, I wanna sit down and read a book that I've been wanting to read. And I really was looking forward to reading. So I put out a bird feeder with a bunch of bird seed and I was hoping that all the birds would come visit me while I was in my nice clean environment reading my book. And they did. There were blue jays and other birds that I don't know what they are, but they were amazing. And then I was like, you know what? I'm gonna go for a hike. So up in the mountains I go for a long hike in the woods without my phone. And there was a bunch of baby deer and the baby deer were just born. And they don't know they're supposed to be scared of me. So they would just look at me weird, kinda like you, you know? And look at me weird. So now I'm hiking and I'm praying and I'm singing and I'm listening to God and I'm unburdening. And I'm interceding for my kids and my wife and our grandkids and for you all. And I'm looking at the baby deer. And then I got back from my hike and I was like, you know what? I'm tired. So I took a nap. I slept 10 hours the night before and then I took a nap 'cause I'm a Christian. And, and then I woke up and I grilled a steak. Amen? I did. I can't cook but I can grill. It is my secret spiritual gift. I can grill. I grilled a steak and I ate it. And I sat by a fire. And you know what? Somewhere on the internet, somebody was probably talking trash about me and I have no idea 'cause I'm a Christian and I don't care. And I'm sure that something was breaking in the universe and I didn't know. 'cause the deer didn't tell me. Here's what I would tell you. Live your life on purpose. Find a way to enjoy it. Take the money and the people and the hours and the days and the opportunities and don't waste them. Invest them. And if in any area of your life you're living for pleasure, put God's purpose over it and see if you don't enjoy it. I love you. It was a weird sermon. How about if I pray and we sing? Okay, father, thanks for a chance to have what may have been a sermon, but nonetheless was a fun time. God, I pray we would take you seriously, but not ourselves. I pray God, for all of us, you would highlight something where pleasure has gotten us into trouble and purpose will get us

out of trouble. And God, I pray for the men, especially the young men, that they would live for purpose, that they would have passion and pleasure, but it would be guided and directed by purpose. And God thank you that we're not the world where the church, that we know why we're here to glorify God. We know where we're going before the Lord Jesus. We know that sex is for marriage. We know that children are a blessing. We know that finances are for stewarding. We know that life is for enjoying and we know that friends are for forgiving. Thank you God, that we know the purposes for all the things we have. Help us to enjoy them. In Jesus' name, please stand as we worship together.