

**Review: 1 Thess 4:1-4; the Problem of Controlling Passions & Desires, 1 Thess 4:5;
Difference between Good & Bad Emotions: Emotions Not a Part of Soul Essence**

The passage continues by identifying what kind of behavior is to be avoided by the believer:

1 Thessalonians 4:5 - not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

This verse starts with the negative conjunction **μή, mē** which introduces an example of how Christian men are not to behave. “Not in ...”:

πάθος ἐπιθυμία, pathos epithumia - “passion” plus “lustful desire”

These two words describe the result of an unbridled sexual lust pattern. Passions and desires are normal but they must be sanctified. This verse accuses Gentiles, which makes reference to the unbelievers of Thessalonica who are involved in the uninhibited lifestyle of the city. Their perversions are justified by the local religions that practice and promote “sexual freedom.”

Many of the people involved in the deviant lifestyle of the city are wealthy, educated, blue bloods. They are considered by the general public as the noblemen of the community. But they are classified by Paul as unbelievers and thus spiritual hoi polloi. Believers of the Thessalonian church are spiritual aristocrats whose rectitude should match their spiritual nobility. Therefore they should be sanctified by abstinence.

The application of this passage emphasizes abstinence toward sex prior to marriage which denies through self-control submission to passions and desires. By extension it directs these passions and desires toward one’s right woman through imagination. In so doing the man sanctifies his passions and desires through abstinence prior to marriage and after matrimony he sanctifies them through congress with his wife’s vessel.

Verse 5 insists that the believer is not to allow his passions and desires to become associated with sexual lust. The word for lust is a very familiar and in this case it is the dative of disadvantage from the noun:

ἐπιθυμία, epithumia - “lust pattern” It is considered by Paul to be evil because it is disobedient to the command of God:

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 3:171:

ἐπιθυμία [epithumia]. For Paul **ἐπιθυμία** [epithumia: lust] is a manifestation of the sin which dwells in man and which controls him. The essential point in **ἐπιθυμία** [epithumia: lust] is that it is desire as impulse, as a motion of the will. It is, in fact, lust, since the thought of satisfaction gives pleasure and that of non-satisfaction pain. The word for pleasure is **ἡδονή** [hēdonē: gratification of natural and sinful desires]. **ἡδονή** [hēdonē: pleasure] and **ἐπιθυμία** [epithumia: lust] are closely related: when **ἐπιθυμία** [epithumia: lust] is satisfied we have **ἡδονή** [hēdonē: pleasure], and when **ἡδονή** [hēdonē: pleasure] is sought we have **ἐπιθυμία** [epithumia: lust]. Even after the reception of the divine Spirit, **ἐπιθυμία** [epithumia: lust] is always a danger against which man must be warned and must fight.

It is to the disadvantage of the believer to submit to his lust pattern. Added to this danger is the word for passion, the instrumental of manner from:

πάθος, pathos - “passion” This use of *pathos* refers to sexual passion which is combined with or grows out of *epithumia*: the lust pattern.

It is important to distinguish between this type of passion which we will define as evil and that which we will define as sanctified.

1. Emotion, like the sinful nature, is not part of man's soul but is rather the function of the soul. The soul, by means of volition, can produce both good and bad emotions.
2. A good emotion is expressed by the soul when a vector associates an idea, a sound, a sight, or a combination of these with establishment or divine standards retained in the stream of consciousness: (1) Observing the flag while listening to the "Star-Spangled Banner" may elicit emotions associated with patriotism: love of country, appreciation for men at war, or civic pride. (2) The experience of being the recipient of God's grace may elicit emotions associated with gratitude, humility, joy, and reciprocal love.