What we do with our bodies matter! 1 Corinthians 6v12-20

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Date: 15 November 2015

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[0:00] This morning is from 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 12 to 20, and that's on page 1148 of the Church Bibles.

1 Corinthians 6, beginning at verse 12. Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.
Food for the stomach, and the stomach for food. But God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
By his power, God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute?
Never. Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, the two will become one flesh.
[1:06] But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Slee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body.

But he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God?
You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body. Thanks, Chris.
Well, please keep your Bibles open. We're going to pray and then look at this section together. So let's pray together. Father, we have many gifts from you.
Father, we have many gifts from you. And the Holy Spirit is another wonderful gift that you have given to your church, your people. And it's for his help we ask right now that we may hear your word.
[2:42] That we may apply it to our lives. That you may change us. And that we may put right in our lives the things that dishonour you.

So that we may live lives that bring honour to you. So help us now, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.
Carigaline Fornication Church.
What would you feel if you read that on the front page of the Carigdown? Pastor sleeps with prostitute. What would you think?
Well, that's what was happening to the church in Corinth. Have a look at the middle of verse 13.
The body is not meant for sexual immorality.
[3:46] Verse 16. Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? Verse 18.

Flee from sexual immorality. You see, Corinth as a city was well known for its promiscuous lifestyle.
It was one of the world's leading centres in trade and commerce.
But it had a very liberal view of life. In fact, the name Corinth became associated with sexual immorality. And to act like a Corinthian was to commit fornication.
To have sex outside of marriage. And the problem is, what was well known in city life was becoming well known in church life.
It was deeply rooted within the life of the church. Now, what had happened then, although it's many, many years ago, can still happen today.
[4:56] A recent survey that I looked at, which was conducted among the 18 to 35-year-old age group, showed that 80% say sex before marriage is never wrong.

32% say that one-night stands are never wrong. While an additional 38% say it's sometimes wrong.

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67% of young men and 49% of young women say viewing porn is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality. And the reason for this attitude is individual choice, personal conscience, and our consumer culture.
We live in an anything-goes society. But it's not just outside the church. It's also inside the church. Another survey, which was conducted in the UK, but I think it still applies to the Irish theme, showed that 50% of Christian men and 25% of Christian women are addicted to porn.
[6:14] In a church of 100, that breaks down to one out of every three. Another showed that 31% of Christians had sexual partners before marriage.

But it's not just the young and the unmarried. Increasingly, pastors are counselling marriages that have broken down because of an affair. We too, it seems, are driven by our individual choice, our personal conscience, and our consumer culture.
And as we look at all of this, we must be clear as well to say that sex is not wrong. It is a beautiful and it's a wonderful gift from God.
But only in the context of a marriage relationship between one man and one woman. And anything outside of that damages our lives and distorts our relationships.
For the church in Corinth back in the first century and the church today, it seems that everything is permissible.
[7:30] Have a look at verse 12 of our reading. The church cried out, everything is permissible for me. But not everything is beneficial.

The church cried, everything is permissible for me. But I will not be mastered by anything. It seems they had accepted this liberal approach to sex in the church.
We can do what we're like. We're free people. We're saved by God's grace. We're no longer under law and under rules. I've been accepted by Christ.
Sure, it's no big deal if I sleep with my girlfriend. God will forgive me. And what harm is there if I do watch a little bit of porn? God doesn't really hold those things against us.
We're free in Christ. We can do what we like. But this is a complete distortion of God's amazing grace towards us.
[8:35] Have a look back at verse 11, which we looked at last week. Chapter 6, verse 11. And that is what some of you were.

In other words, this is the way you used to live. But now that you've come to Christ, your life has changed. You were washed. Your sin has been dealt with.
All your guilt and shame has been cleaned away. You were sanctified. You've now been set apart to live in God's way. You are justified. That means you are now treated as God's own son.
Loved and treasured by him. All in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
Yes, this was the kind of behaviour you used to live in.
But now you've been made holy. You've been set apart for God. So everything is not beneficial within the Christian life.
[9:38] In fact, this freedom was twisted to separate the physical from the spiritual. Look at verse 13.

Food for the stomach and the stomach for food. It's a strange saying, isn't it? Well, in Greek culture, the physical was disconnected from the spiritual.
So what you did with your physical body had no effect, they said, on your spiritual life. Just as eating what you want is not wrong, so having sex with who you want is not wrong.
Food for the stomach and stomach for the food. Or to turn it around in another way, sex for the body and body for sex. It's just a physical function.
What's the harm? Well, we mightn't take such an extreme view, but I think those attitudes are still there.
[10:39] We separate the physical from the spiritual. Oh yes, having an affair is wrong. I'd never do anything like that. But watching a little bit of porn is not going to harm my marriage, is it?

Having multiple partners is not right. I'd never do anything like that. But sleeping with the same person before marriage, so long as I'm committed to them, that's okay.
Or having a one-night stand. I mean, it's not such a big issue, is it really? As long as it didn't mean anything. No, we cannot separate the physical from the spiritual.
These things do matter. What we do with our physical body has a profound effect on our spiritual life. Verse 13, the end of verse 13.

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The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord. And the Lord for the body. You see, our physical bodies that we have, they do not belong to us to do with whatever we like.
[11:54] They belong to the Lord. He created us. He made us. And we are here to serve Him and to honour Him. We're going to look at three things that show us that what we do with our bodies really matters.

And before we look at them, I need to just point out that the three titles that I have here are not original. I've stolen them. I couldn't make them any better myself.
So there we are. Here's the first one. The Christian body is raised by God the Father. So the reason why our bodies matter are first, the Christian body is raised by God the Father.
So look at verse 14. By His power, God raised the Lord from the dead and He will raise us also. You see, when Jesus was raised from the dead, He was raised with a physical body. He actually goes on to talk about all of this in chapter 15.
[13:02] Have a look with me if you just go forward to chapter 15 in 1 Corinthians. Chapter 15, verse 3. And in that whole chapter He talks about the resurrection.

Chapter 15, verse 3. We see here that Christ was raised with a physical body. Verse 3. So what I received I passed on to you as of first importance.
That 1. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. That 2. He was buried. 3. He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures.
And 4. That He appeared to Peter. And then He appeared to the twelve. And after that He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time most of whom are still living.
You see, Jesus, when He rose again from the grave, He wasn't a ghost. He wasn't just a floating soul moving around the place. Jesus was a risen, living person with a physical body that would never decay or die again.
[14:14] And what God has done for Jesus, God will do for those who love Him. So have a look at chapter 15 verse 42.

See what it says there? Chapter 15 verse 42. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown perishable, well, it will be raised imperishable.
It's sown in dishonour. But it's raised in glory. It's sown in weakness. It's raised in power. It's sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body.
You see, for God, our resurrection life isn't just physical, isn't just spiritual, it's physical. One day the Lord is going to return again and He's going to establish a new heavens and a new earth and this broken, decaying, disease-ridden world is all going to be put right and we will be raised with physical, brand new bodies so that we can enjoy it.
Look at verse 51 of the same chapter. Listen, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep but we will be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.
[15:34] For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed. changed. We are going to have brand new bodies.

Now, if all of that is true, it has a profound impact on how we live our life today. So look in the same chapter, verse 58.
The conclusion of the truth of the resurrection and our physical bodies. Look what it says in verse 58. Therefore, because of that truth, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm, let nothing move you, always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.
Do you see the connection? Because our bodies are going to be raised, we are now to use our bodies to serve the Lord well today.
Why are we saying all of this? Well, because sexual immorality actually hinders our service for God.
[16:49] If we behave in ways we shouldn't do, it affects how we serve the Lord. Listen to this very provocative quote from John Piper and it's directed particularly at the younger men, to all men.

Here's what he says. A young man hears a challenging call to throw himself into the cause of world evangelisation or intermission.
He feels the promptings of the Holy Spirit. He tastes the thrill of following Jesus, the King of Kings, into battle. But he does not obey because he is viewing porn, masturbating or sleeping around.
He feels guilty. He can hardly imagine witnessing to a pretty girl about the eternal plight of her soul because he is so habitually looked at a girl's naked image in his imagination.
So he feels unworthy and unable to obey the call of God. Do you see what he's saying?

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[17:59] What we do with our bodies matter because what we do affects whether we serve the Lord as we ought to or not.

Remember, we are raised with a physical body. We will be raised a glorious body in God's new and perfect world. So start living that life now with the body that God has given to you.
Second, the Christian body has been united with God's Son. So look at verse 15. Back in 1 Corinthians chapter 6.
verse 15. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? If we're Christians, we have been united to Christ.
We are in Christ and Christ is in us. We're bound together as one. That's why the church is called the body of Christ.
[19:07] Together, as God's people, we represent Christ. The gathered people are God's very presence here on earth. So that means what I do with my body reflects who Christ is to the world.

We are the body of Christ on earth. So the question is asked in the rest of verse 15. Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute?
Never. do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? Could you imagine a husband who's been away on a trip?
He comes back to his wife after the weekend away and she discovers that, well, he's been sleeping with another woman. Wondering what all the fuss is about, he turns round to his wife and he says, it didn't mean anything.
It's not like I knew her or anything. How do you think that would make her feel? Oh, that's okay dear, as long as it didn't mean anything, that's all right.
[20:26] No, that's not how she feels. She feels hurt and betrayed. It doesn't mean anything. Of course it means something. It means you have become, look at the rest of verse 16, he says the two will become one flesh.

Now, can you see the connection here? He's saying how can we use our bodies for sexually immoral behaviour and say it doesn't mean anything spiritually?
Of course it means something. it means we are uniting Christ to our behaviour. We're including Christ in what we do. What I do is I'm bringing Christ into it.
Remember, we represent Christ, we're united to Christ, we are Christ's presence here on earth. So how we behave is how Christ is being portrayed.
Verse 17, but he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. How can we pretend to be united to Christ if in fact we are uniting ourselves to other things and to other people?
[21:52] What we do with our body matters. it declares to those around us who we are united to. So our bodies matter because the Christian body is raised by God.

It matters because we are united with God's Son. And third, the Christian body is occupied by God's Spirit. Have a look at verse 19.
Do you not know that your body, your physical body, is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you've received from God?
It's an amazing statement. The Old Testament temple that we read about in the Old Testament was the central and focal point of the city.
God was the place where God came to dwell with his people. Of course, we know that the temple could never contain God. It was simply a way of God to show his desire to be with his people.
[23:06] So in a sense, God was saying, I'm moving in with you. I want to be with you. And all of that imagery was a picture of God moving into our physical bodies by his spirit.

So verse 19, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? God has made our physical bodies his home address.
If we are Christians, God is saying, I live in you. Now again, this has a profound effect on how we view our physical bodies.
You see, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is not just a tenant that we can kick out when we like. He didn't just kind of arrive in and we go, sorry, don't want you anymore and boot him out again.
He's not a tenant. He's our new landlord who's moved into our lives. He now decides what is right and best for us and how we should live our life. In fact, like a good landlord, the Holy Spirit checks every single room in our lives convicting us of our sin but also cleaning us of our sin.
[24:29] So that means he's with you in the TV room. He is with you when you search the internet.

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He is with you when you go to the bedroom. the Spirit of God is in us urging us to live pure and holy lives and enabling us to live holy lives.
Look at the rest of verse 19. You are not your own. You were brought at a price. Look at the value of your life.
God gave his life for you. he died on the cross for you. He's rescued you. He's freed you from a life of sexual immorality which only enslaves us and breaks us and destroys us.
And now he's taken ownership of our lives so that we might live a guilt-free life, rid of shame, rid of our sin, that we might serve God.
[25:34] Look at the end of verse 20. Therefore, honour God with your body. If we're Christians, our bodies have been redeemed by God and now they are occupied by God's Holy Spirit so let us use them to do good so that we might reflect the beauty of Christ and the purity of Christ to the world around us.

So how we use our bodies really matters. But what does all of this mean in practice for us?
Well, look at verse 18. What does he say? Flee from sexual immorality. Run away from it.
Don't get caught up in it. Use your physical bodies to actually move away from it. All other sins a man commits are outside his body.
But he who sins sexually sins against his own body. You see, as we've been looking at through Corinthians, all sin is serious.
[26:56] But sexual sin ruins us in a way that all other sins do not. You see, sexual sin damages us physically.

STDs, which in turn can affect the chances of pregnancy. Sexual sin breaks us emotionally. The feeling of being used and abused, reduced as an object for somebody else's pleasure.
Sexual sin destroys us relationally, breaks up marriages, creates a fear of commitment, reduces the loss of trust.
And sexual sin wrecks us spiritually, no longer walking forward in service, instead we're hiding under a cloud of guilt and shame. So that's why he says in verse 18, flee from sexual immorality, run away from it, put in place everything physically you need to do so that you live a pure life.
Don't go where temptation will take you. Don't watch what will control you. And don't touch what you cannot stop.
[28:20] But it's not just enough to flee from sexual immorality. We must also run to Christ and his cross.

You see, whatever our past is, whatever our sexual sin may be, and let's be honest, we all fail and fall in this area, every single one of us.
So whatever our hurts and our pains may be from the past and that we carry into our lives today, run to Christ and his cross because only Christ can forgive you.
And only Christ can heal you. Remember what we read in chapter 1 verse 18? The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.
So for those who want to live a sexually immoral life, they'll look at Christ and the cross and they'll say, how stupid, how ridiculous. How are saved?
[29:30] But to those who are being saved, the cross is the power of God. So run to the cross because Christ takes our past life and he gives us a brand new life.

Christ takes the consequences of our sin and he fills our life with the Holy Spirit. He takes away the momentary pleasures and he replaces it with everlasting joy.
He takes away our guilt and our shame and he gives us gifts so that we might serve. Run to Christ and his cross because there we are washed like stepping into a shower and all the dirt being washed away so Christ washes us deep inside purifying us from all our guilt and shame and all the mess that is there purifying us so that we can be a clean and holy people so that we can honour God with our bodies.
Our bodies are not our own. They were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body.
Let's pray. our Father God, we're conscious that as we read your word and as we listen to it, we realise that we are all, every single one of us, we have all, we are all impure.
[31:42] We've all done things, we've all watched things, said things that are not honourable to you. and so we come to you afresh, Father God, and pray that cleansing forgiveness in our lives.

Help us that we may see that our bodies have been made by you, created by you, created for a wonderful purpose, a purpose to honour you and serve you.

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thank you that one day our bodies will be raised to be brand new when we will live with you in your new heaven and new earth. Thank you that today through faith in Jesus we are united to Christ, belonging to him.
And thank you that you have not abandoned us but that you live in us by your Holy Spirit. it. We pray Father God that all of us and you would enable each one of us to live lives that reflect the purity of Christ and the love of Christ to those around us.
We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing together a song which helps us to reflect on what we've just been looking at and a song that will prepare us as we come to share the love of Christ.
[33:23] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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