

# 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

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Preacher: David Helm

[ 0 : 00 ] You do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. One of Paul's parenting strategies was to sit down with his children and rearrange their mind.

That makes sense, given what we've learned of the intent of the letter, chapter 1, verse 10, that they would come back to be of the same mind and be able to make the same judgments in life.

The same mind and judgments of Paul, who he claims had the very mind of Christ. So we've hit now on one of Paul's favorite parental strategies.

And the tactic he employs is very much like a parent in our own day. Well-placed reminders to his children that come by way of a question.

Do you remember that back in chapter 1? Is Christ divided? I mean, he's asking these rhetorical questions to rearrange the mind of his children. Take a look at the one that drones on and on, and we'll find it particularly in our text.

[ 1 : 09 ] But it occurs previously, chapter 2, verse 16. Do you not know? It's the language of a parent attempting to rearrange the mind of a child.

We see it again in chapter 5 and verse 6. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know? Or there, where we saw it last time we were together in chapter 6, verse 2.

Or do you not know that all the saints will judge the world? Or verse 3. Do you not know that we're to judge angels? And so this parental tactic of well-reasoned reminders to stand the child up, reorder their mind, that they might live well in a world gone wrong.

Look at our own text. It occurs four times. This father-like figure in his chair. Verse 9.

Do you not know that the righteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Or down in verse 15. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

[ 2 : 22 ] Or verse 16. Do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? And finally, verse 19. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?

We come today to a meeting of the minds on the freedoms that we have as Christians in Christ.

The subject matter that Paul is in the midst of is an issue of the use of freedom. For in Christ we have been set free.

But it's the relationship that that freedom has to the way that we use our bodies, particularly sexually. He's been on that all the way back from chapter 5 and verse 1.

Now, the reason we know that our passage is centered on the issue of freedom comes out of verses 12 and 13. Take a look. The editors have put quotation marks in to almost give us the sense of what had become the Corinthian slogans for life.

[ 3 : 34 ] Here they are, the Christian slogans. Verse 12. All things are lawful for me. Now that I'm in Christ, I'm free. Again, verse 12.

All things are lawful for me. This is the parroting language. Parroting, not parenting. The parroting language that had taken root in Corinth.

Or what about verse 13? Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food. And the correlating slogan that he doesn't mention, the implication of which is, and the body was meant for sex and sex for the body.

And so he is here speaking of the issue of the Christian's freedom. What it means to be set free. And what Paul wants to correct them on is that freedom is always qualified.

Yes, all things are lawful for you, but not all things are helpful. That's the qualifying word he brings. I'm free in Christ. All things are lawful for me. You will not be mastered by anything.

[ 4 : 40 ] The body is meant for food. Food for the body. The stomach. God will destroy both. And indeed, when it comes to sexual things, your body was meant for the Lord.

So here's the Corinthian ideal. You're free in Christ. Grace abounds. And while he has saved your soul, the use of your body is largely left up to you.

In Corinth, this would have had, like Chicago, an appeal to the city. The temple of Aphrodite was well known in classical Corinth to rest on the very height.

By Paul's day, of course, that temple would have been decimated. But the thousand prostitutes that, to the goddess of love, would have flooded their way down into the Corinthian streets.

And indeed, this was a city known for its licentiousness or its freedom with how you handle your body.

[ 5 : 55 ] Corinth was a port city strategically situated to catch men in their business travels and sailors moving from one place to another.

So it was a hub of commercial enterprise and traffic of all kinds. William Barclay says, Corinth had a reputation for commercial prosperity, but she was also a byword for evil living.

The very word, and then there's a Greek word put together, Corinthia Sesthi, to live like a Corinthian, had become a part of the Greek language and meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery.

So there is a late Greek writer that tells us that if ever a Corinthian was shown on a stage in a Greek play, the actor was always in a drunken state.

The very name of Corinth was synonymous with debauchery in the civilized world. And so the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was indeed in play.

[ 7 : 19 ] In fact, there was a Greek proverb that says, it is not every man who can afford a journey to Corinth. Such was the use of his money while there.

So this is the Corinthian ideal. And the impact on the church was clear. Sexual immorality was in the church as it was in Corinth. And as it is then, so it is today.

Sexual immorality is in the church as it is in Chicago. For we too live under the adage of free in Christ. Grace abounds.

No impact in regard to how I handle my body. But look at it back there in chapter 5, verse 1. It's actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you. The word sexual immorality appears again in chapter 5 and verse 9.

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, but of those who were in the church. Our own text.

[ 8 : 19 ] Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, and then he goes on to list others as well. And indeed, all the way down to verse 15, the joining of our bodies to a prostitute.

Now the word sexually immoral is porneia. And we normally think of it in a very restricted sense of adultery, which is the union of a man to a woman or a woman to a man outside of their married state.

Sexual immorality, the word porneia, actually has a bigger umbrella. Let me just mention to you the seven or eight sexual sins that in the Bible fall under this word.

The first is just fornication, which would be the consensual sexual acts of any two unmarried persons. Rampant in our own day.

This is the way that it would actually include that. Adultery would be a second use. Incest, chapter 5, verse 1, is a third use.

[ 9 : 27 ] The joining together of the body to a prostitute, our own text here, chapter 6, verse 13, is a fourth use. From Galatians 5, it would include orgies.

It also includes from our own text, as well as 1 Timothy and Leviticus 18, homosexuality. Homosexuality is another kind, as you look back to chapter 5, verse 1, another kind of sexual immorality.

And from Leviticus 18, bestiality as well. These are all aspects of handling our bodies in a way that it was not intended to be used that fall under the term sexual immorality.

And so Paul comes and says, all right, in a city where it's rampant and in a church where it's present, let me sit down with you as your father and ask you four questions that will remind you so that you can live well.

Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? This is not the way we're to live.

[ 10 : 45 ] He lists all of those things there. It's interesting that idolatry follows sexual immorality. Because in the ancient world, sexual immorality and idolatry always went hand in hand.

You think of the golden calf incident, Deuteronomy 32, there's the actual, the worshiping of foreign deities and sexual immorality in play. The same thing happens with Beor in Numbers 25.

The same thing happens with the temple sacrifices in the New Testament in the Greco-Roman world. Sexual immorality and idolatry are always mingled in the ancient world.

In the modern world, we don't really link them necessarily together. In the modern world, sexual immorality has become the idolatry. Because we don't worship anything but that anymore.

But in the ancient world, these were tied together. And he says, do you not know that that is not the rule of God? That is not the way of the kingdom.

[ 11 : 43 ] And then I love that verse 11. And such were some of you. I know where you've been. And you were there. And then three but's. It doesn't show as strongly in the English text as it does in the Greek.

But you, you were washed. But you were sanctified. I love the word sanctified as a past tense sense of a completed action.

We normally think that my whole life is about sanctification. And while that is true, he says, in Christ, you were sanctified. In that moment of conversion, you were made whole, pure, clean, done deal.

But you were justified. All of these things. Wonderful reminders for us as children of God.

In fact, the implication of that flows in verse 13. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord.

[ 12 : 51 ] And the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Why is it that we don't give ourselves to sexual immorality? All the things that we gave ourselves to habitually in the past.

The reason is because as God raised up Jesus' real body, his flesh, so too he will raise up our flesh.

It isn't just that our soul is saved for a future day in heaven. Our very person was saved.

And our very flesh will be raised. Our very body will be carried with us in its glorified state into heaven. So it's the physical body that Paul elevates the doctrine of.

That when you're saved, he's dealing with your body. And your spirit. And as he raised Christ's body, he will raise your body.

[ 13 : 55 ] Do you not know, second question, verse 16, that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take a member of Christ and make it into a member of a prostitute?

Never. No. It's so good to be reminded that Christ would have our bodies. It's so good to be reminded that Christ would have our bodies. That the work of salvation is a work in the material world, not merely the spiritual world.

And so then the final two questions give us the way in which to live. Do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

For as it is written, the two will become one flesh. But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Here's the takeaway then. Therefore, because you now know this, because you now know the elevated state in which God views your body, flee from sexual immorality and from every other sin.

And then finally, verse 19, or do you not know that you're a temple now? The Holy Spirit lives in you. Therefore, and you were bought with a price. And what was the price? It was literally the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 15 : 09 ] So glorify God in your body. So there are the two ends. Flee and glorify. On what grounds? On the exalted grounds of the way God views your body.

And what we all need is a moment of clarity. A moment of clarity in the church today. That when temptation comes, a true understanding that the Lord will raise my body and that this some glorified state of what you see before me today, this very condition in some glorified way will walk the streets of heaven.

Not just my soul. Not just that my spirit's going to be hovering around. That your spirit's going to be wedded to Christ.

No, but I will look you in the eye and you will look me in the eye and there will be a recognizable sense to us. Because God would have us. That is, He would have this. He would have what you can see as well as what you cannot see.

When that moment of clarity comes, then the physical body becomes the impetus for spiritual growth.

[ 16 : 34 ] It's on that account, Paul says, that we flee, and on that account that we present ourselves differently. Now, one thing I'm aware of is the nature of this life, the evil one, will come to you and to me on many occasions between now and the day we see God face to face.

And the lie will be propounded. All things are lawful. All things you're able to entertain. God is saving your soul and there's more grace for all of that.

But that's the real thing. Now, I want to say the real thing is your body as well. And may that truth hold us in an hour of temptation that we would live well for Him because He will have us, even this, forevermore.

Our Heavenly Father, to sit down with Paul is to sit down with a father. And to have our mind arranged under your will.

[18:01] And so, [REDACTED]  
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