

'Honour God with Your Bodies'

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[0:00] And please keep your Bibles open to 1 Corinthians 6 as we again talk about sexual immorality. Again, it seems that sexual immorality is one of those things that the Corinthians were most struggling with.

! And it's not that different today, is it? I remember when I was a uni student, I was a first year and we were doing a great job.

I was doing a group work. There were three of us in the group. I was surprised to find how a guy in my group was talking about wanting to woo a Korean girl in class because, in his words, he has never tried sex with a Korean girl before.

I was shocked. And I was also surprised that the woman in my group had been having one-night stands and she was sharing it with the group.

I was so confused, I said, what's a one-night stand? And they both looked at me like I was an alien, the weirdest guy on the planet for not knowing what it was.

[1:10] Apparently it means having sex with someone casually only once or only for one night. I realized then how different the Christian lifestyle was compared to the world.

Casual sex without any commitment is so widely accepted in this world. And sometimes that worldly culture can penetrate into the church.

And it wasn't different back then when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians. Ancient lawyer and philosopher Cicero said this, If there is anyone who thinks that youth should be forbidden from affairs, even with God's sons, he is doubtless eminently self-disciplined, I cannot deny it.

But his view is contrary not only to the license of this age, but also to the custom and concessions of our ancestors. For when was this not a common practice?

When was it blamed? When was it forbidden? Cicero was saying casual sex outside of marriage, even with prostitutes, had been widely accepted by the culture in the Roman culture and the Greek culture, and even by their ancestors for ages.

[2:31] So they must not forbid anyone from doing it. And just like today, that Roman culture of sex sometimes penetrated the church, just as we read in this passage.

But as we will also see in this passage, the Bible gives us a very different view of sex, and more importantly, a very different view of our bodies.

Let's read verse 12. I have the right to do anything, you say, but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything, but I will not be mastered by anything.

Here Paul answers a statement or a slogan that the Corinthians used. They said, I have the right to do anything. And as the rest of the passage shows, they're applying this freedom to sexual immorality.

Christians are free, right? We have been freed by Christ. We can just do whatever we want with our bodies, right? Well, not really.

[3:45] Paul first responds, not everything is beneficial, or not everything is helpful, constructive, edifying. Christ has freed us, that's true, but we should not focus on our own self-centered rights and entitlement.

If we have been redeemed by Christ on the cross, then we must do what Christ did, selfless sacrifice. And that means self-control, often.

The focus is not my entitlement, but whether the thing is beneficial, both for myself and for others. And second, Paul also responds, I will not be mastered by anything.

The Corinthians think that they're so free, no one is their master, they have the right to do anything. But actually, by engaging in sexual immorality over and over again, they show that they're not free, they're enslaved, they're mastered by their flesh, by their sin, by sex.

As we have said two weeks ago, holiness is true gospel freedom. True gospel freedom means holiness. Because when Christ frees us on the cross, He frees us from the slavery of our sin and death.

[5:21] Slavery is when we have to engage in sinful acts. Slavery is when we have to entertain sinful thoughts or sinful desires, and we have no self-control.

That is slavery. Christ freed us from that, which means that we are enabled to live a holy life, not to be mastered by our sinful desires anymore.

And also, that's what sexual immorality often is, right? We engage in one sexually immoral act, or we entertain one sexually immoral thought, and then we get hooked.

And we have to return to it over and over again. We are mastered by it. Now, these two principles already gives us a good foundation for thinking about our freedom in Christ that we can apply to all activities.

Often as Christians, we ask, a lot of people have asked me these questions, are Christians allowed to do dot, dot, dot?

[6:35] Are Christians allowed to do this or that? Are Christians free to do this or that? Are Christians free to smoke?

Well, yes, we're free. But it's not really beneficial for ourselves, is it? Are Christians free to drink alcohol? Well, yes, we're free.

But if we're drinking it with others who struggle with alcoholism, then it's not really beneficial for others. And also, does the thing master us?

When we engage in it, does it reflect our freedom to pursue holiness? Or does it show that we're still mastered by our own sin? When we engage in it, will it master us and make us addicted to it?

Like gambling, for example. Paul is saying, I will not be mastered by anything. Our Lord is only one, Jesus.

[7:47] These two principles are helpful generally. But in this passage, Paul applies them specifically in the case of sexual immorality to show that even though Christians are free, sexual immorality is not beneficial and it's slavery.

Now, Paul also responds to another thing that the Corinthians say in verse 13 to 14. You say, food for the stomach and the stomach for food and God will destroy them both.

The body, however, 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. Basically, the Corinthians have been saying, sex is just like food.

It's just a physical and temporary thing. If we're hungry, we eat. If we feel sexual urges, we have sex. Food is limited to this world.

It doesn't have any eternal significance. And so, sex is limited to this world. It doesn't have any eternal significance. But Paul responds, no, sex is not like food and having sex is not like eating.

[9:12] In the sense that food is destined to be consumed and destroyed. But our bodies are not to be consumed and destroyed.

What we do with our bodies matter because the body belongs to the Lord and the body won't be destroyed like food. It will be resurrected and renewed.

It will be made eternal. What we do with our bodies now matters because God has an eternal purpose for our bodies beyond this physical life.

What is that eternal purpose? Verse 13. For Him, for the Lord as He is also for us.

What does that mean? What does that mean for our bodies to be for the Lord? Well, it's a marriage language.

[10:13] We are for Him and He is for us. Paul explains that in the next verses. 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 but whoever is united with the Lord is one with Him in spirit.

It's a marriage language. It's not a coincidence that the next chapter, the very next chapter, Paul will talk about marriage. Notice how Paul always asks, do you not know?

Don't you know? Throughout the whole letter we get a sense that the Corinthians think they're so wise and knowledgeable. They're puffed up. But Paul keeps saying, don't you know?

I thought you were wise. Don't you know this basic thing? They think they know but there is something fundamental that they have forgotten. Their union with Christ.

[11 : 30] They are for the Lord and the Lord is for them because they're united to the Lord. As husband and wife are united to each other, Christians too have been united with Christ in His death and resurrection.

And so Paul finds it inconceivable that Christians can be united to their Lord in a holy union while also being united to prostitutes in an unholy sexually immoral union.

It doesn't make sense. Now most of us, hopefully all of us here, don't visit prostitutes like the Corinthians.

But just as the Corinthians had forgotten about their status in Christ, we too have often forgotten, haven't we? I have often forgotten.

Do we often see Christ as our beloved one? Do we love Him? Do we long to see Him return? If so, surely we must keep our bodies pure for Him.

[12 : 47] But that's not often not what we do, is it? That's often not what I do. Instead, I see my body as belonging to myself only. My body, my choice.

we think about indulging our own desires, doing what we see fit to our bodies. Often we don't care about what our beloved Christ thinks.

Even if we don't have sex with prostitutes, generally it's still true, still true to me, that we often forget about our identity as members of Christ.

members of Christ. But here Paul is talking about something more specific, sex with a prostitute.

Or we can also apply it to any sex outside of marriage, because marriage is the only holy union that God has instituted to reflect the holy union that Christ has with His people.

[13 : 52] So any casual sex outside of marriage enjoins us in an unholy sexual relationship with someone else, while also being enjoined to Christ.

That just doesn't make sense. The two can't go together. Oh, how different would we live in this world if we constantly saw our bodies as members of Christ in union with Him?

We can respect our bodies. We love our bodies. We keep our bodies pure. We keep our bodies holy, not because we worship our bodies, but because we know that they belong to Christ as His members and we love Him.

Don't we? may may may may may may may members of Christ also gives hope to those who are sexually broken, or on the flip side, to those who have been victims of other people's sexual brokenness.

Our bodies are members of Christ. All that shame that we might feel is attached to our bodies because of past sexual brokenness that we feel we can't get rid of. All that shame is united to the body of Christ and nailed there on the cross.

[15 : 31] It's left there as Christ rose back to newness of life. All that shame is no more. No more. The world can have a very low view of the body. People use their bodies to satisfy their fleshly desires or someone else's fleshly desires. They can objectify other people's bodies and their own bodies. They want to manipulate their bodies to suit their own desires or to sexually allure others.

But the Bible gives us a much higher view of the body. Your body is a member of Christ.

It will live on when Christ resurrects it. Completely new, free of all shame, because Christ has died for your body as well as your soul. Because your body as well as your soul belongs to Him.

Now, the practical application of this, according to the passage anyway, is simple. Flee sexual immorality. Notice that Paul says flee sexual immorality, not fight sexual immorality or endure sexual immorality or see how close you can get to sexual immorality before you cross the line. Flee! Run away from it! Don't give yourselves a chance for sexual immorality. Sexual immorality is so serious and dangerous that Paul's command is for us to flee.

[17 : 24] Many times in other places, Paul says endure, but here he says flee, just run away. Run away. Now, that can manifest in many different ways.

So, if I'm alone with someone and the situation is becoming sexually compromising, I have to excuse myself and leave. If my messaging someone in a way, if I'm messaging someone in a way that I know is becoming sexually charged, then I have to end the conversation.

If there's a TV series or a book or an app that consistently leads me into sexual temptation, I delete it. I have to. If my imagination is feeding lust, I don't have to entertain it.

The reformer Martin Luther, there's a story that Martin Luther was often, when he was imprisoned, he was often tempted by Satan with sinful thoughts.

And this is what he often did. He would shout, I am baptized, which means I am united to Christ. I am baptized. And he would throw his pen to the wall.

[18:43] And you can see, if you go to the castle in Wittenberg, there's all, I'm in front of his desk. The wall is destroyed, because he would often do that. Flee sexual immorality.

Remember Joseph in Genesis, who was tempted by Potiphar's wife? What did he do? He ran. He left his coat behind, and he just ran. He fled. Flee sexual immorality. Now, why is Paul being so serious here?

He explains it in the rest of verse 18. All other sins a person commits are outside of the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body.

Now, these are difficult words. What does that mean, Paul? Paul is not saying that sexual sin is the only sin that damages your body. Obviously, that's not true.

[19:48] Drunkenness damages the body. Gluttony, self-harm can damage the body. So what does Paul mean? To understand this, we need to read verse 18 in the context of what Paul has just said.

Sexual immorality is distinctive because of what sex does. It creates a one-flesh union in a way that no other sins do.

And so all other sins are done outside the body in the sense that I only use the body as an instrument, a tool for sin.

Whether being drunk or using drugs, the body is an instrument for sin. But sexual sin doesn't just use my body as an instrument.

It surrenders my body, that's supposed to be in union with Christ, towards union with unholiness. And so in that way, it's against my body or against my body's status in Christ.

[21:00] My body is a member of Christ. My body is united to the Lord. And then Paul gives another reason why we need to flee sexual immorality in verse 19.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? Our bodies are temples.

Do you know what that means? In the Old Testament, like our Exodus passage, the temple was where God chose to dwell amongst His people. That's our bodies.

Again, it's just inconceivable that we do unholy things to God's dwelling place. Sexual immorality is contrary to everything that our bodies are.

Our bodies are members of Christ, temples of the Spirit. Sexual immorality is contrary to both of those. So flee from sexual immorality.

[22:07] Run away from it. Now, if you have sinned sexually, as I have as well, it's not too late to flee.

Never too late. Repent and flee. flee from sexual immorality and towards Christ. Run to Him.

It's never too late. The very people that Paul tells to flee are the people who have committed sexual sins. And yet, he constantly calls them, in the whole letter, the redeemed, members of Christ, temples of the Spirit, the people of God.

If you are currently in any sexual sin, an affair, or casual sex outside of marriage, or visiting prostitutes, or even just watching pornography, your sin is serious.

But the grace of Christ is stronger and deeper. If you repent and flee to Him, He will forgive you and welcome you with open arms.

[23:29] If you repent and flee to Him. And He will give you the kind of love that will satisfy you way more than any sexual immorality ever can. Trust me, I've been there.

So don't run away from Christ in shame. Flee towards Christ and away from the sin that enslaves you.

If you flee to Christ, He will not shame you. He will take away your shame and nail it to the cross. You are precious to Him.

As Paul says, you are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

This is the complete opposite to what the Corinthians have said. They say, I have the right to do anything. But Paul is saying, no, you are not your own.

[24 : 36] You are not your own. The Christian life is not about my rights. We have been bought. And what was the price? The precious blood of Christ.

The Son of God had to die. That's what redemption means. We are united with Christ as His bride, as His members. He loves us so much that He gave Himself up for us on the cross.

How can we give ourselves up to sexual immorality instead? How can we? No, we use our bodies to honor Him, to love Him, to express our worship of Him.

Do you know what that means, to honor Him? It means to give God the reverence, the admiration, the glory that are due to Him. How much is due to Him?

All glory and honor are due to Him. And so when it comes to applying this passage, of course, the primary application is very clear. Flee from sexual immorality.

[25 : 47] Whether that's sex with a prostitute or any sex outside of marriage, the application is flee. And even other kinds of sexual immorality. Porn, looking at another person with lust, sexual messaging with someone who is not your own spouse, the application is flee, run away from it.

That is the primary application. But if we read this passage and that's the only application we get out of it and we think, check, I haven't done any of those things, I don't do any of those things, I'm safe.

It's true. And we might get the basic message, but we don't get the full extent of Paul's intention. Paul wants us to broaden our perspective in his last sentence.

Honor God with your bodies. That means the Christian life is not only about what we refuse to do with our bodies, it's also about what we choose to do with them.

Our hands can serve someone with the love of Jesus. Our mouths can encourage someone with the gospel. Our feet can take the gospel to the ends of the earth rather than taking us to a prostitute.

[27 : 13] our eyes can look at another person with dignity rather than lust. We can honor God with our bodies. So let's keep asking ourselves that question, how can I use this body to honor God?

This body doesn't belong to me. How do I eat to honor God? That's an interesting question to ask. How do I drink to honor God?

How do I enjoy sex to honor God? How do I work to honor God? How do I watch movies to honor God? Friends, we are not our own.

We have been bought at a great price. We are united with Christ. So let's honor God with our bodies. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we praise you for what you have done on the cross. You have bought us with your precious blood. You have set us free from the power of sin and death.

[28 : 25] You have united us with yourself. So help us, Lord, please, with the power of your Holy Spirit who is already in us to always remember that we are the holy members of your body.

and help us to live it out in holiness. Amen. Amen. may may may