

# Moral Purity

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now friends, there's no frills tonight, that is, no frills as we get into it, because this is, well you see, though we read from verse 12, we are going to start at verse 1.

That means we have got a lot to do, that means we're just going to get straight into it. However, I need to tell you why we're going to sort of abbreviate things a little bit, because there are really deep things in this passage, it is full of intricate and important things.

So my approach tonight is going to be this, I will concentrate on the two halves of the chapter. I will tell you what I think is going on in those two halves, then I'm going to draw together some principles that we should take on board as Christians living, in the 21st century.

Now, I will say that I think this passage, after that I'll say what this passage means for us today, because it has very significant ramifications for us in the contemporary world.

But let's turn to the first 11 verses of 1 Corinthians chapter 6. I encourage you to have your Bibles open, that'll help me and it'll help you, and it might even be good to have those outlines in front of you so that you know where I'm going, and how much longer I've got before I get there.

[ 1 : 18 ] It might even help you to take some notes, particularly I think in the second half, but the whole lot would be good. But the outline will just help summarise what I'm saying and help you to see where we are.

So let's get started, and first, let's see what's going on here in the first half, in the first 11 verses. And we really don't have to wait long to find out, because look at verse 1, Paul says, Now, I don't think that what is going on here is that Paul is imagining some sort of theoretical situation. You know, he's not saying, Now, I want you to imagine this situation. One of you Christians has a grievance against another Christian.

And when that happens, do you dare take it to court before the unrighteous instead of taking it before the saints? Now, I think that this something has already happened.

You know, and just as you get a feel for how immature the Corinthians have been in this letter up till this point, you know, in chapter 1, they've been boasting about their leaders and dividing on the basis of them.

[ 2 : 38 ] In chapter 5, they've been committing incest and turning a blind eye to it. Now, in chapter 6, what are they actually doing? Well, it seems as though they're ignoring incest in their congregation.

But one Corinthian Christian has a minor dispute with another Corinthian Christian. He's taken him to court in a pagan court in order to have it settled. Can you hear what's going on?

Not worrying about incest, but worrying about little quibbles that they've got between each other, things that they could take each other to court about. Look at verse 6. That reading is confirmed. Paul is startled.

He's offended. He says, a believer goes to court against a believer and before unbelievers at that. Can you hear what's being said?

Believers are taking believers to court. But there's more. Look at verse 8. But you yourselves wrong and defraud and believers at that.

[ 3 : 36 ] Not only are believers taking believers to court, but believers are also wronging and defrauding each other. And the times that they are defrauding and wronging are, sorry, the people that they are wronging and defrauding are fellow believers.

Paul is disgusted at the immaturity of these folk. He is alarmed at what he says, what it says about their spiritual maturity or lack of it.

So that's what I think is going on. I think it's straightforward. You've got court cases being enacted between one believer and another. So let's see if we can draw together some principles that

undergird what Paul has to say to the Corinthians.

And because if we can find some principles, then surely those things will apply to us as well, won't they? So let's do some digging around in the passage, see what we can find. You see, if we dig through this passage, then we'll see what Paul tells them.

He tells them in no uncertain terms. Look at verse 1. This is who these people are. Can you see who they are? These people, these Corinthians are saints.

[ 4 : 43 ] Look at verse 2. Who are they? They are those who will judge the world. Now look at verse 5. Paul calls them believers, but the original Greek has brothers rather than believers.

In other words, they are brothers and sisters in Christ. That's the other thing about their status. That is who they are. They share together in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are members of God's divine family.

Now go down to verse 11. Paul remembers how they became Christians and what that means. He says, you were washed. I think that's probably an allusion, while it may be an allusion to baptism, it's probably a reference to the sins that they were washed free from.

They were sinners and their past sins were washed away. They were cleansed from the filth of sin that characterized their own lives and that characterized the lives of their neighbors.

But that's not all. Look at how Paul goes on. You were washed. You were sanctified. In other words, you've been separated from the godlessness that you had and you've received a holy status.

[ 5 : 54 ] As Paul said in the very first verse of the letter, they are saints. They are holy ones. They are sanctified. They are God's own possession.

But that's not all. Look at verse 11. Again, Paul tells them that they are also justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of God. You see, here they are.

This is their status as Christians. They stand vindicated before God. God has declared them righteous before him. They have been put in right relationship with God.

They have been justified. So this is who these Corinthians are. God's holy ones. Brothers and sisters in Christ. Washed free from the filth of past sins.

Sanctified. Declared righteous by God and before God through Jesus Christ. And all this has happened through Jesus. And it's all done in the spirit of God.

[ 6 : 54 ] They are converted people. People who have left the age, this age in one sense, in that they're so different from it. People who are of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

People of a Trinitarian God. People of the age to come. That's who they are. By the way, if you're Christian, that's who you are as well.

Okay, if you're Christian, that is who you are. So that's who they are. Let's do some digging and see what they are not. Because there's the opposite as well, isn't there, here?

So if you dig in this passage, you'll see Paul telling us who they are not. As well as who they are.

Look at verse 1. Paul tells them, they are not the unrighteous.

Now look at verse 6. Paul tells them, they're not unbelievers. Now look at verses 9 to 11. Paul talks about wrongdoers. And he lists a sort of negative to the Ten Commandments.

[ 7 : 52 ] There are ten characteristics about those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. In other words, ten characteristics of those who are not saints. They are fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers and robbers.

So, there's who the Corinthians are. There's who they're not. And do you see what Paul is saying to them? He's saying to them, you are not that.

You are this. But you're acting like that. You're acting as though you were not believers. Your actions betray that you have your feet firmly planted in a pagan mindset.

And you are acting like pagans. You are acting like the ones you are not. And you're not acting like the ones that you are. So, the big question, of course, is if they want to act as they are, what should they be doing?

What would being what you are mean for these Corinthians in their practical everyday lives? Well, it would not look like this.

[ 9 : 06 ] It would not look like taking your brother or your sister to a pagan court before people who don't know Jesus. No. It would look very different from that.

And Paul tells us what it would look like in these verses. Take a look at them. Look at verses 1 to 2.

If the Corinthians are really saints, if they are those who are going to judge the world, if they are those who are going to judge even angels, then don't go running off to pagans to solve your

disputes.

Instead, point 2, why not at the very least find a wise believer who can help you sort it out? Surely you've got someone around like that. Or even better, point 3, think radically and thoroughly Christian as you are.

And that's the focus of verses 7 and 8. Look at them with me. Paul says, In fact, In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.

Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud and believers at that.

[10:20] I wonder if you can see what Paul is saying. Can you hear him? In my view, he's thinking about Jesus. Jesus who loved even when he wasn't loved. Jesus who was treated badly and endured it for the sake of others.

Jesus who told his disciples that when someone hits you in the face, turn to them the other cheek, give them both your coat and your cloak when they want to take your coat off you.

Go the extra mile with them when someone forces you to come with them. Can you see what he's saying? Can you hear what Paul is saying? Can you now understand his point in verses 7 and 8? Can you hear what he's saying?

He's saying something like this. Don't be who you are not. No, be who you are. Reflect your status in your actions.

Let it filter down to what you do. In your actions, be who you are. You are Christians. For goodness sake, be like it. Friends, I want to tell you a story.

[11:27] I want to tell you a story about a friend of mine who was a friend in Christian ministry. And some things happened to him that resulted in him having to exit Christian ministry. His family fell apart and his life to some extent fell apart as well.

Anyway, I tried to keep being a friend to him because he'd been a good mate and he was a strong Christian friend and he remained in the Christian faith. However, he found that some other Christian people actually distanced themselves from him.

And anyway, one day we were talking about all of this and he wondered out loud to me. He said to me, he suggested to me that I kept looking after him because I was simply a good man.

Well, friends, let me tell you, I don't think that's why I kept friends with him. I know that I'm not simply a good man. I know that I'm a forgiven man.

And I know that I'm one who has been forgiven a huge debt. And I know that I'm one who was once far away and has now been brought near in Jesus. And I know that God was incredibly and miraculously forgiving toward me in his son Jesus.

[12:41] And I know that I must love even as I have been loved. That I must be who I am in Jesus Christ. And that means I must treat others even as God has treated me.

Now, my friend was wrong. I didn't love him because I was a good man. I loved him and kept friends with him because I know how God has treated me.

And I want to be like the God I worship and know. I know I'm not a good man by nature. But I know that God is the ultimate good and he has shown me ultimate good and I am called to be like him.

Can you hear what I'm saying? Can you hear what Paul's saying? Paul, aside, this specific example, sorry, it looks at this specific example of lawsuits and he gives a principle.

And the principle is that we should be in our actions who we are because of Jesus. We should be in our actions who we are because of Jesus.

[13:48] God's gift in Jesus demands a shift in our behavior. It demands a transformation in our thought and in our actions. Okay, let's now turn to verses 12 to 20.

Now, as I do so, I need to say that I'm going to spend even less time on these verses than the first 11 verses. And I'm going to do this despite the difficulty. It has been said by New Testament scholars that these are amongst the most difficult verses in the New Testament.

So I'll let you know that ahead of time and I'm going to make it look as so it's relatively simple, which it is not. At least I hope I'm going to make it look as so it's relatively simple. Let's have a look at it together.

First, let's see what occasion gives rise to Paul's comments here. Now, I reckon that for most of us, we are not going to understand this for a moment, but I'm going to tell you what I think is giving rise to Paul's comments.

Look at verses 15 and 16. Look at what Paul says. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? [14:55] Never. Do you not know that whoever is united with a prostitute becomes one body with her, for it is said the two shall become one flesh? It's because of these verses that I think that Paul is dealing with prostitution in general rather than sexual sin in general.

That is, I don't think these verses are about sexual sin in general. I think they're about a specific sexual sin. And that's why I've given the heading in my outline, fraternising with prostitutes, because I think that's what they were doing.

That is, I think some of them were going off to prostitutes because it was a fairly common practice in the early, in the first century world. And Paul has lots to teach us by talking about this one specific instance about sexuality in our contemporary world.

By the way, before I go on, I want to make one observation. In our world, we tend to think that we are more sexually promiscuous than any other generation in humanity, in human history.

We tend to think, you know, we've arrived in terms of sexual ethics and so on, you know, or in terms of sexual promiscuity. Everyone before us, they just didn't know, but we know, post-Margaret Mead and all that sort of stuff, okay?

[16:10] But friends, let me tell you that sexual promiscuity, sexual sin, sexual licentiousness, sexual exposure is nothing new. And the Roman and Greek world could tell us a lot about it.

We think we know something new. They have been there before us. It is not a new problem. The availability of sex in the contemporary world is nothing new.

It existed in the ancient world. The variety of sexual activity that exists in our world is nothing new. It existed in the ancient world. The complexity of sexual depravity is nothing new.

It existed in the ancient world. So when Paul grapples with it here, he has some things to teach us in our contemporary world. Oh, look, I acknowledge that the internet brings its own particular problems for us.

However, the principles in the Bible about sexuality and sexual practice can help us to be real as God's people in the contemporary world.

[17:18] So with that said, let's get to work on this text and see what God has to teach us. Now in my reading, I've become convinced that what we have here in these verses is a determination by Paul, an assertion by Paul, and three arguments by Paul.

Let's have a look at them fairly quickly. Determination, verse 12, assertion, 13 and 14, and 15 actually, I think, and in argument, 16 on. Let's get started with verse 12.

Now, you will notice that in verses 12 and 13, there are various quotation marks. Do you see them in our versions of the Bible? Little quotation marks as though they're little sayings there. There's no ground really to say that they're there.

It's just scholars have thought these are little quotation marks of the Corinthians, Christians. This is what they kept quoting to each other. Anyway, I'm not sure that's true. So I want to try and read it a different way.

Let's look at verse 11. Paul states that this is who Christians are. They are washed. They are sanctified. They are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God.

[18:25] In other words, who are Christians? They have a clear status before God of forgiveness, holiness, sainthood. We know that this conveyed great privileges.

If you're a Christian, that is who you are. And the risk is that those great privileges are abused. And the risk is that if you thought your status was enormous, then you also thought your freedom was enormous.

Does that make sense? And the Corinthians did that. They thought they were kings. We heard earlier on in Corinthians. Kings can do anything they like, can't they? Now you think your status is enormous, you think your privileges are enormous.

So Paul says, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. I wonder if you can hear what he's saying.

He's saying, we Christians have a new status and a new freedom. However, this does not for a moment mean you should just do what you like when you like.

[19:27] No, you should work out what's beneficial, that is, what is good for you and for others. You should make sure that you distance yourself from the things that might trap you and dominate you.

That's determination number one for Paul. And I want to urge you to follow him. Head towards the things, can you see what he's saying here? Head towards the things that are beneficial and head away from the things that dominate and enslave you.

Friends, I wonder if, this is my little aside, this is a great rule for those of you who are trapped by things sexual. Now here's a great rule. Determine to exercise some self-control in these things. Deliberately head toward the things that are beneficial or good for you and deliberately head away from the things that dominate and enslave you.

I reckon it's great advice for people. You know, when you come across things sexually that are good for you, run toward them. When you come across things sexually that are bad for you, run away from them.

[ 20 : 40 ] Okay, don't let them dominate and enslave you. Deliberately head away from things that dominate and enslave. Don't spend your time justifying whether it's okay or not.

if it is not good for you, don't go near it. If it is not good for you, run away from it. Friends, I've been there, you know, I'm a sexual being like all of you.

You can go through all of these legalisations about, you know, whether something's right or something's wrong. Friends, you know underneath whether it's good for you. If it's not good for you, don't go near it. If it is good for you, feed it.

Okay, don't go near things that dominate and enslave you. Friends, if you end up trying to justify everything that you do, you'll end up in legalism. No, just remember those two things.

Head toward the things that are good and beneficial and head away from the things that will dominate and enslave you. And that goes for sexual ethics or any other part of life.

[ 21 : 44 ] Anything that's going to dominate and enslave you, run. Run as fast as you can away from it. Things that are good for you, dwell on them and take them on board and get lots of them.

Okay, let's have a look at the assertion by Paul in verses 13 and 14. Look at what he says. I'm going to go through it just bit by bit. Paul says, Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food and God will destroy both one and the other.

Let me tell you what I think he's saying. He's saying, look, the created order is structured, really, when you think about it. The stomach finds its proper function in relation to food.

Now, that makes sense, doesn't it? Stomach is designed for food. It's meant to process it. It's meant to deal with it. But both food and stomach will have their day when they will be destroyed.

that is, you will die or your body will be done away with and you won't need food and you won't need a stomach or whatever. Okay? That's, you know, both will be destroyed.

[ 22 : 57 ] Now, the second statement. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Now, the danger is when you're thinking about your body and sex, you think the same way as stomachs and food.

Can you see that? The danger when you're thinking about the body and sex is you think it's the same as stomach and food. But they're not the same, are they?

I think our contemporary world thinks that they are the same just like the Corinthian world thought that they are the same but they are not because the body is for the Lord and the body will not be destroyed.

We will have a resurrected body. Look at verse 14. Paul talks about the body and he asserts this, God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Bodies are not made for sex, believe it or not, they are made for the Lord. Bodies are not made for sex, they are made for the Lord.

[ 24 : 00 ] Moreover, the physical body we have now is inextricably linked with our resurrection body which will be raised with Christ on the last, that is, which will be, we will have that form when we are raised with Christ on the last day.

You see, bodies are not just vessels like a stomach is a receptacle for food. Bodies are not just vessels, they are a place where our relationship with God is worked out.

They are a place where the Lordship of God, the Lordship of Christ, is practiced. See, Paul doesn't really care so much, God doesn't care so much about what you put in your stomach.

The New Testament is beautiful in that way, it says, you know, it doesn't really matter too much, there's no things such as clean and unclean food, you can eat whatever you like. So God doesn't care so much about what you put in your stomach because there's no morality connected with food, is there?

There's no moral food and no immoral food. Food is just amoral. It doesn't have any morality tied to it. But God does care about what you do with your sex organs.

[ 25 : 13 ] After all, what you do with your sex organs does have to do with morality because if you're a married man and you use your sex organs or a woman and use your sex organs outside of your marriage, you have been immoral.

that is, you have sinned. Whereas eating pork is not a sin, at least not for us. Okay? And eating various other foods, they may not be good for you, but they're not sinful.

But committing sex outside the bounds God talks about, that, that's sinful, that's immoral. So what Paul is saying is, so let's see if we can tie together Paul's determination and his assertion.

I think what Paul is saying is something like this. When you're choosing actions that you will or won't do, think about these criteria. Will this action help your relationship with God or not?

Will it threaten your relationship with God? Does this action compromise or defile your body? Does this action take some part of me that belongs to my relationship with God and commit it to another relationship?

[ 26 : 33 ] With that, Paul launches into three supporting arguments. Have a look at them. Each one begins with the words, do you not know? See the three little do you not know there? First one occurs in verse 15.

Paul says, do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Therefore, should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?

Now, I wonder if you can just get the gist of what's going on here. He's saying that the Christian's body is a member of Christ's body. It belongs to Christ. So, if you take your physical body and take it down the road and join it to a prostitute, then you're taking something which belongs to Christ and joining it to someone who personifies a lifestyle of rebellion against God.

And you're joining that body which belongs to Christ to that person whose disposition is away from God. That cannot be on for a Christian.

Now, let's go to argument two. You can see it in verses 16 to 18. Paul says, do you not know that whatever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

[ 27 : 49 ] For it is said the two shall be one flesh. but anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication.

Every sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Can you see the logic? Paul says, all sexual unions create a one-sex union, just like Genesis 2 talks about a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

Okay? So any sexual union creates a one-flesh union along the lines of Genesis 2. However, if you're a Christian, then you're united to the Lord and have also a spiritual union with him.

Prostitutes represent the powers of evil in the world, not them themselves, but their practice, who exalt him and glorify him, breaking God's order.

So a Christian who takes their body and joins it to a prostitute is committing a sort of spiritual adultery. It's not just a physical adultery, it's a spiritual adultery.

[ 29 : 06 ] They are breaking or disrupting or violating the spiritual union that they have with the Lord Jesus Christ. Friends, I might say that it's possible to do this also without it being a prostitute.

With the other person being someone who's leading you astray from Christ, it could be a similar sort of thing. You see, but they're also, when this happens, sinning against their own body because it's now dedicated to Christ.

So can you see what Paul says? He says, run away from it! Flee fornication! And then Paul switches to argument number three. Look at what he says in verses 19 and 20.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own, for you were bought with a price.

Therefore, glorify God in your body. Can you see what Paul's doing here? He's saying, look, your body is a shrine of God.

[ 30 : 17 ] It's a temple of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit who sanctified you. You are his. You were bought with the price of the death of God's own son.

You are God's now. You belong to him. You are his slave for him to order around, as it were, the great thing is he's a loving and wonderful master, but you are his slave now.

Consequently, you're not permitted to do everything. You're not free to just do what you like. No, you belong to your master to do what he wants you to do.

So, you may not do whatever you wish. The only goal that you have, if you wanted to summarize it into one little statement, the only goal that you have now is to glorify your master, to glorify God with your body.

That's what your master wants. He wants you to bring glory to him. God with love to them. So, what does all this mean? So, what is the big question. Friends, in this area of sexual ethics, we must not buy into where our world is.

[ 31 : 45 ] Our world says we're sexual beings. I've got these desires, I must satisfy them. I've got these lusts, I must satisfy them.

Now, friends, that is not who we are. We are God's people, bought with the price of the blood of his own son.

We are his to do what he wishes. urges. We are not people who can just get sucked in by this mentality that says, you've got sexual urges, just satisfy them.

No. We have a greater allegiance, which is our allegiance to God, not to our body. Our sexual wants are not like our stomach's wants, that you go and eat something to satisfy.

It's not the same. We must say no to certain sexual desires, or the practice of them, in certain ways. That is not on for us as Christians.

[ 32 : 57 ] We are gods, bought with a price. We must glorify him in our bodies. Friends, everything in our culture will work against that for you.

Everything will tell you, if you want it, take it. if you feel this, follow it. No, that is not who we are.

We are saints. We have been washed. We have been sanctified. We have been justified. We have the spirit within us.

We are joined to God. We are joined to the Lord Jesus. We cannot take those things and mix them with incompatible things. It is just not on.

Yet, friends, the pressure will be on us in every corner of our existence to do exactly that. We must not. I don't know what it means for you. You can work it out for yourself.

[ 34 : 01 ] Friends, a couple more things to say tonight. I sort of skipped over verses 9 and 10. Do you see that list? I just read them to you very briefly. Let me read them to you again.

verses 9 and 10. Even though we speak in this way, I'll read from verse 9.

Sorry, I've got the wrong one. Let me just find it. Verse 6. Sorry, chapter 6, verse 9. Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, and the greedy, and drunkards, and revilers, and evildoers, none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, why do you reckon he's putting that in there? I think everything before these verses lead up to these verses, and the things that come after these verses rely on these verses.

[ 35 : 15 ] First, what are they doing? They are warning us. Friends, if you act in this way, then you demonstrate that you do not belong to and have no place in God's kingdom of the washed, the sanctified, the justified people of God.

Now, friends, I reckon Christians say that of the sexual sins that are there. Can you see the list there? See the sexual sins? Christians will go on rallies, they will write letters to politicians, they will do everything to stop homosexual practice.

I don't really hear them doing terribly much about greed. And yet Paul's even handed here about these things, isn't he? he says, such people who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Friends, that is a warning for you, let me tell you. It is a warning. Those things that are here, you practice those things, you demonstrate you've got one or more feet outside the camp.

That's not what Christians are. Christians are not greedy people. Once they start being greedy, they're demonstrating that they've got the characteristics that belong to outside the kingdom.

[ 36 : 32 ] Keep going that way, you'll not inherit the kingdom of God. It's a severe warning. But they also function in a different way as an encouragement, as an encouragement to be different.

Friends, we are not like that list of ten things. We are more like the ten things that occur in the Ten Commandments. Lovers of God and lovers of our neighbour.

That's what we're like. We're not those ten things, we're these other ten things. We are people who look like people who love God and love their neighbour.

So this is an encouragement. You're not that, so don't be like that. Act like who you are. And that means in your grievances against your brothers and sisters, and that means sorting things out internally or personally and not going to pagan courts, and that may mean suffering financial loss. Being Christ-like might mean that. But you've got to do it. Don't, you know, don't be greedy. Don't be idolaters. Don't be adulterers. Even if it's only in your brain, don't be it.

[ 37 : 43 ] Because that's not who you are. That's not who God made you. That's not how you've been formed in Christ. Okay, let's move on. Just finally, I'll wrap this up.

Do you remember, friends, do you remember the word I taught you last week? Cruciform. Remember what it means? Christ-shaped. Remember I want us to use this word, cruciform, because that's what we are to be.

We are to be cross-shaped, Christ-shaped, Christ-centered, cross-centered, cruciform. form. no right to no right to him.

We'll think a little financial loss is worth bearing, rather than take a brother or a sister to court, or find someone else who can sort out your dispute who's Christian. That makes sense? even in that area. That's what cruciform means. It means sorting things out, not as pagans do, but as Christians do.

[ 39 : 14 ] Next one, in relation to sexual ethics, what will it mean? It will mean, I have been bought with a price. I belong to Christ as Christ's slave.

I give myself to him. And if he says, run away from this, I will run. If he says, embrace this in sexual ethics, I will embrace it, and think it's okay, because he is my master.

So cruciform means being like Jesus who died for me, letting him dominate my existence. cruciform means letting the cross filter down into every area of life, letting it shape everything that you do.

Let's just think about the most simple bit of Christian ethics. Why is selfishness wrong? Why is selfishness wrong? Because if you're selfish, what are you doing?

You're saying everything is oriented toward me and my satisfying, my desires, and my satisfying my wishes, my satisfying my wants, it is me that is most important.

[ 40 : 33 ] A cruciformed life would say, it is Christ who is most important. It is his will that is most important. And I will therefore be selfless in order that Christ might be formed not only in me, but in others.

do you see the difference? Christ is my master. Christ's cross forms my existence. I will do that in every area of life.

In your family life, in your workplace life, in every area of life. Let us pray. Father God, we think of these two issues that Paul is dealing with here.

There's Christians taking each other to court, Christians thinking that they can do anything sexually. And Father, we acknowledge that we see some of these dispositions within ourselves, dispositions in our relationships with others to get our own way all the time and even to mistreat people in order to do that or to treat them in ways that pagans would but are not acceptable for Christians.

Father, we think in the area of sexual ethics that we've really bought in far too much to the mindset of our peers who think that an urge means it must be satisfied and have not been shaped by the fact that we are your people, bought with the price of the blood of your own son and that you are our master through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 42 : 24 ] Father, we pray that in every area of life we would glorify God in our bodies. And Father, we pray that you'd start with us in our minds to straighten out our minds so that they are Christ-shaped, so that our lives themselves might be Christ-shaped.

Make us your cruciform people, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.