

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

January 13, 2019/January 16, 2019

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

"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. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ 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! ¹⁶ 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." ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

FIRST THOUGHTS

- What is an example of something that is permissible but not beneficial?
- Discuss this quote and how it relates to things that are "permissible, but not beneficial" and things that are "immoral": "Right and wrong aren't always our cue, but rather what is the wise thing to do."
- How would you characterize our culture's view of immorality?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

It's easy to embrace the notion, "What I do with my own body is up to me. It's nobody else's business." In the first century, some of the Corinthian Christians thought similarly. They had come out of lifestyles of physical indulgence, whether in eating or drinking or sexual expression. They supposed that now, as followers of Jesus, everything was still permitted. In this week's lesson we will consider how Paul helped these immature believers come to a better understanding of how their bodies were to be used. No doubt they were surprised to learn that they did not have the right to do with their bodies whatever they wanted. Indeed, their physical bodies did not even belong to them.

After Paul addressed the issue of division in the Corinthian church (1:10–4:21), he turned his focus to another report that reached his ears: sexual immorality in the church. It was the kind of sexual immorality that was not even tolerated among the Gentiles (5:1). A man was sleeping with his stepmother. This notorious case of sexual immorality needed to be confronted.

In 6:1-11, Paul dealt with the problem of lawsuits among believers. Paul had reminded the Corinthian believers that they had every right to judge and evaluate each other since they were members of one another in the body of Christ (5:12). Couldn't issues be resolved amongst themselves? Did they really need to go before worldly people to arbitrate matters between believers? For Paul, this was a shameful thing (6:5) and he redirected them toward humility and selflessness (6:7). In 6:9-11, Paul resumed his exhortation concerning sexual immorality, which set up his comments in this week's Scripture passage (6:12-20).

The verses of this week's lesson fall within Paul's larger discussion of Christian liberty and freedom in chapters 5–11. It seems like individual believers in the Corinthian church were only concerned about themselves and their own pleasures or status. Whether the topic was sexual immorality, marriage, food, or the Lord's Supper, Paul exhorted them to honor the Lord through holy living and to honor one another selflessly as members of the body of Christ.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

FOCUSED ON CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

> Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-14

- How would you define "Christian freedom"?
- How did Paul correct the Corinthian believers' misunderstanding about Christian freedom?
- What had the Corinthian believers' misunderstood about the purpose of the body?

JOINED WITH CHRIST

> Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-17

- ° What did Corinthian believers misunderstand about their bodies in these verses?
- ° What did Corinthian believers misunderstand about the nature of sex?

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

> Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

- ° What must the Corinthian believers do to strengthen their ability to flee sexual immorality?
- ° What are you doing to strengthen your ability to flee sexual immorality? What are some practical ways we can avoid this temptation?
- ° How did Paul urge the Corinthian believers to view their bodies?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

Believers honor God through holy living.

- ° Unless one lives in a vacuum, no one can escape the widespread exposure of immorality in today's culture. How can Paul's challenge to the Corinthian believers strengthen our resolve to resist the practice of immorality and live holy before God?
- ° Take some time right now in silent reflection. Ask yourself, "What is one thing I struggle with in terms of immorality?"
- ° Who will hold you accountable in this area of struggle? We cannot do this in our own strength but through the power of the Holy Spirit and in community. Revealing brings healing.

Personal Challenge: As Christians, let's all resolve to honor God by the way we live. Let's guard our minds from the influence of immorality. This means filtering what we watch on television and other media as well as being careful of what we read, and to who and what we give our attention. Contemporary culture is not silent on the issue of immorality. Turn on the tv and see how sex sells. Hamburger commercials even glamorize risqué behavior. Most shows portray immorality as normal. Secular media continues to scoff at traditional (biblical) views of marriage. Are we called to experience happiness or pursue holiness? What are teaching the next generation of believers about immorality and what is permissible versus beneficial? Believers are not immune from the power of sexual immorality. We must aggressively turn away from every temptation.

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-13
- Is it harder or easier today for married couples to keep their commitments? Why do you think that is?
- What advice would you give someone who is about to get married?

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

13th - Genesis 31-33; Luke 13 | **14th** - Genesis 34-36; Luke 14 | **15th** - Genesis 37-38; Psalm 7; Luke 15 | **16th** - Genesis 39-41; Luke 16 | **17th** - Genesis 42-43; Psalm 5; Luke 17 | **18th** - Genesis 44-46; Luke 18 | **19th** - Genesis 47-48; Psalm 10; Luke 19