

1 Corinthians

Chapter 6:12-20

April 14, 1996

- **1 Corinthians Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Ungodly divisions result from man's wisdom.
- Chapter 2 Carnal man cannot understand our Spiritual God.
- Chapter 3 All Christians will have their labors tried by fire.
- Chapter 4 Boasting in our leaders puffs up and destroys fellowship.
- Chapter 5 Maintain the purity of the Church.
- Chapter 6 Do not dispute before the world and do not partake in sexual immorality.

- **1 Corinthians 6:1-20**

- **Introduction & Review**

In this section, Paul continues to address various problems within the church at Corinth. In the first half of this chapter, Paul taught on the sin of disputing between brothers and the further sin of seeking justice before a worldly court. His primary points were that it was an abomination and a denigration of the witness of the church to wrangle in public and secondly that our attitude should be that we should rather be wronged or cheated before we would bring a lawsuit against a brother to court.

The Roman Empire was known for licentiousness but within the Empire the name Corinthian became synonymous with extreme immorality. To "Corinthianize" meant to act in a sexually immoral manner even as defined by the immoral Greeks or Romans. With this as a background it is understandable that this issue would need to be addressed by Paul.

- **Exposition**

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

¹² All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.¹³ Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them.

- This is one of the most amazing concepts in Christianity. The world wants to know a list of all the things that it is permitted to do or commanded not to do so that it has a list by which to determine how it is doing. However, in Christianity we find that when we are in Christ, that is, we are purchased by Him, we find liberty. Now, this liberty is to be used to glorify God, not so that we can squander our blessings on our own desires. We find that coming under the Lordship of Christ is actually liberating.
- Too frequently we want our religion to be in nice tidy little packages which we can tuck away and pull out when the time is necessary. We don't want to work or think diligently we just want the answer or a list of things we aren't supposed to do. Thankfully, Christianity isn't like that; there are many things in the Scriptures which are difficult to understand and require study and counsel. God has built the world in such a way that knowing Him and His will more fully can be accomplished by diligent study. It isn't the study which produces the fruit but it is God who honors the labor and grants the increase thereby causing fruitfulness. It is imperative that the Church confess and repent of its simple mindedness. Let's pray that God would grant us faith and strength such that we can seek after Him diligently and as we do so, that He might reveal Himself even more fully.
- Although we are given liberty in Christ, we are also under the authority of the Word of God. There are those things which are expressly prohibited which we have not been given liberty to partake in. But there are many things which are very much a blessing from God which can become a curse. Another way of saying is this that Christ has given us the Spirit of God which frees us from the curse of the law so that we might fulfill the law in Christ. The freedom from the curse is our liberty. We are lords of all things; only we must not abuse that lordship in such a way as to become in bondage by a lack of self control and thereby come under subjection to outward things which ought to be under subjection to us.
- In the final point of this verse, Paul makes a comparison; the first part is by reminding us that food has been given to us by God for our bodies and our bodies have been given to us for food. It is the way God has made the world and He is Lord over both of them.

Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.¹⁴ And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

- Now, he moves on to contrast his last point by comparing the stomach with the entire body and sexual immorality. There is a complete inconsistency when our bodies are engaged in sexual immorality. Two points are to be derived from his teaching: First, we see that if we have been purchased by the death of Christ then our bodies are not ours; they are the Lords. Our bodies don't belong to us such that we can engage them in this kind of activity. Secondly, we see that our bodies were not made for the immorality. This behavior goes contrary to the express purposes that God had when fashioning our bodies. This is not difficult to see when we consider many of the age old sexual perversions that exist they don't require a tremendous amount of insight just to know that they are unnatural. They go contrary to who we are as created beings.

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

- Notice in the next two sections that Paul says "do you not know...?" three times. His rhetorical question is either answered with a yes, which then leaves them no excuse or it is answered with a no and the implication of Paul's grammar is that they should have known these things. Therefore, no one can claim ignorance of these issues. We will not be allowed to use the excuse of forgetting as a license for sin.
- When Christ died on the cross as a ransom for the Elect, He paid a price which purchased them. This is called our redemption. Furthermore, not only did Christ purchase our souls, but He purchased our bodies. When we are in Christ our bodies belong to Him as well.
- Even though a harlot is not a man's wife, a sexual union does produce the effect of becoming one with her. Given that our bodies don't belong to us, who are we to take Christ's purchased possession and join it with such immorality?

¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. NKJV

- Paul's command is to flee sexual immorality; not to turn and fight it head on; not to run away always looking behind longing for what we are missing.
- These verses have historically been used to support not smoking, dieting, exercising and other types of behaviors. But notice here that Paul explains that sexual immorality is completely *different* than all other sins. All other sins that we commit are considered *outside* the body. Sexual immorality is a sin *against* the body and we don't own the body. Although the other things very well may be sin, they do not affect the body like sexual immorality does. If you are in Christ, the Holy Spirit has taken up residency in you. As you take your body into sexual immorality you bring the Holy Spirit along with you and may such a thing be remorseful to us!
- Christ paid the price to purchase us from our slavery to sin. The purchase secured His ownership not only of our eternal destiny, but also of our physical bodies. As surely as He is the owner of our bodies, He shall surely one day change our bodies to be like His and that physical body we will dwell in forever.