

Glorifying God  
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1 Corinthians 6:12-20

**“What I do with my body is my business!” True, false, or a little of both? Why should what I do with my own body matter to anyone else? If I’m a follower of Christ, why does what I do with my body matter to Jesus? Isn’t He only concerned about my soul? If my actions are done in private or between “consenting adults” doesn’t that solve the problem?**

- Here is a term we find shocking: Religious Prostitution.
- In the first century city of Corinth not only was prostitution rampant; it was actually practiced by church people. In the temple to the god Aphrodite history tells us there were over a thousand prostitutes.
- *“[S]ome of the Corinthians saw no harm in visiting the temple prostitutes ...and committing fornication.”*
- In Greek thought, the soul was your higher self and your body was just the “tent” your soul lived in. Since the body would one day be destroyed, they rationalized that whatever you did with your body didn’t matter – it was just a biological function. Sex was just like eating – just satisfying an appetite.
- We may shake our heads at those early Christians justifying “religious prostitution” or other sexual immorality. But how many professing believers today buy into a similar line of thinking by saying *“what I do with my body between consenting adults is my business.”* Or they say, *“What I take into my mind through the Internet isn’t hurting anyone.”*
- Paul wrote to the church at Corinth to straighten them out on several things and in his passage it was about sexual immorality.
- The big idea: Believers honor God through holy living and that includes glorifying Him with our bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:12–20 (ESV)

## Flee Sexual Immorality

<sup>12</sup> “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.

<sup>13</sup> “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other.

- Let’s pause and look at those verses. Paul is quoting two popular slogans of that day that people were using to justify their behavior.
- The first saying was, “*all things are lawful for me.*” In that day going to a religious prostitute was accepted by society and not illegal.
- Paul countered that argument: “*It might not be illegal, but is it helpful?*”
- **How would that apply to a Christian today? We’re saved by grace and not by following rules, right? If something isn’t illegal or even immoral, then why should a Christian give it a second thought?**
- Then he goes further, “*It might not be illegal, but has it mastered you?*”
- **What did Paul mean by being “mastered” by some kind of behavior? What do we call that today? Any examples other than food or sex?**
- The second saying people used was, “food for the stomach, and the stomach for food;” The Corinthian culture believed sex was just another physical appetite like eating. Paul said there is a big difference between satisfying your appetite for food and your appetite for sex.
- Because Paul was specifically warning about sexual sin, he shifts to discussing the body. At the end of verse 13 Paul says,

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.<sup>14</sup> And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

- Jesus came back from the dead in a “bodily” resurrection just as all of us will be raised one day in a glorified body; our body is important.

- Remember, the Corinthians thought the soul was what mattered and your body was just a disposable “tent” your soul lived in.

<sup>15</sup> 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 prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Or 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.” <sup>17</sup> But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

- Paul said, when we are saved Jesus doesn’t just claim our souls; even our physical bodies are “united” to him. Therefore, anything you do with your body involves Christ himself. Then he quotes Genesis 2:24 that said Adam and Eve in sexual union became “one flesh.”
- There is no such thing as “casual sex.” Here’s why:
- In this context of prostitution or other sexual immorality, Paul gave a jarring mental image. When a follower of Christ went into a prostitute they were taking Jesus right along with them because (verse 16) when you are joined with someone sexually you become one body with that person.
- Paul was quoting scripture but he was also stating some scientific fact.
- Sex stimulates the brain releasing chemicals like dopamine, oxytocin, and vasopressin that create a brain bond between the two people.<sup>ii</sup> It’s not just a physical encounter. [Illustration: Steve Arterburn’s comments on men, pornography, and negative feelings toward their wives.]
- Sexual activity is not like eating junk food; it forms chemical bonds and rewires the brains of the people involved. So Paul warned them:

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

- **Why “flee” vs stroll? How would you define “sexual immorality?”**

- Paul goes even further about the physical body of a believer.
- He concludes with the strongest point of the whole passage:

<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- **Why not say our body was the “house” or “home;” why “temple?”**
- When we are saved, Christ claims our bodies for righteousness and not for sin. He paid a high price through His death on the cross so He could use our bodies for holy purposes: to “glorify God in our body.”
- If Jesus paid the price we are not our own, we belong to Him both body and soul. He owns our “temple.”
- **How does realizing that you were bought for a price encourage you to honor God with how you use your body?**

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church to correct their behavior. In this case, he was warning them about sexual immorality. Paul made his point by countering two popular slogans of that time.
- Here’s a slogan from today: *“What happens in Vegas, \_\_\_\_\_.”*
- There are parts of Nevada where prostitution is legal. For that matter, if two consenting adults go up to a hotel room to have sex the police won’t come knocking on the door.
- But for a follower of Christ, that slogan should read: *“What happens in Vegas, includes Jesus.” “What happens in front of my computer includes Jesus.”* The harmful substance I put in my body includes Jesus. Whatever I do with my body, Jesus is along for the ride.
- The point: If scripture commands us not to do something it’s clear-cut. But what about those gray areas? What we do with our bodies may not be illegal, or in some cases even immoral, but is it “helpful?” Does it glorify God?

- This week as we make decisions about how we will use body, we need to remember it's His "temple." We were bought with a price so we are commanded to use our bodies to glorify God.

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<sup>i</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 589). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.charismanews.com/opinion/39405-science-proves-premarital-sex-rewires-the-brain>