

Honor God With Your Body [Slide 1] 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Read This Week Magazine survey. We have a national health crises in rising rates of obesity and an opioid epidemic on top of our other alcohol and drug addictions. Sexual immorality pervades our culture with STD's damaging our bodies. We cut ourselves and castrate ourselves in an attempt to deal with our emotional pain. We have figured out almost every possible way to damage and pollute the bodies God has given us. It's time we start honoring God with our bodies.

We continue our sermon series in 1 Corinthians by looking today at 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. 1 Corinthians is the seventh book in the New Testament after the four Gospels, Acts and Romans. I invite you to turn to that passage today. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. I'm going to begin with the conclusion or the general principle the passage teaches and then look at some of the specific applications Paul uses to illustrate the general principle.

[Slide 2] We will begin with the general principle in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Let's read those verses. Read. When a person trusts in Jesus Christ as their Savior, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity comes to live within them. He lives with us to help us live the Christian life. He teaches us. He guides us. He convicts us of sin. He forms Christ-like character within us. He encourages us. He empowers us. A Christian carries the Holy Spirit with them wherever they go.

[Slide 3] Since the Holy Spirit lives within you, Paul rightly says that your body functions as a temple for the Holy Spirit. Paul's audience was very familiar with temples. The Jews were familiar with their temple in Jerusalem. The Gentiles were familiar with the temples dedicated to the Greek and Roman gods. Temples were beautiful structures. They were kept clean and well-maintained. They were protected from vandals and sacrilegious people. How you treated the temple illustrated what you thought of the god behind the temple.

So, let me just ask those questions of your body at the outset? Do you keep it clean and well maintained? Do you protect it from those people or things that would harm or damage it? Do you realize that how you treat your own body illustrates what you think about God?

[Slide 4] You see, God owns your body. Actually he twice owns it. He personally created or formed your body in your mother's uterus. Under inspiration by the Holy Spirit, David proclaims in Psalm 139:12-14, "Read." You did not manufacture your body, God did. Therefore he owns you and has the right to do with you as he pleases. Thank God that his bent toward us is of love and wanting to bless us, so what he says to us about our body is for our good.

Paul mentions the second reason God owns you in verse 20. You were bought with a price, referring to the death of Jesus Christ. Not only did God originally own you, but when you sold yourself into slavery to the Devil and to sin, God bought you back. Jesus Christ died on the cross to ransom you or to redeem you back to himself. He created you and then he paid for you. He twice owns you. Before you do anything with that body of yours you should check with Jesus as to whether he wants you to act on your latest impulse. Did you think to ask God whether to purchase that nice chocolate covered do-nut? Did you ask God before you got that tattoo or piercing? Did you ask God about dyeing your hair or coloring your nails? I'm not

trying to imply that God won't spot you a do-nut or allow a tattoo or piercing or even changing the color of your hair. All I want to know is: Did you ask?

If you don't ask, you are living as if you owned your body and that the only opinion that counts is yours and I'm telling you that's not true. You don't own your body and the only opinion that really counts is God's. I've purposefully provided examples of the most mundane of decisions to make my point. If you should consult God even at this level, then certainly you should ask him about whether or not you should start or change an exercise regime, or whether you are going to be an omnivore, a vegetarian, a vegan, a pescaterian or whatever. That's pescaterian, not Presbyterian. One is about adding fish to your diet, the other is about doing all things in moderation.

Whatever you consume in terms of food, alcohol, vitamins, supplements, energy drinks, soft drinks, etc. needs to be a decision you let God speak to. Whether you play high contact sports needs to be a decision where God has a say. Surgeries, both medically necessary and optional need God's input. Whatever impacts God's body should have God's input.

[Slide 5] So far we have been looking primarily at the negative side of not damaging God's body. The positive side is that you are to use God's body to bring glory and honor to him. This does not necessarily mean that you have to add a lot of activities to your schedule. It may mean changing the way you do things so that God receives more honor and credit. Maybe you're going to the gym now includes forming relationships with non-Christians and sharing what Jesus has done for you. It could mean changing your attitude at work so that you now see yourself as working for Jesus and not just your boss. It could mean getting into a life group or Adult Bible Fellowship or volunteering to serve in some capacity in the church or in the community. It could mean using your creative abilities in music, drawing, dance, writing to produce quality work that points people to God. It could mean using your health issues to express your faith in God. Whatever you do with your body can become an act of worship and bring glory to God.

[Slide 6] Let's look at some specific applications Paul makes beginning in verse 12. Read. Avoid what has the potential to control you. What does Paul mean when he says that all things are lawful or permissible for him? He certainly did not mean this in an absolute sense because he just said in verse nine that fornicators, thieves, the covetous, drunkards, adulterers, etc. would not enter the kingdom of God. He certainly wasn't saying those things were lawful.

Most Bible scholars believe that Paul is quoting a slogan of the Corinthians, "all things are lawful for me", which they had originally gotten from Paul but which they had misapplied. There actually is a lot of freedom in Christianity especially when compared to the OT Law. Christians have no religious dietary restrictions- all things are permissible to eat. We don't have to offer any animal sacrifices. We can mix fabrics, take a Sabbath rest on any day of the week, let Gentiles into our worship services, eat meat offered to idols and a host of other freedoms. Paul probably did teach in a limited context that all things are now permissible for those who are in Christ, but the Corinthians had apparently taken that slogan and applied it to sexual relations outside of marriage and to other things that were neither profitable or beneficial. So, Paul now clarifies the saying.

We may be permitted to do many things, but not all things will be profitable or beneficial to us. Since we are stewards of this body, which belongs to God, there are things which legally I am allowed to do, but which are not profitable or beneficial to the health and well-being of this body. If this body belongs to God, then I cannot allow something else to master me. I cannot allow myself to be addicted to junk food, cigarettes, prescription drugs, alcohol, sex or any other kind of controlling addiction that negatively affects my body. The Christian apologist, G.K.

Chesterton put it this way: “To have a right to do a thing is not at all the same as to be right in doing it.”

I want to speak briefly to the issue of marijuana use, not because it is the most dangerous drug but because of the modern movement to legalize it and the resulting misconception that it is not harmful. Even if legalized, it falls into the category of not beneficial. It negatively affects the brain, especially that of younger people. Read. Journal of Neuroscience report. It negatively affects your decision making ability leading to physical harm. Read hospital data from 2014.

[Slide 7] In verse 13 Paul mentions both food and immorality. Read. As I mentioned earlier, America has an obesity epidemic and along with it increasing diabetes and other health problems associated with being overweight. Food is one of the hardest areas to master because we all need food to eat. We can't do total abstinence with food like we can do with many other controlling addictions. We have to exercise self-discipline and moderation when it comes to our eating habits. For many of us, the most severe battle between the flesh and the Spirit occurs in the kitchen or at the restaurant.

Listen to this information from a New York Times article by Michael Moss. Read article. The food industry seeks to master you, to manipulate you into buying more and more of their product.

The other example Paul mentions is immorality or fornication. This word is a broad term that refers to any kind of sexual activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman. Paul says the body is not for immorality but for the Lord. Unlike the stomach and the body being designed to eat food, our body was not designed for immorality.

Do you realize that sexually transmitted diseases only exist and can only spread because of immorality? If no one ever committed immorality, within a generation all sexually transmitted diseases would be eliminated. Here is the most recent data on sexually transmitted disease from 2016. Read CDC report. The good news is that teenagers are having less sex. Read World Report.

Paul says that you should not mistreat the body and treat it as disposable because God is going to raise your body in the future. Read verse 14. God is not going to let your body be destroyed by sin. He's going to redeem and resurrect it. Therefore you shouldn't let your body be destroyed by sin either.

[Slide 8] This issue is not just about flesh and blood, disease and decay. There is a spiritual dynamic at play whenever you have sex. It's never just about the body. You engage your spirit and soul when you have sex. Read verses 15-17.

Random sex does not fulfill those deep longings for spiritual intimacy that God designed sex to meet. Listen to this confession from a woman named Amy who admitted to Oprah Winfrey the following: Read.

God designed sex to unite a man and woman into a spirit/soul relationship. This is part of his plan to strengthen and make permanent marriage. Also, because the Holy Spirit is inside of you, he participates with all your activity. In marriage, that is a good thing. The Holy Spirit is there to help you love your spouse fully. But when you go to a harlot you join the members of Christ with a harlot. You subject God to that immoral experience. It is like you flinging a bucket of feces into God's temple and saying, “How do you like your temple now, God?”

Understand that sex inside marriage is good and holy, but outside marriage it is defiled and polluted.

[Slide 9] Paul therefore commands us to keep fleeing immorality. Read verse 18. The Greek command is present tense indicating that you have to keep doing it, keep fleeing immorality.

Anyone living in this sex-saturated culture understands why you have to keep fleeing because we are constantly tempted everywhere we go and everywhere we look to give into the temptation of immorality.

I've spoken before against living together and in the past I have called living together premarital divorce. The data is well established that if you live together you are more likely to split up or if you get married, you are more likely later to get divorced. If you live together you are about 75% likely to break up which is about 170% higher rate compared to married couples. Living together also increases the chances of spouse abuse and child abuse. Government data show that children are at least three times more likely to be emotionally, physically, and sexually abused in a cohabiting household. The reason God tells you to flee immorality is because he loves you and doesn't want to see you damage yourself by all the negatives that come with immorality. You can't test drive a marriage before you get married because the defining reality of marriage is a covenant between you, your fiancée, and God where you covenant to be loyal to them until death parts you. That covenant is what strengthens the marriage and makes it endure. You don't have that unconditional covenant when you're living together. What you have is a loose agreement between two selfish people to try something out to see whether it works or not. It doesn't work most of the time.

For some reason Christian singles have not gotten this message that their body is for the Lord and not for immorality. Read Christian mingle survey results.

[Slide 10] Christ followers don't follow the world, they follow Jesus. You are not following Christ if you are engaging in immorality. If that is what you have been doing, it's time to stop. It is always possible to start obeying the Lord today. He's always ready to work with you when you are ready to live for him. Don't fool yourself. Jesus isn't your real Lord if you are making your own rules for your sex life. Then you're still the boss of your life and you are letting sin control you.

Paul finishes with a somewhat vague statement. He says that every other sin is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. What does he mean by that? He doesn't mean that immorality is the only sin that damages one's body because that is not true. Drug abuse, self-mutilation, gluttony, suicide also damage the body.

Paul is referring back to what he said about becoming one body with a prostitute. What makes immorality a unique sin against your own body is the fact that in the sexual union your body becomes united with another and comes under the control and influence of a person who at that moment, at least, is rebelling against God along with you. You are not only placing your body under the sinful control of yourself, you are also placing it under the sinful control of someone else, someone to whom your body now belongs because of sex. Your body belongs to God, but in sex it also belongs to that other person. You have sinned against your own body by removing it from its rightful submission to God and placed it in submission to someone else.

That is why Paul ends this section by saying in verse 19 that your body belongs to God, because in immorality you have given your body to someone else besides God or besides God's intended covenant partner for you.

The application is pretty clear although it can take many forms. Take care of your body because it is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Avoid those things that control you and your body rather than God being your controller. Your body belongs to God, therefore glorify God with your body. Use your body to do things that honor God. Let's pray.