

Text: 1 Cor 6.12-20

As we move through Corinthians, we will keep our place by developing the broad outline we started with.

I. Introduction (1.1-9)**II. Conditions reported to Paul (1.10-6.20)****A. Divisions in the church (1.10-4.21)**

¹ Cor 1.11 For I have been **informed** concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you.

The divisions reflected a worldly approach by the Corinthians, treating their leading teachers as competing philosophers, not recognizing they were their servants to lead them to Christ.

B. Lack of discipline in the church (5.1-6.20)

¹ Cor 5.1 ¶ It is actually **reported** that there is immorality among you...

1. The report of immorality in the church
2. The matter of lawsuits among Christians (1 Cor 6.1-11)

Today: Prostitution in the church (1 Cor 6.12-20)

I discussed this passage in an “Ask the Pastor” message on March 12, “Sinning Against One’s Own Body” if you want to check out that message later. We will repeat some of that material here.

The Corinthian Problem: thinking like Greeks

Greek dualism: sharp divide between matter and spirit, considered matter to be corrupt/evil; spirit pure/good

Consequently, Greeks had little conscience about using the body to satisfy one’s desires (or using the bodies of others).

In addition, some of the Corinthian Christians may have misinterpreted Paul’s teaching on liberty, adopting an “anything goes” approach.

Some of his hearers concluded that he advocated no restraints whatsoever in Christian living (“all things are permitted for me”).

Similarly the Protestant reformers fell under the same criticism by their Roman Catholic opponents. The Catholics said that the reformers were teaching that, since Christians are saved by grace, they could live sinful lives. Unfortunately John Calvin's successor in Geneva, Theodore Beza (1519–1605), overreacted to this criticism and argued that a true Christian cannot commit gross sin. This assertion led to the conclusion that the basis of assurance of salvation is the presence of fruit in the life, rather than the promise of God (e.g., John 6:47; et al.). This view, that a true Christian will not commit gross sin, has become popular in Reformed Theology, but it goes further than Scripture does. Scripture never makes this claim but constantly warns Christians against abusing their liberty in Christ and turning it into a license to sin.¹

Paul makes two arguments in the passage against Corinthian practices:

Verses 12-13: the argument from **creation**

Verses 14-20: the argument from **spiritual union**

Slogans: Paul seems to respond to rhetorical self-justifying slogans in vv. 12-13.

What are they?

1. **All things are lawful for me**
2. **Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food**

What two responses does Paul make to “all things are lawful for me”? (12)

1. **All things are not profitable**
2. **I will not be mastered by anything**

“The Christian should always be able to submit to the Lord's control and not be controlled by some habit. We should give the Lord, not anyone or anything else, primary control of our bodies.”²

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Cor 6.12.

² Constable, 1 Cor 6.12.

What would the Corinthians mean by the second slogan about food and the stomach? (13)

- “when I’m hungry, I eat; when I feel the sex urge, I satisfy it”

“The Corinthians are saying that food is meant for the stomach and the stomach is meant for food, and God will destroy them both. No, replies Paul, the body is meant for the Lord and the Lord is meant for the body, and God will raise them both. So important is the human body to the Lord that he promises to give us a glorified human body on the day of the Lord (15:33–58). Thus what we do with our bodies now should reflect this value that God places on the human body. Once again, just as in 6:1–8, what will happen to us in the future should affect how we live today.”³

Union: The believer’s union with Christ

Our resurrection is united with Christ’s resurrection (14) This makes you a member of Christ (15a)

The physical union of an illicit sexual relationship disturbs the spiritual union with Christ (15b-16)

1. What kind of union does the sexual relationship create? **One flesh**
2. What kind of union does salvation create between the believer and Christ? **One spirit**

Sins of immorality harm you spiritually, not just physically (18)

What establishes the ultimate ownership of the believer’s body? (19)

The indwelling Holy Spirit establishes God’s ownership

Therefore, what are we to do with our bodies? (20)

glorify God with our body

³ Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “1 Corinthians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans-Galatians*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, Revised Edition, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2006), 311.