

**“Sex and Our Bodies”**  
**1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

INTRO... (HS)

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**1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (text displayed)**

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**The Point: Understand God’s design for your body and sexual health.**

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4 Declarations...

**1. “My body was made by God for God.” (12-14)**

This section almost flows as an imaginary conversation Paul has with his friends in Corinth.

- The opening words of verse 12 are *not* Paul’s words. The three statements in quotation marks in verses 12-13 represent common sayings by the church in Corinth to justify their ungodly behavior.
- What were they saying? “All things are lawful for me.”
  - The term “lawful” speaks of a “right” or “authority to act” as they pleased.
  - They twisted their freedom in Christ into a license to do whatever they wanted, even things contrary to Christ.

How does Paul respond?

- But not all things are helpful
  - The NIV says, “not everything is beneficial.” Before we do anything, we should ask will this benefit myself and others?
  - We should ask, not “Can I do \_\_\_\_\_?” but “Should I do something?” “Is it good?” “Does it point to the beautiful and true?”
- Paul then adds: But I will not be dominated by anything.
  - Ironically, our freedom can lead to slavery.
  - Sin first deceives. Then it continually cries: “Just one more.” Eventually, if left unchecked, it will dominate you.
  - Jesus said in John 8, “Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin, [but] if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed [truly free!].”

We find another “Corinthian slogan” in verse 13: “Food is meant for the stomach and stomach for the food,” I believe the quotation should end after “and God will destroy both one and the other.” There seems to be at least two lines of thought here:

1. The Corinthians essentially argue that sex is like hunger, a natural desire that must be fulfilled.
  2. I can do anything I want with my body. When I die, my body is done.
- To both of these Paul says: “WRONG!” Here’s why!
    1. Verse 13 introduces Paul’s primary argument for sexual ethics in the way of Jesus. It centers around a “Theology of the Body.” Did you notice how Paul mentions the body in verse 13, verse 14, verse 15, verse 16, verse 18, verse 19, and verse 20?

- “Our bodies were made by God for God.” They matter. They have value. We are not just souls (with thoughts, affections, emotions, and desires). We are embodied souls (souls wrapped in a body).
    - Genesis 1 tells us God made us male and female. While our culture tells us that “Our psychology is our sexual identity and our bodies should be conformed to it.” God says, “Your body is your sexual identity and your mind should be conformed to it.” (Allberry, in Roberts, *Transgender: Christian Compassion...*)
    - We hold that conviction with love, with compassion. Anyone identifying as transgender or wrestling with gender dysphoria is welcomed to explore following Jesus with us and all that he means for us!
  - The Corinthians were Greeks. They followed their great teacher Plato, whose dualistic philosophy viewed the spiritual or immaterial as good and the physical, material world as bad. For Plato and the Greeks, salvation equaled the soul being freed from the body.
  - Christians often live as modern day Greeks, placing value only on the spiritual.
    - We see this in how we neglect our physical health,
    - ... how we reduce every problem to *only* a spiritual problem,
    - ... how we wrongly assume Jesus is not bringing heaven back to earth for his forever kingdom (Revelation 21).
  - Please hear this: God forever put infinite value on our bodies, when he took one for himself. John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, took on a ---- BODY.
2. Verse 14 brings another correction: God is not going to destroy the body. God is going to raise our bodies! Your body was made to live forever. This was true in the Garden in Genesis 1-3. It is true forever, as God will raise us up with resurrected bodies (Romans 8:22-24; 1 Corinthians 15)

Paul’s response answers the modern day slogans we hear: “To each his own.” “You do you. I’ll do me.” “My body, my choice.” “Love is love, which means I define who I love, how I love, when I love. I can do anything I want.”

T: Paul says, “Hold up. Wait. Your body was made by God for God. They are sacred and should be treated as such.” Then he provides a second declaration...

## 2. “My body is one with Christ.” (15-17)

Look at verse 15: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”

- When the Corinthians decided to follow Jesus, they became one with Jesus. If you follow Jesus, he is in you and you are in him!
- Paul finds it unbelievable that those who are one with Jesus would go make themselves one with a prostitute – LISTEN – *that they would dehumanize another person made in God’s image and reduce them to a service to fulfill their perverted sexual desire.*
  - This was common in Corinth. The great Temple of Aphrodite sat on the edge of the city where prostitution was baked into the local economy.
  - It was available, affordable, and you could acquire it with anonymity.
- Paul goes on: “Shall I take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? NEVER! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her.”

- This was surely obvious to them! But to just to make sure they're tracking with him, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 regarding God's design for marriage: "The two will become one flesh." That's God's sacred design for sex.
- Sexual intercourse brings two people together as one, and follow this: because we are more than bodies, it's more than flesh that is coming together. We, as embodied souls, bring our relational, and emotional and spiritual selves into the sexual act.
- There is no such thing as casual sex, as much as a "hook-up" culture may try to paint it the other way.
- Sex is very good, very beautiful, very pleasurable, and very sacred. That is why it should be reserved for the sacred context of a man and woman committed too one another in the covenant marriage.
- Paul finishes by saying in verse 17: "But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him."
  - Let me translate that - Pastor Tanner style: "You are one with Christ. Where you go, he goes. It's that intimate! You are out of your ever-loving minds, if you think you can play sexual games and not get burned and not bring shame to the name of Christ."

You say, "Well, Pastor Tanner, I've got good news for you. Haven't connected with any prostitutes lately."

Ok. What about another ultra-available, ultra-affordable, ultra-anonymous digital form of prostitution?

#### Pornography.

- Pornography is addictive, destructive and demonic.
- A study led by three psychologists out of Stony Brook University found that 91% and 60% of women had consumed some form of pornography in the past month.
- The people at "Fight the New Drug," (a non-religious, non-legislative - non-profit) tell us pornography use:
  - works like a drug, changing the chemical responses in our brain...
  - normalizes the objectification of women (and men)...
  - increases stress, loneliness, depression, and anxiety...
  - destroys sexual intimacy, promotes sexual violence, and fuels sex trafficking.
- The modern day Temple of Aphrodite must be torn down.
  - Take radical action.
  - Get anti-porn software like "Covenant Eyes."
  - Speak with a trusted friend or two that will walk with you through prayer and encouragement.
  - Parents, take responsibility. Do not be naive.

T: Our bodies are made by God for God. Our bodies are one with Christ.

### **3. "My body is a home for the Holy Spirit." (18-19)**

**When it comes to sexual sin, verse 18 gives a clear command.**

- Flee! "Run from sexual sin!" (NLT) If we translated this from the Greek literally it would say: "Run and keep running from"
- There is a time to fight. There is a time to flee. Sometimes the best fighting is fleeing.
  - Oh, I'm going to go to the strip club and show what strong resolve I have.
  - No, you're going to the strip club to show what a fool you are.

- Story... Joseph & Potiphar.

Paul provides two main reasons for running from sexual sin in verses 18-19.

- Verse 18: sins against their own body.
  - Notoriously difficult verse! As I studied a variety of scholars this week, I came across a new interpretation that I find most plausible. Richard Hays sees another Corinthian slogan here. The conversation would go like this:
    - Paul: "Run from sexual sin!"
    - Corinthians: "Why? Every sin a person commits is outside the body." (In other words, bodily actions are not significant, which fits with the previous slogan: "Food for the stomach, the stomach for food, but God will destroy them both.")
    - To which Paul answers, "When you sin sexually, you sin against your own body." You not only unite physically in a way that dishonors God, but harm yourself mentally, emotionally and spiritually.
- Verse 19: One more time... "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"
  - When a person gives their life to God, God gives his life to them.
  - The Holy Spirit takes up residence in you. You are a walking temple of worship.
  - Live like it! Honor God's holy presence inside of you by living a holy life.

T: Our bodies were made by God for God. If we follow Jesus, our bodies are one with Christ. They are a home for the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. "Therefore, I must glorify God with my body." (19-20)

But how do we do that? Look at verse 19 & 20 one more time.

- By the power of the Spirit, remembering and walking in the power of the gospel (what Jesus has done for us in his life, death, and resurrection).
- Surrender daily to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8. Galatians 5)

I want to give you a simple framework for fighting sin and temptation. Easy to remember. Just remember - Double R. Double P.

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#### "Double R. Double P. — A Framework for Fighting Sin"

- Refuse the Temptation in Jesus' Name.
  - Refuse. Say "no." If you don't say it out loud, say it silently. If you're with others, might want go the silent route. Little head shake... no, thank you. But hey, better to be weird than sin, so feel free to speak out loud!
  - Nope. I'll pass in Jesus' name. He is better. He died for my sin. He reigns over it. I'm all set!

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#### "Double R. Double P. — A Framework for Fighting Sin"

- Refuse the Temptation in Jesus' Name.
- Replace the Temptation with Scripture.
  - Like Jesus, fight lies with truth (Matt 4:1-11).
  - Satan be like: "But he's so fine; she looks so good. You deserve it."

- We be like: “Yo Mr. Fallen... Jesus said this was so serious: i should rather cut out my eye than dishonor him and my sister he loves. (Matthew 5)”
- Satan says: “I know you’re lonely. Just compromise. One time.”
- We be like. “Lonely. I’m not lonely. My God is with me. (Psalm 23) I got a bunch of brothers and sisters that I can call (Acts 2 & 4). ‘One time’ was enough to separate me from God (James 2:10). I don’t trifle with your games. That’s right, I don’t trifle.” (Eph. 5:3)”
- Satan says, “No one knows.”
- We say, “Apparently, you do, and if you do, God certainly does, (Proverbs 5:21) and God said, ‘sNothing that is secret will remain in the dark.’” (Mark 4:22)”

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**“Double R. Double P. — A Framework for Fighting Sin”**

- **Refuse the Temptation in Jesus’ Name.**
- **Replace the Temptation with Scripture.**
- **Pray the Other Way.**
  - When tempted to pride, pray for humility.
  - When tempted to greed, pray for generosity.
  - When tempted to lust, pray for love.
  - When tempted to give in, pray for self-control.
  - When tempted to settle for less, pray to see the infinite riches of Christ and his kingdom. .
  - This what Thomas Chalmers spoke about in his classic sermon, “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection,” when he said: “The only way to dispossess the heart of old affection is by the expulsive power of a new affection.” That’s Matthew 13:44... forever marked in our church. 1<sup>st</sup> sermon I ever preached at RHC. Jesus you are still and forever will be the treasure!

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**“Double R. Double P. — A Framework for Fighting Sin”**

- **Refuse the Temptation in Jesus’ Name.**
- **Replace the Temptation with Scripture.**
- **Pray the Other Way.**
- **Praise God for his Victory.**
  - As your surrender to voice of the Spirit, give God praise.
  - Do a dance. If you can’t dance, dance anyway to give the devil a double dose of shame. Ha!

This is how God shines through us, day by day. This is how people see God’s reflection in us. This is how we help tell the world a story about a loyal, faithful love.

Conclusion:

Pray....