

(Through the Bible) 1 Corinthians 5-6

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of purity in the church, the danger of tolerating sin, and the need for restoration in the face of immorality and division.

Duration: 1:16:10

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:9

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of laboring for the Lord and not getting caught up in worldly projects that have no eternal value. He reminds the audience that even if their efforts seem to go in vain, their labor for the Lord is never in vain. The speaker also highlights the freedom that comes with being a Christian and the captivity of living in sin. He encourages the audience to live in a way that pleases God and to respect their bodies as instruments created by God. The sermon concludes with the speaker expressing his desire to hear Jesus commend him as a faithful servant on the day of judgment.

Transcript

Let's turn in our Bibles now to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. The Corinthian letter of Paul was mainly corrective. The Corinthian church had innumerable problems. Those from the house of Cloy had reported to Paul many of the situations that did exist there in the Corinthian church.

Part of the problem was the divisions that existed within the church as they were dividing off into little sects of sorts, little denominations. I'm of Paul, I'm of Peter, I'm of Apollos. And Paul said this was a mark of carnality.

Christ was not divided. Those ministers who had ministered to them should have had complementary ministries, not competing ministries. And surely we should see the church and the various ministries within the church as complementary rather than competing.

I don't feel that our church is really in competition with any other church, nor should it be in competition with another church. We should be complementary to the other churches, filling up a part of what they are not doing as they fill up a part that we do not do. And thus the churches should be complementary, never competing.

But yet the Corinthian church had fallen into this competition, little competing groups, dividing the body of Christ, the mark of carnality. Now with the end of chapter 4, Paul has completed really his rebuke concerning the divisions that existed within the church and moves on now to even more serious problems, problems of immorality that did exist within the church. It is reported commonly, that word reported commonly, is really it has been noised abroad, or it is common knowledge that there is fornication among you.

And such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles that one should have his father's wife. So there was in the church of Corinth, a man who was living incestuously with his stepmother, his father's wife. And the Corinthian church was so busy with their little squabbles over I'm of Cephas, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, that they allowed this condition to exist within the church.

In fact, they almost took pride in the fact that they could tolerate this kind of goings on within the body. They sort of prided themselves in their broadness of view, as unfortunately there are some churches that pride themselves in their liberal views today. You are puffed up.

You're actually priding yourself in your liberal attitude towards this condition. And you have not rather mourned or grieved over this condition that was existing, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For though I am absent in my body, I am present in my spirit, and I have already judged as though I were present concerning him which has done this deed.

I already have made up my mind. I've already made my judgment on this situation. And in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ delivers such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Or the Lord Jesus.

Jesus said that if your brother sinned against you, that you should go to your brother and deal with him. And if he receives you, then you have gained a brother. But if he will not receive you, then you should take some witnesses with you and you should go to him in order that the sin might be dealt with.

But if he will not receive then the witnesses, let him be as an outcast. Let him be as a heathen or a publican unto you. The first thought always of the brother in sin within the church is restoration.

Going first. Seeking to restore. Seeking to bring about a rectifying of the bad situation.

Paul exhorted the Galatians, if a brother be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourselves, lest you also be tempted. So the first duty concerning that brother who has fallen into sin is going to him in a spirit of meekness, grieving over his situation, seeking to restore him to a proper walk with the Lord. Always, even in the excommunicating, the idea is that of restoration.

So even with this brother in Paul saying, I've already judged, kick him out. Deliver him over unto Satan that the flesh, not the body, but the flesh, that is, that life after the flesh might be destroyed. That by his being excommunicated from the fellowship of the church, he will realize the seriousness of the sin that he is committing.

That it is alienating him from the life of the church and the life of Christ within the church. But even in the putting him out, the idea was to destroy this work of the flesh in order that he might be ultimately restored into the fellowship of the church. And always, the ultimate view is that of restoration, for that is the work of

Jesus Christ, is to seek and to save that which is lost.

And thus is the church, when we have to deal with issues within the church. And there are times here where we have to deal with serious moral problems where we have asked people not to return to Calvary Chapel. Don't come back until you've taken care of this situation in your life.

But the idea is that of restoration. Now, just what involves turning them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, I am not quite certain. Paul, in writing to Timothy, speaks of a couple of fellows, one Hymenaeus, who was really a crummy character, no doubt.

And Paul said that he had turned him over to Satan. That he might learn not to blaspheme. And so, here, putting them outside of the umbrella, the covering of the church, that Satan might really take them on down and let them see the end result of this kind of sin and tolerated sin in their life, or practicing sin in their life.

Let them see what it does. Let them come to the destruction of the flesh. You know, sometimes the best cure for adultery is for the person to marry the person they're involved with.

You know, Satan can so delude you. They go, I can't live without them. Oh, you know, this is the love of my life.

This is the love of the ages, you know, and all. Oh my, you know. And just let them get married and they find out that they could have lived very well without each other.

It was just a big lie that Satan had built up in their minds. So, turning them over to this, so oftentimes brings the destruction of the flesh, the excitement, the glamour, the allure of the whole thing. And Paul's admonition to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh in order that the Spirit might be saved in that day of judgment.

Again, salvation is the ultimate desire and goal here. Even if it involves the destruction of the flesh, the important thing is that the Spirit be saved in the day of the Lord. Now, your glorying in your broadness is not good.

The fact that you're puffed up over this and you glory in the fact that, well, sure, you know, we can accept these kind of things. That's not good, Paul said. For do you not know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Leaven was the sourdough starter that the women used in making their bread, always keeping a little bit of the dough from the last batch to mix it in with the new batch of dough.

And leaven is used in the Scripture always in an evil sense. Because the leavening process is actually a putrefying process. The air that gets into it by the rotting process.

And a little starter into the new batch of dough will work its way through the whole batch of dough. A little leaven will leaven the whole lump. And it is such a classic picture of sin, how that just allowing, tolerating a little area of evil, it can permeate the whole life of the body.

It can affect the whole body. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened, for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Now, Paul brings in here the picture of the Passover. And you know the Passover was the time of unleavened bread. In preparing for the Passover, the 14th of April, the Jews would go through their whole

house in a search for leaven, to remove from the house any leaven that may exist.

And then they would make the bread for the Passover out of unleavened bread, or the flat bread, the unleavened bread. Leaven being a type of sin. And so, the feast of the Passover was the feast of unleavened bread.

And it was known as the feast of unleavened bread. A beautiful type is involved. Because of Jesus Christ, of which the Passover was a type, being without sin, our Passover, our sacrifice without sin.

And so, leaven being related to sin and the old life in sin, now purge out the leaven from the church, that we might be a new lump, as ye are unleavened, for even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. And so, Christ, our Passover, the one in whom the whole Passover scene is fulfilled, the unleavened bread, the broken bread, and all, all, the whole beautiful symbolism there. Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, that would be the feast of love within the church, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. As we meet together, let us meet together in sincerity, let us meet together in truth, let us worship together in sincerity and truth, let us love one another in sincerity and truth. Within the body of Christ, we should not have the malice, we should not have the strife, the wickedness, but there should be a purity of heart before the Lord when we gather together to worship Him.

Now, Paul refers to an epistle that he wrote to the Corinthians, which we do not possess. So, we call this 1 Corinthians, but it really is 2 Corinthians, or maybe even more. We do not know how many letters Paul wrote to them, but he does refer to a letter that he had already written to them.

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or the extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world. Paul now here is making a definite separation and distinction between our fellowship in the church and our life in the world. Within the church, we are not to have fellowship with fornicators, nor with the covetous, or with idolaters.

Outside of the church, we live in a world that is filled with fornicators, filled with covetous people, filled with idolaters. And the Christian life is never intended to be a monastic existence. In order to live a pure life, God never intended for you to go and cloister yourself behind some high walls and be shut out totally from the world.

God intends that you be a light to the world. And the light is not to be placed under a bushel or behind closed walls, but shining in the world to give light to those that are in the world. Therefore, as I deal with the world, I have to deal with people who are immoral, who are greedy, and who are idolaters.

But when I come to church and meet together with the people of God, I should be able to meet in a totally different environment. There should be a holiness, there should be a purity within the body as we meet together. Now, it is interesting, as Paul lists these three basic sins, fornication, greediness, and idolatry.

As you look at fornication, it is really a sin against yourself. It is a sin that is marked really by selfishness, but it is that of taking advantage of another person, thinking of them only for sexual gratification, not really caring so much for them as a person, but only that you can satisfy your own biological urges. They become an object.

And so, it is really a sin against the other person, a sin that is marked by selfishness. Greed, of course, is totally selfish. Covetousness or extorting, that is really out for myself to get from you what I can by whatever means possible.

But idolatry is sin against God. That is worshipping something other than God. When a person establishes an idol, and let us not think of an idol only in terms of some little figure that's been carved out of wood or made out of silver or gold.

For a person can make an idol of a car or of a garden or of a building. It is amazing how many people make idols of buildings. There were a lot of people who had much misgivings when we moved from the little chapel a block away.

Oh my, you know, I was saved here. Oh, you know, we can't leave this place, you know. Let's build three tabernacles and stay right here, you know.

This is where God met me. Whenever a person establishes an idol, a representation, it indicates, first of all, that they have lost the true consciousness of the presence of God within their lives. And so this is a reminder of what I once had or experienced.

In the Old Testament, when Hezekiah became the king, Israel had lapsed into idolatry. Hezekiah was a reformer. And one of his first actions was to cut down the groves in which they had worshipped the false gods and had set up their idols.

And he broke down the various altars unto the gods that had been built. And then it says, And he took the serpent that Moses had made in the wilderness, and he broke it in pieces, and he said, Nahushtan. You see, that serpent that Moses set up in the wilderness, when the children of Israel were being plagued by these poisonous serpents into the camp, and as they were bitten and dying, the Lord said to Moses, Make a serpent of brass, put it on the pole in the middle of the camp, and whoever is bitten by the serpent, if they will look upon that serpent of brass in the middle of the camp, he will be saved.

Again, a very beautiful picture of Jesus Christ, as Jesus Himself pointed out to Nicodemus. For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believes in Him should not perish. So, the serpent, the symbol of sin.

The serpent of brass, the symbol of the judgment of sin. For brass is a medal of judgment. The serpent is a symbol of sin.

So, to look at Jesus and see my sin judged, you see. My sin doesn't then kill me. It doesn't destroy me.

But I live by looking at Jesus crucified for me. But the people took this serpent. Someone kept it.

And gradually through the process of time, this had become an idol. And the people used to make pilgrimages to look at this serpent of brass that Moses had made in the wilderness. And it had become an idolatrous thing.

And so, he broke it in pieces and he said, Nehushtan, which in the Hebrew means, a thing of brass. It's not a god. It's not a representation of God.

This is only a thing of brass. And when we're prone to get attached to buildings, we need to realize, a thing of stone, a thing of wood. It's only a building.

And we mustn't get attached just because that's the place where God met me. You see, I should be having a fresh experience with God each day. And the fact that I want to erect an idol means that I have lost that consciousness of God's presence.

I'm reaching back for something that I have lost. Trying to regain it by establishing a relic. Idolatry, the sin against God.

But yet, as I'm in the world, I mix with these people. I have to. I don't say to the person checking out the groceries, Is your life pure before God? You know, I don't know if I should allow you to touch my groceries as they're passing by, unless you're born again, you know.

I'm in the world and I have to, you know, live among the world. I will confess, I don't like it at times. And there are times when I frankly hate it.

I hate it when I have to listen to the filth that pours out of some people's mouths. It disgusts me when they open the door to their sewer and just let it pour out through the room. I hate it when I'm sitting in a restaurant and people light up.

And why is it that they always hold the thing up over their shoulder, you know? I'll tell you why they do. They don't want to smell the stinking thing themselves. But that's so totally inconsiderate.

But I'm living in the world and I cannot escape it. And God doesn't intend that I try to escape it by moving off. Now, I would, let me, I will confess, I've had, I've had real yearnings to, you know, say, let's all go together and let's purchase an island in the Caribbean.

And let's just have a totally Christian community, you know, where our kids could just grow up in, you know, no jails, no police departments, none of this, none of the need for this, because we just live together according to the principles of the word. And, and just in a loving community, oh my, you know, how I would love to see my grandkids being able to walk down the street without having to worry about some nut trying to entice them in a car or to forcefully, you know, abuse them. It concerns me, the direction our world is going in.

And I would, I would oftentimes, in my mind, I would love to escape. But God didn't intend that we escape and just, you know, have our own little heaven on earth. We're living in a world that is filled with sin.

We're living in a world that's corrupted by sin. But we look for that city, which hath foundation, whose maker and builder is God. And we're just pilgrims here.

We're just passing through. One of these days, we will come to the kingdom. And it will be a place of beauty and rejoicing.

And the scripture says, and the children shall play in the streets and not be afraid. But not now, not yet. I cannot escape it.

I must be a light in this dark place. But now I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother, this is a different sense. If he's in the church and he's called a brother, and yet he is a fornicator, or he's covetous, or he's an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, I'm not to have close fellowship with him.

And that is what the term to eat signifies. For you see, according to the Oriental tradition of the Middle East, to eat together with a person is to become one with that person. For in their society, they usually have a common bowl of soup of sorts in the middle of the table.

And then a common loaf of bread. And you take and you pull off a portion of the bread and you dip it in the bowl. And the person next to you, they don't use utensils, they just take their hands and pull it off.

And you pass the bread around, everyone pulls off a hunk. And then you dip it in the same bowl of soup in the middle of the table. And you're all eating from the same bowl of soup and the same loaf of bread.

Well, that makes me one with you. Because the bread that is now being assimilated and becoming a part of my body is being assimilated into your body and becoming a part of your body. So the same loaf of bread is nourishing and assimilating in both of us.

So I become a part of you and you become a part of me. And they really looked at it like that. We're being joined together as one by the eating together.

That's why the Jew would never eat with a Gentile. He didn't want to become one with a Gentile. So if a man within the church is a fornicator, an extortioner or covetous, or an idolater, a drunkard or whatever, then don't have this close communion with him.

You shouldn't have this close fellowship with him. Now those that are without, for what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not you judge those that are within. Those that are on the outside, God will judge.

But we should have a certain judgment within the church. Therefore, put away from among you that wicked person. Referring back to this fellow who was having an incestuous relationship with his stepmother.

Now, Paul brings up another issue. And that was the taking of a brother before the pagan courts. Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if you're going to be judging the world, are you unworthy to judge in the smallest matters? Now, there were those within the church of Corinth that were going to court, to the pagan courts in Corinth, with judgments against a brother within the church.

And Paul is saying, ideally, your differences should be resolved within the church, by the church. For God has committed judgment to the church. The church will be judging the world.

Now, we know that Christ will be the one that judges the world. But we are one in Christ. And so, in Him, we will be participating in the judgment of the world.

Now, if that awesome responsibility is to be placed upon the church in Christ, then, surely, we should be able to judge in these small matters that exist between brothers. And differences should be resolved, if possible, within the church. Now, Paul is not saying that, if necessary, we should not take legal recourse.

He is dealing, first of all, with the situation within the church itself. There are those that, perhaps, you have a legal problem with, who are outside of the church. And they would not submit to the authority of the church's decision.

And thus, it is sometimes necessary to take legal recourse, in order that you might obtain justice. Paul himself, when he was getting the old political runaround before Festus, when Festus said, Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and face these charges? And he had already spent two years waiting for justice to be done there in the prison in Caesarea. And Paul, realizing this is just one more little political go-around, then he said, I appeal unto Caesar.

And he exercised his right as a Roman citizen, made his appeal to Caesar. So that Paul himself took a legal recourse to save himself further manipulating by the politicians. But as much as God has placed judgment within the church, we should be able to judge in the matters that deal with those within the church.

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? Now, there are angels which did not keep their first estate, who probably, with Satan, rebelled against the authority of God. Revelation would indicate that as many as perhaps one-third of the angels joined Satan's conspiracy against the authority of God. And Jude tells us that they are being reserved in chains awaiting the day of judgment.

Now again, Christ will be no doubt the one figure of judgment against the angels, but we are in Christ and we are associated with Christ. We are together with Him, joined with Him in the kingdom age as one with Him. And so we join in Him even in the judgment of angels.

Now, it doesn't mean that you're going to have a chance to say to your guarding angel, hey, where were you on the 16th of October when I ran into that guy? Why weren't you there to hold me back? But those angels which kept not their first principles are to be judged. They are awaiting the day of judgment in chains of Tartarus, awaiting the day of judgment. But if we're going to be judging in these spiritual issues, how much more should we be able to judge in things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgment of things pertaining to this life, set those to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

You know, the least esteemed Christian is more capable of honest, true judgment than the smartest judge in the superior court as far as able to render righteous judgment. Now, more and more as I read of some of the judgments coming out of the superior courts, I wonder concerning the competency to judge. I am alarmed, I'm shocked at how light a sentence or non-sentences some of those convicted of terrible crimes are receiving.

So, the least esteemed. You see, the courts of the land know nothing of the laws of the Spirit. Paul was talking about the natural man does not know the things of the Spirit or does not understand the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them.

They are spiritually understood, discerned. But he which is spiritual understands all things, though he is not understood by the world. So, in dealing with issues within the church, especially issues that involve spiritual things, the least of the saints are more competent to judge than the wisest of the world.

In the same token, you can learn more divine truth from an uneducated, simple, Spirit-filled believer. You can learn more spiritual truth from them than you can the wisest PhD in the country who is not born again. Scholarship has nothing to do with the understanding of things of the Spirit because the natural man cannot understand them, neither does he know them.

And thus, they cannot be a guide to spiritual truth, nor can they be competent to judge in spiritual matters. These issues should all be settled within the church. Paul said, I'm speaking to your shame.

I'm hoping to shame you by your actions. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? Not one that shall be able to judge between his brothers? Don't you have one person there who is wise enough to deal with these issues? But a brother goes to law with a brother and that before the pagans. Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you because you go to law with one another.

Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather allow yourselves to be defrauded? No, you do wrong and you defraud and that your own brethren. Tragic, tragic that it hasn't stopped. There are still those within the church today who would defraud even their own brothers to shame.

And so Paul is speaking of the shameful condition. Now, again, this does not at all dictate against going to court with a person who is not a brother. That is sometimes our only recourse and it is not a prohibition.

Nor is it to my knowledge or understanding of prohibition of going to court with a brother if the brother is not willing to settle it within the church. You see, if he's unwilling to submit to the arbitration within the church, then you may have to take other recourse. But Paul said that's that's a shame.

It would be better if you would just be defrauded. Allow it. If a man sues you to get your coat, give him your cloak also, Jesus said.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Now we're getting down to some very serious issues. Those who are going to inherit the kingdom of God. Paul declares, don't you realize that the unrighteous are not going to inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived.

Neither fornicators, the word here in Greek is male prostitutes, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor the homosexuals. The abusers of themselves with mankind is the Greek word for homosexuals. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revelers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul writing to the Galatians in chapter 5 declares, for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary one to the other. So that you cannot do the things that you would.

But if you are led by the spirit, you're not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, which is in the Greek pharmakia, the use of drugs, hatred, variants, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, endings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like. Of the which I've told you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Is that plain? Paul said don't be deceived. A lot of people are deceived into thinking that they can live however they please and still inherit the kingdom of God. Not so.

And thus, these words should come as a searchlight to our own hearts. If I desire to inherit the kingdom of God, these things should be searching my own soul. For the unrighteous are not going to inherit the kingdom of God.

The fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves and mankind, nor thieves, covetous, nor drunkards or revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you've been washed.

But you are sanctified. That is, set apart for God's use. You are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Though that may have been a part of your past life, that's where it should be. In the past life, if any man is in Christ, he's a new creation and the old things are passed away. But what do I say if the old things are not passed away? Then obviously you're not a new creation.

Don't be deceived. Do not be deceived in taking the grace of God as a cloak for lasciviousness. Thinking, because the grace of God is covering my life, I can live as I please after the flesh.

There is a lot of clamor today, even within the church, to broaden the road to eternal life. To open the doors to all kinds of lifestyles. To a toleration of ungodly lifestyles within the family of God.

For are we not all seeking the same goal? Are we not all walking the same path? For all roads lead to God. And that endeavor to broaden the road. But let me remind you that Jesus said, Strive to enter in at the straight gate.

For straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life. And few there be that find it. But broad is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction.

And many go in there at. Beware then, he said of false prophets, right after warning about these two gates. Beware of false prophets who will be there as wolves in sheep's clothing.

The false prophets who say, hey, it doesn't matter, you know. God loves everybody. Doesn't matter how you live.

Beware of false prophets. They may have reversed collars. They may be there in ministerial garb.

But many of them are wolves in sheep's clothing. But grandma, what big mouth you have. I get so totally upset with men who purport themselves to be ministers of Jesus Christ.

They seem to love to take the title of reverend. And do you know that in a suit filed against President Reagan by the ACLU, that they have several ministers from the Southern California area here who have joined in the suit against President Reagan for declaring 1983 as the year of the Bible. And they have filed a civil suit against the president.

Several ministers. They must be ministers because they have reverends in front of their names. Hey, they are wolves in sheep's clothing.

They're disguising themselves as servants of Christ. But as Satan is able to transform himself into an angel of light in order to deceive, so are his ministers. And these are servants of Satan disguised as ministers of Jesus Christ.

And they are working to destroy the body of Christ and the church. The communist has planted many men in places of position in some of the major denominations across the United States. The World Council of Churches is close to a communist front organization and espouses almost every communist cause and supports every crooked thing going.

I could get carried away with this. I'll tell you, I would not give one dime to any church that is a part of the World Council of Churches or the National Council of Churches. When they support the guerrillas that are

killing the missionaries in Zagwe and the little children over there, when these militant groups are supported by the World Council of Churches, your money would be used when they support PLO, when they support Angela Davis.

Oh, some of you were such, but thank God we've been washed. Washed first of all, then sanctified and then justified. Oh, that glorious work of God in my heart through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I have been changed. I no longer am what I was. My life has been changed through the power of the Holy Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ.

And it is a new life. And the old things have passed away and all things are become new. Now all things are lawful unto me.

That is a very, very broad statement. It is as broad as ethic as any man could ever express. The Epicurean philosophy came close to it.

They said all things are lawful for me if they bring me pleasure. It doesn't matter what it is. As long as it brings me pleasure, it's all right to do.

So you talk to them about some horrible thing you did. Well, did you enjoy it? Oh, yes. Well, then it's all right as long as it brought you pleasure.

Paul said all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. Again, as a child of God, I'm a goal-oriented person. My goal is to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is by the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

My goal, one day, I'm going to stand before Jesus Christ. And you are going to stand before Him, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. To receive for the things that we've done while we are in these bodies.

To receive the rewards for our faithfulness in our stewardship or in our lives. What I have done for the Lord, because I have only one life and it soon will be past. And only what I do for Jesus Christ is going to last.

And I'm going to stand before Him to receive the things done in my body. My works will be judged by fire, what sort they were. And my goal is that when I stand before Jesus in that day of judgment, He will look upon me and say, well done, thou good and faithful servant.

You've been faithful in a few things, now enter into the joy of the Lord. I'll make you ruler over Kauai. Have thou rule over five cities or ten cities or whatever, you know.

To hear, you know, I don't care what I have done in life, what I've accomplished, what I've gained for myself. None of that will matter when I stand before Jesus. At that point, to receive His words of approval and commendation are all important.

That's what I'm living for. That's what I'm looking towards. Now, there are things that I can do that would be all right.

They're not going to damn me. I am saved because of my trust and faith in Jesus Christ. But there are things that I could get caught up in, very easily caught up in them, that would impede my progress towards my goal.

That would rob my time and my energies so that I would not have time to do it. I don't have time or energy to do the work of the Lord or the things for the Lord. I could become so involved.

Oh, they're perfectly all right. There's nothing wrong with it. But yet, it takes me away from my primary goal.

It's an impediment in my movement towards my desired end. And thus, though it is lawful, though it is all right, I don't do it because it's not expedient. It doesn't expedite my journey towards my goal.

So, it is important as a Christian that I learn to prioritize my life, lest I get caught up and I'm spending inordinate amount of time in non-essentials. Because that's a very easy trap for people to fall in. Where you get so involved in things that really don't count eternally.

And you can spend months in these projects, and then watch the whole thing go down the tube. And, hey, what have you been doing for the last six months? Nothing. It all blew up last week.

Six months of labor. But yet, Paul tells us at the end of the epistle, know this, that your labor for the Lord is never in vain. One day we're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Oh, to hear him say, good job, well done. Enter into the joy of the Lord. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Only a Christian knows what it is to be free. The man who is living in sin is not free at all. Paul, writing to Timothy, said that we might take them from the captivity of the enemy who has taken them captives against their will.

Paul writes that the God of this world has blinded their eyes that they cannot see the truth. So, he's holding them captive against their will, blinding their eyes. And you can't say he's really free.

Don't tell me that fellow snorting coke every weekend is free. Don't tell me the alcoholic is free. Or a person that's bound by any kind of a habit says, oh, I just got to go out, man, oh man, I've got to have it, you know.

That's not freedom. That's bondage. Only the child of God knows what it is to be free.

I appreciate my freedom. I love my freedom. You see, it isn't really the freedom to do those things that is really so exciting to me.

It's the freedom not to have to do them. That's the kind of freedom I enjoy. I have the freedom not to have to do them.

I don't have to do those things to get kicks. I don't have to do those things to feel a sense of well-being or get excitement or whatever else. Thank God I don't have to do that.

I'm free. Now, being free, it is possible to exercise that freedom in such a way as to bring myself into bondage. Being free to drink if I so desire.

By the exercising of that freedom, if I drink to the point that my mind is now influenced by the alcohol that I've ingested into my system, that my judgment is now fuzzy or impaired, that I am no longer able to think clearly, then I am not free. I am under the power or the influence of the alcohol that is numbing a part of my brain cells. Free to snort coke.

But what I am doing is putting a little insulator between the snaps gaps so that my thinking is now, I can't make those connections. The snap gaps doesn't snap across. And though it may prolong a pleasurable sensation, I cannot make the proper connection in the snaps gaps.

And thus I don't think rationally and I can get addicted. And where I have to have it, and then I am not free. I've been brought under the power of it.

So it is foolish to exercise your freedom in such a way as to bring you into bondage because then you're no longer free. And some people have unwisely exercised their freedom in such a way as to bring themselves into bondage. So though all things are lawful for me, I will not be brought under the power of any because of my love for freedom that I have received through the power of Jesus Christ.

That glorious freedom not to do those things that are destructive. Meats are for the belly and the belly for meats. That's a part of the body itself.

So if I eat meat, it doesn't matter. That's not the issue that's being dealt with. The meat that I eat is going to be destroyed.

God will destroy both it and them. But the body is not for fornication. God didn't give you this beautiful instrument.

God didn't place that strong sex drive in you nor the pleasurable delight that you might use the body for fornication. Your body is not for fornication, but it is for the Lord. And the Lord is for the body.

And God hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by His own power. Now I'm to have a new body. Even as though God raised up Jesus Christ, so He's going to raise me up.

And my body is not for living after the flesh or after the things of the flesh, after fornication. It isn't to just satisfy the desires of my body that I live in this body, but it becomes a beautiful, delicate instrument in the hands of God to do His will and to do His work. Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ or the instruments of Christ and make them members of a harlot or a prostitute? God forbid.

Don't you realize that he which is joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For the Scripture says the two shall become one. Through the act of intercourse, the two become one. Now, your body is a member of Christ or an instrument of Jesus Christ.

And if you use your body for fornication or to be joined with a prostitute, you are actually joining Christ together if such could be the case. With that relationship. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

We are joined to Jesus Christ, one spirit with Him, and thus we are not to take our bodies and use them in an animalistic way. Flee fornication. Paul writing to Timothy said, Flee youthful lust.

Run from them, Timothy. Oh, God, help us to run from temptation, to be like Joseph. Who, when Potiphar's wife grabbed hold of him and said, You're going to go to bed with me, wriggled loose and ran

naked out of the house rather than to succumb to her charms.

God, help us to flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body. But he that commits fornication sins against his own body.

Most of the rest of the sins are done without the body, outside of the body. But fornication is a sin done against your own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God and you are not your own? Don't you realize this, Paul said? Your body is the temple.

And again, this is the Greek word naos, which is the holy of holies. It's the dwelling place of God. It's the place of divine activity.

It's not the heron, the whole temple precinct. It's the naos, the inner sanctuary. Your body is the inner sanctuary of the Holy Spirit which you have of God.

You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price. That's what redemption is all about. You see, I was a slave to sin.

I was a slave to my own flesh. I did those things because I was bound by my flesh. But Jesus Christ set me free, free so that I don't have to do those things anymore.

And my body, which I once abused, I now offer to Him as the instrument through which He might work, the temple in which He might dwell. And thus it becomes a holy place, a sanctuary. For you see, Jesus redeemed me.

He paid the price. He purchased me from my slavery to sin in order that I now might be His servant. But as His servant, I must obey Him.

I've been bought with a price. I belong not to me. He didn't redeem me so that I could be my own man.

He redeemed me so that I would belong to Him. I've been bought with a price. I am not my own to do with as I please.

My life now belongs to Him to do as He pleases. Therefore, we are to glorify God both in our bodies and our spirits, which are His. Again, if any man defiles the temple of God, Him will God destroy, Paul said.

We need to respect our bodies. They are marvelous instruments created by God. I was reading the other day that your brain in one day makes more connections than all of the telephone systems in the entire world.

No wonder you're tired at night. The operator up there putting all these lines together constantly all day long. More connections are made in your brain in a single day than in all of the telephone systems of the world.

As David said, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. A beautiful instrument, my body, given to me by God that it might be the expression, the medium of expression for my spirit. That it might become the medium of expression for God.

That God might express Himself through my body. And that's the divine ideal. God revealing Himself through you, through your body as His instrument.

Revealing His love, revealing His work, revealing His plan. And so we need to hold our bodies as instruments of God and respect them as such and not do that which would destroy or harm the temple of God. Oh yes, it may be lawful.

You may be able to prove that it's all right, but that's not the question. Is it expedient? Does it bring you under its power? Does it build you up or tear you down? Father, we thank you for thy word. May it be like a light shining in the dark recesses of our lives.

Illuminating, bringing to light those hidden things. That if there be in us, oh God, a wicked heart, an evil desire, a covetousness, an envy, a bitterness, that these things, oh Lord, might be exposed by the light of your word and brought unto the cross and placed there. That we might renounce those hidden works of darkness and walk in the light as He is in the light.

Knowing this beautiful union and fellowship with Him as our lives are being cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord, for thy word and for the privilege of fellowshiping together with your children. Thank you, Lord, for making us one together to share in thy kingdom and in the joy of your kingdom forever.

Bless us now. Help us now. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon your life. And may you be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus.

As you grow in grace and in knowledge of His love and of His way and of His goodness. And may your body become truly an instrument through which God works as He seeks to reveal Himself to a lost world. God bless you and strengthen you in your walk with Him.

And give you discernment and help you in using your time well as you redeem the time in this present evil age. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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