

Addictions and Sexual Sin

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the deep topic of addictions and sexual sins through the lens of radical Christianity. It emphasizes the vulnerability of radical Christians to these sins and the need for drastic measures to overcome them. The importance of fleeing from sexual immorality, understanding the sanctity of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and glorifying God in both body and spirit are highlighted as the cure for these struggles.

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 5:15

Topics: "Overcoming Addictions", "Sanctity of the Body"

Description

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Transcript

Blessings to everybody. I'd say it's a very rich day all day already with the agape and all that we had there. We thought it was a very special time of sharing.

I'm finally back to the series that I was doing on 1 Corinthians through the eyes of radical Christianity. I left off the last one, I think it was on lawsuits in chapter 5, and we talked about that and now we're coming into chapter 6 or chapter 6 beginning we had done. Now I'm coming in the middle of chapter 6 at about verse 11 and we're going to talk about addictions and sexual sins.

And this is again I would like to try to do through the eyes of radical Christianity. I think there's some particular points that we have to watch out for in radical Christianity that makes us vulnerable, I believe, to addictions and just problems with sexual sins that I would like to bring out. And so it's some challenging stuff from the Apostle Paul here, but I think there's some really deep things that he's getting into in this chapter that I'm just praying the Holy Spirit would give me the power to be able and the ability to discuss these things with his spirit.

So if you don't mind, I know we just prayed, but I just feel a need to pray again for the Lord on this text. Dear Heavenly Father, we come and face a hard text for us to look at this evening. And I ask you, Lord, to

have mercy upon me and have mercy upon all my failings throughout my entire life.

And I pray God for all of us that we can raise to the standards that you are expecting from us in being holy and pure, to have clean hands and pure hearts. And then Lord that you know how you show us in this text how important this purity is and how we make so many excuses for ourselves and so many things Lord. And so God, I just pray that you would illuminate this word and help me Lord to be able to present it, that you would be, what you want coming out of this text would be displayed for all of us to see.

None of my words would last and you would bring in the conviction and the grace that we need to walk strong in these teachings. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

So we'll praise the Lord. The text ends out of the, I think, I don't know where I got to. I don't remember where I got to at the last message, but the last passage, if I could come in and crack into first Corinthians chapter six, verse nine, and it's, it gives sort of a, a rebuke and an encouragement to the Corinthians about some pretty heavy sins, some pretty heavy sins.

And it just says a lot about even what Corinth was like, if you think about it, and perhaps what the church is like, what radical churches are like at every age. He said in first Corinthians chapter six, verse nine, do you not know? Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. I find that incredibly challenging for us in our, in our theology and all of our different things we go through.

He, he's wanting us to know no matter how you slice, how you think about life or your theology or whatever, do you, don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither fornicators, idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And then here's this incredible part and such for some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.

And so he tells us some pretty incredible things that this, these sins were in the church of Corinth or in their past lives, and they were justified and sanctified and washed and now we're walking in victory. And he's telling us that, but there's something that's interesting. I think in every generation and in their days, they would have been really dealing with this sort of platonic thinking and, and Plato would have thought that reality just existed in the heavenlies, that the only place that you really have a reality is there way beyond the heavens.

This stuff doesn't really count. And this really became popular with the Gnostics and Aristotle, his, his pupil, Plato's pupil would have tried to correct them in, in many of these elements. And then I think the new Testament does even more, but the idea is it's always a temptation.

And we're looking at this, that it it's deep. These are deep spiritual subjects that we're talking about really deep ones. And how God does grace and salvation and those things are beyond our thinking.

But he's saying at the end of the day, though, don't be deceived. Is it real? And then he, in the midst of that passage, he starts talking about some of these things on addictions and sexual addictions and things like that. And so salvation is of God, it's grace, it's there, but it has to be concrete and it has to be real.

And he's saying at the end of the day, don't be deceived. If this is the truth and we have, and we have to look at these things, but we were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified. And I think that

that's powerful.

When you go up into the 300s or so, you pick, you pick up then Neoplatonism, where Plato's revived and you get guys like Ambrose and Augustine that also tend to struggle in this concept of things only existing in the heavenlies and not being a reality. We can go the other way too, and not appreciating the deeper spiritual parts of this. But at the end of the day, there has to be a reality.

And if you think about it, so many debates in Christianity between debates on the invisible church, imagine it in that context, or the, of course, the works and faith arguments or the, or even arguments on the Trinity and things like that, if everything is just existing in the heavenlies, which has a lot of truth to it, but it also has to be in a reality with us too. And Paul's starting off this whole very challenging, difficult teaching with letting us know what you're doing there in Corinth is not right. The kind of sins and the kind of the, where you're falling into is going to keep you out of heaven.

And so he's, he's prefacing these very difficult teachings with these types of statements, but such for some of you, you were washed, you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God. Now be careful. He says very clearly that it's by the spirit of God that he justifies us and sanctifies us and washes us in baptism.

And so those things I think are, are very, are very significant. But then he goes into his text here about these addictions in particular, he gets into sexual addictions and about what it means for defilement of the body of Christ. He says in verse 12, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.

I think of the King James, I remember growing up with it. All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient, I think is the word that I remember, but I like this new King James. All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. I think one of the biggest things that you get in radical Christianity, particularly ones who have come out of a very conservative background, and now let's say they've been liberated in faith and that kind of a thing. And you're dealing with things, a lot of a conversation you're saying, well, is that a sin? Well, is that, you know, okay, is it a sin to do this? Or is it a sin to eat that? Or is it a sin to look at this? Or is it a sin to dress this way? And that's very common.

And we tend to do that. It's understandable that we do that. And Paul's starting at a very interesting place.

All things are lawful for me. And so he's trying to kind of take all that conversation out. And maybe in a bit of a hyperbole, I don't know.

I don't know. I mean, obviously not all things are lawful to him, but he throws it out there to bring the attention onto, yeah, but not everything is good for you. And you need to start considering some of these things that you're doing.

All things are lawful to me, but not all things are helpful. And I will not be brought under the power of any. It makes me think of the writer in Hebrews, where he said in chapter 12, verse one, therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin, which so easily, interesting, that so easily ensnares us.

And let us run with endurance the race that was set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Notice in these passages, Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith. This is a grace thing.

This is a faith thing. Jesus is doing this. But in the midst of that walk, it's got to be real.

You got to get rid of the weights. You got to get rid of the sins because they're going to ensnare us. And there's going to take us away from from eternal life with our Lord.

And so this kind of paradox, sometimes this kind of of discussion of talking about God doing it, but it better be real language, I think just goes all through Paul so many times, certainly through this passage. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. So we interesting the the idea of freedom in Christ and these things of being freedom in Christ and some of the stuff that he's getting to now where he's going to start talking about eating and relationships and these in your eye and your passion.

These things are very lawful things. As a matter of fact, he gave us some very powerful things. For me, it's been interesting.

I did a sermon, I don't know, maybe a couple of years ago. I'm just talking about these different chemicals, and I'm always very interested in these kind of sort of mental chemicals, the ones that are on the limbic system and things like that. And scientists are just now getting to the point where they can even study some of these.

And some of it's perhaps been a bit exaggerated, but even as a just a construct of what some of these chemicals do, that we seems that we've identified things like dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin, and endorphins. And these things are part of healthy relationships. As a matter of fact, they're given to us to give us life and have it more abundantly.

They're to encourage community, they're encourage love and goals, and they're help us along the way. I mean, even some of the language we were going through in our family devotion in Proverbs chapter 5, and it gets to this almost embarrassing, gushy language about, in Proverbs chapter 5, about this being intoxicated with the wife of your youth. And so these types of things, these strong, passionate emotions that God has given the human are part of a gift of God.

They're beautiful. They're part of it. And so how those things can get distorted, can get broken by different things that we've had happen in our life, and in different ways that we come before the Lord.

And I mean, in our journey, it can get very difficult. Some of those, I'm just fascinated with it, if you'll bear with me. I think of this dopamine.

And so in dopamine, it's talked about a lot because of our America's or perhaps the whole world's addiction with telephones and cell phones and the different things. So dopamine has really come into the press a lot about the way that it's the concept that gives you a little reward for a goal. It's that thing, that feeling you feel when you got a box and you check it.

Feels good, doesn't it? It's supposed to. It gives you a surge. It gives you a reinforcement.

It gives you something. It gives you the sense of accomplishment when you've been looking around the house and you finally find your keys. Oh, yeah, that feels good.

Or a great parking place or that type of a thing. It's those types of things. And it helps us.

And that's part of life. It's part of something that God gives to us. The dark side of that is it can be somewhat addictive.

And that there's been some things that we can do that makes that unhealthy. And how we deal with that is, I'll speak here in a minute, really affects our spiritual life. It can help.

It can cause gambling. People get into gambling. It can cause cell phone abuse.

And of course, it goes into gaming and different things that happen with pornography. Pornography, I'm going to mention here at the end of this whole section, is a cocktail of so many of these things. Serotonin is almost like an opposite.

I read one thing was a study from Virginia Tech done in 2018 just talking about how serotonin and dopamine, these guys were saying they're just getting to the point where they can just finally actually measure serotonin, according to this article from Virginia Tech. And so they're suggesting maybe there's checks and balances between this. And serotonin, some are suggesting, is something like the feeling of accomplishments, the feeling of, oh, advance and that type of a thing.

And if you're missing this, you tend to try to fill it with dopamine. And then the article was trying to make, some of the psychologists were trying to make arguments of that kind of a thing. The other one that's a really powerful, particularly in the church, is the hormone of oxytocin.

Oxytocin is a hormone. Scientists didn't completely know for a while that where does this thing affect except for what happens when you start to breastfeed. And so we know for a fact that when a mother starts to breastfeed, it releases this oxytocin and it does something within her.

And there's also, why do guys have this? I know in anesthesia, we used to always give pitocin at the end of like a C-section. It also contracts the uterus and does different things like that. But it's also something that does community.

It brings us together. It makes us feel like we're one. And it's a powerful, powerful hormone.

It's a very powerful feeling. And it's a good one. It's a good feeling.

But in radical Christianity, sometimes it can also, when we come to it broken, when we come to the church broken, it can come out wrong. There's a study I watched, I remember in school, that just almost made me cry. They did an experiment on chimpanzees.

I don't know if you've ever seen this one. Yeah, isn't it sad? And they take these baby chimpanzees, everybody seen this one? And they put a chimpanzee with a mommy chimpanzee. They do another one with a furry post and another one completely isolated in a cage by itself.

And so then they saw the life of those chimpanzees later on after they were spending the beginning of their life either with their mommy, with a furry post, or completely isolated. And what they found, and it's a really cruel sleeping exercise, that the chimpanzees, just as you would imagine it, become very clingy and very needy and very destructive in the one that were totally isolated. And there was something about that healthy relationship with the mommy that had the most nurture, the best results in the chimpanzee.

But even the one with a furry post did better than the one in total isolation. In a healthy radical church, this oxytocin and these types of things is an amazing thing. But we have to be careful.

When we come to it broken, and you see many different people from different abusive relationships and different things, in this clinginess, if we come to it broken, and we're the chimpanzee baby that is just having all of these pains and broken, there's parts of that that's unhealthy in us. And when Paul says, I will not be under the control of something, it's good to see that if there's something inside of us that maybe is unhealthy. Sometimes people stay in abusive groups or something, or even a group itself can tend towards this.

There's a sense, and again, my whole theme of this whole thing is radical Christianity, and I've seen radical isolationism in some groups that's very dangerous, whether that's by a bizarre sort of uniformity that would be like an unhealthy uniformity, or even some sort of a niche theology that break people off from just everybody else. And there's this sense of being completely on your own that I find is abusive sometimes in radical Christianity. I'll never forget years ago when we were just first moving up to Pennsylvania, we called up a pastor, and I said, you know, I've got this, we've got this favor, we'll do this, but you know, we just feel completely alone, and I don't know if we should move up to Pennsylvania, be with other people, or keep going out here.

And he said, you know, Dean, I don't know if I even have a theology for this, but I'll just tell you, from what I've seen, when you're all completely alone, you get weird. I'll never forget that. And there's something about the need of healthy relationships, and even churches having relationship with other churches that is healthy.

And so we have to watch out for, I think, if some of these things can come off in a very broken way. And the last two ones I'll just talk about are cortisol and endorphins. These are the ones that come after stress, and these can be really, really powerful and really destructive.

So what these are, these are the fight-or-flight hormones. So like, after you've gone through a really hard thing, you get this endorphin, people, runner's high gets this, I don't know if anybody ever had that, I don't know, but anyway, you know, you get this type of a thing after you've done some damage to your body or your mind, okay? It's the feeling you get after an ice headache, okay? That's the endorphin release that comes after those types of a thing. Again, it's a healthy thing.

It's a healing. It's like, it's a natural morphine. In anesthesia, we would use, you know, sort of a morphine.

This is a natural thing. However, there's situations where we can actually become junkies to this. People hurt themselves.

People put themselves in a thing, something that's actually abusive, and that's not being, embracing the freedom that Paul is talking about here. In radical Christianity, I've seen some of this sometimes, and it concerns me. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. So, what are some of the cocktails that just bring all those things together that are bad? And Paul gets into some specifics. We can go shopping.

It gives us a sense of ownership, and the eating for sure, taking risky behaviors. Alcohol works on the limbic system very similar to some of these hormones, and it makes us have the kind of feelings in a

wrong way. And I'm amazed, and I'm not trying to, I don't have anything that we're going to take away from cell phones or whatever this, but let me tell you something.

In my life journey of being within radical Christianity, I entered radical Christianity in a day that, of course, no one would ever have dreamed of cell phones or something. Matter of fact, when Stephen, my firstborn, was born, the internet wasn't even invented. And now all of that has come and existed, and I'm just telling you from someone who's come into it from the beginning till now, the availability we have for many of these abuses is just incredible.

Men and women have not changed. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that we didn't have people that were finding pornography and finding these things and that thing in my age.

Certainly they did. But just the availability of this is staggering. And the way that the church has dealt with it has also changed.

In my day when we joined radical Christianity, it was a very much of a scandal if you had a television in your home. A scandal. I mean, some people tried to make it, and they put a sheet over it, you know, and say, well, we just do this, you know, and that type of thing.

But it was a scandal. Well, I remember when I would always go to a new hospital or something in anesthesia, and the first day everyone's talking about you. And I always remember when people would say, when I tell them about how many children I have, they would think that six or five was a lot, you know.

And then anyway, they would always say, oh, don't you have a television? And I would usually then say, well, why no, I don't. And that would always open this amazing conversation about how can you live without a television? That was normal in radical Christianity. I'm telling you, that's the way the church dealt with it.

We had a way, we didn't seem to miss it. But now, I'm now with cell phones, and I'm not trying to make some hidden rule that we're going to get rid of cell phones. But I do say that the church has got to do better with the onslaught of the temptations that are coming with the cell phones.

I mean, I remember when I left from Minnesota, from Lancaster County, and that day it was, and this was 2012, it was pretty uncommon, relatively uncommon at least, for any kind of Anabaptist, radical churches, charity churches, any of that to have cell phones. It was like, especially smartphones, you had cell phones, excuse me, you had cell phones, you didn't have the smartphone. And I'll never forget, while I was there for many years, and then coming back when we were getting ready to go to Greece, I was at a regional board meeting with all the Beechy Amish bishops, and I just happened to look around that room, and every one of those guys had smartphones, and that quick of a change.

And it just made me, I mean, I had a smartphone, so I'm not throwing stones, but I'm like, wow, I wonder if we're keeping up with the way that the last generation did. So, I don't know, the movies, the availability, I mean, he's going to get into pornography, and it's serious. In those days, don't get me wrong, people got into porn, people did those things, but you had to like go into a store, and you had somebody look at you, and maybe people could see you, and all these types of things, and now the way that we can have games, and movies, and pornography, and the way it's literally designed to snare us, we just need a lot more accountability, we need a lot more talking about things like this, and I think that this, when I ponder the difference between 25 years ago and today, it scares me, it scares me for the next generation.

So, all these things, the eating, the shopping, the risky behaviors, the pornography, outbursts of wrath can give that endorphin thing, all these things are us not having the control that Paul is talking about, being brought under the power of any. There's a passage that just brings chills to me as a 21st century American, it's in 1 Timothy 5, 6, it's an obscure passage, it's about when you should allow a widow to be brought into the list of the order of widows, and it's just this little phrase tucked in the middle there, in 1 Timothy 5, 6, and talking about how she shouldn't be led to pleasure, because, but she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. Doesn't that scare you? I don't know, it does me.

I ponder that, and I think, wow, so, I mean, they're not saying, this is talking about old ladies that are brought into the order of widows. I mean, okay, these are not talking about guys that are, you know, running up and down the street or doing all kind of crazy stuff, and it's saying that if somehow Paul is writing this, however he's meaning this, that he who lives in pleasure is dead while they live. I'll never forget, do y'all remember the story John D. Martin tells sometimes of the monk who was going through his whole life and everything, and finally, he's an old guy, and somebody offers him a banana.

I don't know, do you remember that story? I'm trying to remember how it goes, but I remember the story that the monk has lived his whole life, and he's never seen a banana, and somebody comes up to him and says, hey, would you like a banana? He said, oh, I've never seen a banana. What is that? He said, and he goes, no, I don't want it. He said, well, you've never tasted a banana.

You should taste the banana, and the guy says, you know, I've got enough things in my life that tempt me, that are hard for me to push out of my mind. I don't want to taste a banana. Is that good? I don't even want to taste it, and that's the kind of a mentality that I see as Paul is concerned about.

Yes, a banana is lawful. It's a wonderful gift of God, but if you are under the control or the power of any, it's a problem, and I think that's Paul's point, and we have to look at life in this way, and I think that he hits some pretty strong points, so some of his specifics, verse 13, so back to 1 Corinthians 6, now verse 13, and he hits food. He's going to hit on food first.

He says in verse 13, food for the stomach, and the stomach for food, but God will destroy both it and them. It seems to be that he's just talking about that all of these things are going to perish, the food and the things for asking for food, but this idea that he brings up the food, the foodies, is another thing that brings me, it makes me tremble, particularly with all of our varieties of living here in America, and I'll just say that as a guy who loves to study history, food as a delicacy and getting fancy foods and different things like that is not new. I mean, when you read the Roman Empire, they had fancy tasting foods, and you would hear Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian complaining about imported waters and sweet meats and different things, and the idea of being attracted to all kind of fancy foods, it's not new to the 21st century.

As a matter of fact, you know, in 1621, the Dutch East India Company literally went to war in Indonesia over guess what? Close, nutmeg. They went to war, they genocide, look it up, in 1677, Manhattan was traded for a small island in Indonesia, they gave them the monopoly on the nutmeg, but that's how it went from the old, from New Amsterdam to New York because of nutmeg off an island of Indonesia. Fascinating, and so the having these little palates and these tastes and these different things is not new to us.

It's been in every generation, but nevertheless, not being brought under the power of any. I do think that frequent fasting helps us with a lot of these things, and here's the thing, and why I love to think of these endorphins and dopamines and oxytocin and I tend to sometimes, I go through phases where I'm a pretty

moody guy, and I have these feelings, these deep feelings, you know, and sometimes they're, and it helps me for whatever, even if it's just chemical constructs that we do to analyze these things, it helps me to kind of think of some of those things that I'm not going to let that control me, and I have found that fasting and a regular habit of it, you know, that gives that little nag, that nag that you get, go ahead and eat something, go ahead, and it's the same kind of nag that says, go ahead and look at this, go ahead and buy that, go ahead and indulge in this. It's just a good habit, and being able to tell the body no in foods also help us with sexual things as well.

Tertullian, I remember a quote, I was going to look it up, I forgot to. He had this quote, and he was talking about the belly, and he said, the belly, if you give into the belly, it will then begin to affect the organs that are closest to it, and so this kind of idea of the habits of letting oneself go seems to be something that Paul is talking about, and he's very concerned with it. It's not a light matter for him.

It's not a light matter at all. So verse 12, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. You get that? Don't argue with, is it lawful? Is it okay? Ask yourself, is it helpful? Is this movie, is this app, is this food a friend of grace? Is it helpful? Not is it sinful, is it helpful is what he's saying.

All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. Is it a friend of grace? All right, he then takes a very challenging turn and begins to hit very hard, and it's going to carry into the divorce, remarriage sermon for the next chapter 7. He talks about sexual sins, and this is pretty hard, and he's going to be, I think, taking from Jesus' teachings. Now he says, now the body is not for sexual immorality.

This is verse 13. Now the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will raise us up by His power.

This passage is very important for us to understand some really big pictures, and that is the resurrection of the flesh. As a matter of fact, this becomes part of the Apostles' Creed. It gets put in there that the need to understand that we are not just going to be turned to these sort of spiritual, illuminated, luminous, you know, people without bodies in heaven.

That it's very important to early Christianity and to the Apostle Paul here to understand your body will resurrect. I think it's either Tertullian or Clement or someone says you will stand in judgment for the same body that led you into sin. That you will give an account in the body, and this is important.

And Paul's making this stressful point, you see. Now the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. So this idea, again, remember the platonic thought? What's the platonic thought? All the spiritual stuff is just, it's spirits, it's thought life, it's your mind, it's your genius, it's your thinking.

Paul says, no, it's your body. And the defilement then is not just a mental defilement. And when he starts taking us into these physical things of sexual sins and different things, there's a defilement that's at a much deeper level than just a construct that's in our mind.

And this is where he's hitting it very hard. And so where the Gnostics or whoever they're dealing with this temptation in Corinth is coming out. Verse 15, he goes on to this.

And I love this. I got excited this week about studying this. He says, do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Okay, so this whole concept, we talk a lot about the real presence here, and I've been getting really excited this week about just pondering the beautiful of the real presence.

We'll talk this way in chapter, what is it, 10 or 11, and that kind of a thing, talking about this. And it's a beautiful thing, but so this is just a preview to that. But there's a part of it that we spiritualize this language too much, being partakers of the heavenly body of Christ, being that we as the people of God have this sort of real presence sharing amongst ourselves and with a real presence in communion.

He says, then shall then, so imagine that then, shall then I take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not. Now Corinth, I've talked this in the introduction video to this whole series, was a really bad place. As a matter of fact, it was sort of a pejorative term.

It was sort of a negative slang to say that you're acting Corinthian, because it was considered to be lewd. Remember there was a section that goes from the mainland of Greece into the other side of Greece, and even to this day there's a little canal that goes right between that whole section. In that area they used to carry ships from one end of that land to the other, and that took a couple weeks.

While that couple of weeks while you're waiting and you're a sailor, you're needing a couple things. You're needing to live in tents, hence Paul making tents, and you've also got a lot of free time on your hand away from your family, your wives, and everything, and this made Corinth very wicked. As a matter of fact, there's several reputable sources of talking about Corinth that just talks about just the unbelievable amount of prostitutes and sensuality that was there.

I think in many ways as we've seen now that we've seen in the Vesuvius with Pompeii, that this kind of behavior was also in Corinth. Just wickedness everywhere, and it was so much part of it, and there was people here in Corinth that were slipping and losing their faith in Jesus Christ because of this great temptation that was there, and it's terrible. There's one that's mentioned when you're standing in Corinth, and you're like in the marketplace, and if you look up, the whole mountain of Aphrodite's or the mountain of love would have a mountain.

There was a road that goes up to the top of that temple that you would look from the marketplace looking up, and at one source that said that there was over a thousand prostitutes along that road that takes you up to the temple of Aphrodite's. Incredible wickedness to them, and he's very concerned. You've got to understand you don't play with this thing.

You're going to lose your salvation. You're going to take this precious body of Christ and prostitute it. So he goes on, shall I then take the members of Christ and make the members of a harlot? Certainly not.

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For the two, he says, shall be become one flesh. We'll discuss this next time too with the divorced one. But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

This amazing oneness. Now we really love our communion services, but we couldn't fathom praying over a communion and then allowing that communion just to be even to be considered common, let alone, God forbid, something terrible with that communion bread. He's making that kind of comparison with the body there at Corinth.

You are one with God. You are one with him. I tell you, one of the things that just really blessed me this week, I guess I always pondered that John chapter 13 to 18 was in the Lord's supper and everything, but it never really hit me theologically until this week I started looking to it.

And as I began to ponder that, you know, when we think of the communion, we tend to think of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but the whole John brings this whole picture. And when you think of, of things like the high priestly prayer, when he says this, um, and John 17 to 20, I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who would believe in me through their word, that they all may be one as you father are in me. And I, and you, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe you sent me and the glory, which you gave me.

I have given them that they may be one, just as we are one, I, and them, and you, and me, that they'd be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me. Now ponder that as a communion prayer, that incredible oneness. I think that's what Paul's hitting on.

Now you would take that in this precious body, this precious body of Christ, this oneness that you share with the communion, with each other, with Christ and defile it. It can't be, it just, there's no way you can do that. It's impossible.

There isn't a big fat word ontological change. There's a fundamental change in who you are as a Christian, that you become one with Christ, that you can't let ourselves be defiled in these things and become under their control. You know, I think we take in our modern scientific world, the idea of defilement, again, kind of just mentally, you know, it's funny if you're ever around like people who come from a different country, people in missionaries and things that, particularly in Africa or people in China and people, things, and they're very, they're very concerned about defiling themselves.

And a lot of it's mixed up with a lot of superstition. And I get that, but we, I think we are sometimes think too, they were too smart that we can just not be defiled by these things. It's interesting.

If you look at the words in Matthew chapter six about covetousness, there, when Jesus talks about coveting things, he's talking about, he said, your eyes are like a lamp to your soul. Now, some people think that he's just quoting, using some sort of platonic understanding of light in his day. They used to think that there's this lamp inside of you that shines out and that's how the mind works.

And it's maybe Jesus was just using common scientific things to get a point across that's possible. But if you look at it, he talks about though, that that whole thing of being covetous ends up defiling your whole body. And in Matthew six 22, he says that if we do this, our whole body can become dark and great darkness.

And Luke 33, 36, 11, Luke chapter 11, 33, 36, he says, the lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body is full of darkness.

Now we can just make that a metaphor. We can make that sort of a scientific thing. We can make it sort of a theological thing.

But now think of it in the terms of pornography. Think of it in terms of covetousness, which is the theme there. That the way that we just let ourselves go with some things can actually cause total darkness.

But yet having light and keeping ourselves pure will bring this beautiful thing that comes out of all this, which is this beautiful light and beautiful oneness with God. Remember the Pharisees, it's not just keeping the outside clean, but what's inside of you defiles. Defiles.

So sexual sins, he brings up in this chapter two, in verse 18, now we've come to verse 18, are some of the worst, if not the worst of sins. And here's the kind of explanation he gives to this. He says, flee verse 18, flee sexual immorality, flee it.

Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own? Let's hit that first part, flee sexual immorality. You know, one of the passages that I think many times that I've fallen and to this verse finally hit me one day in a proper way, we tend to think that God's going to keep you strong during a temptation.

And let me tell you something, there's no promise in scripture that you can stand strong in temptation. Not. What it says is that he's giving you a way to escape temptation.

So let me give you the verse. First Corinthians, we'll get to that in chapter 10, maybe if we make it that far. Chapter 10, verse 13, no temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted to beyond what you are able.

This is a promise. But with the temptation will also make the way of escape that you will be able to bear it. The mistake is this in the midst of, let's say we're online, we're looking at something or we're about to be tempted somewhere.

The temptation is, OK, God, keep me strong. Keep me strong. I'll keep scrolling.

Keep me strong. Keep me strong. I'll keep strolling.

You know, and you think that there's this promise that somehow God's going to be protecting you from being strong in this. He's saying, no, no, there's a way of escape, which means getting rid of it, running, fleeing away from it. And this is a snare that we give ourselves.

And I think it's a snare that sometimes affects radical Christians because we think we are so spiritual that we're make these kind of severe things. That is what it takes. I think in this passage, when he says flee immorality, he has in mind the Sermon on the Mount.

Timothy Miller was just preaching something on these passages in Matthew 5, 27. He talks about that Jesus does an excavation going to the root and amputation taking drastic measures and a formation, which means forming a proper fear of God. In that passage, though, I think if you could turn with me on that with this, this idea of fleeing fornication, these are the words of Jesus.

Let's get a hold of these because they are terrible, frightful, and power giving. 527. You have heard that it is said of old, you shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than your whole body be cast into hell. Now, hear what Jesus is doing.

He's getting to us to the very heart of adultery. There's adultery going on. There's these things that are happening.

You need to understand that you are just looking. You're letting yourself. What's the passage was in Jeremiah meant on a horse after everyone's wife.

There's this sense that you're letting yourself do this all the time. You're already committing adultery in your heart. It's already this way.

And so this is telling us that it's going to require you doing something drastic. Now, I should bring out because this whole context is on to radical Christians. I want to point out that he does want us to realize he's saying it's sometimes it's going to take some drastic measures.

I will say he does say it's more profitable for you to pluck out your eye and to cut off your arm. And so it's not, these aren't commands for you to do this. And I bring this out for some very terrible reasons.

I know two young men in my life that have been eunuchs, self castrated themselves, two men. And as I ponder that it's the one time I was in a doing a surgery in Lancaster County, and I was doing a urology surgery. And the one of the other surgeons come running, running in, they knew that I was a pastor in the town.

He said, you have got to do something. I said, what? He told me this terrible story of this young man that had castrated himself. I finished with my patient, brought him to the recovery room.

And I was there looking at this young man waking up with this horrid look on his face when he was waking up from his anesthesia, where they were trying to help him way too late. I knew someone else that had had the same kind of, same kind of a thing, origin from his enemies say that he perhaps had the same kind of a thing. The problem is here that I don't think they're getting to the roots.

Jesus gave us something that he said, it's more profitable. He wants to get to your heart. He wants to get to you.

Now to be out of matter of fact, something that's actually misunderstood in this. And I bring this out because this is to radical Christianity. It doesn't even help the problem.

As I began to have this discussion with the urologist and you doctors can hear, testify this. If you will, if you would then that young man would probably still then start taking testosterone or he would effeminize, you're still going to have the same problem. You would have the same temptations and the same problem.

You just could never have children. And so these same people who have done these terrible things to themselves are actually still in the same temptation, even after doing some drastic. So I bring this out, but there's another thing that ends up hitting us.

And that is we're not though. So the other extreme is to just spiritualize this. And I've seen this in radical Christianity.

And we think that, Oh, I am too spiritual to have this to happen. I don't need to do something like get rid of my cell phone or something. And let me show you something that I've seen in my life.

All right. Okay. Okay.

Here is what I've seen in my life. I call it the circle of sin. Now, so here's what happens.

So we end up having a sin and let's say we, we fall into pornography. Okay. So we, we look at pornography right here.

And at this point, we feel really, really bad and God gives grace and we feel terrible. And that Holy spirit, and you're knowing you're grieving against God. It's really bad.

And so at this point we think, wow, there's a confession maybe that goes on or something. And that lasts until about here. And then as we get here the first, this whole section here is what I would call guilt.

This is the guilty feeling. And this is, there's a, there's a holiness and a sanctification that goes during that guilt process. You wouldn't dare look at pornography here.

Wouldn't dare. It's just like, I, I would never do this. The next section I would say would be the repentance section.

And so it's in this section that if you don't do something, you're going to be in trouble. Here's my thought on this, as I've seen this in my, in my own life, where's out of context, but if you bear with me that the passage where sin abounds grace, much more abounds at this moment from here to here, God has given you the ability to do something drastic. And so you, you almost know at this point, you can talk to a young man who has, or anybody who has, who has fallen into sin.

And you can ask them, what did God say to you at that moment that you need to do? And they can say, well, I know I've got to stop doing this. I got to get rid of this. I got to get some accountability.

I got it. You can hear them spit out this whole list of things that they know that, that, that we know we should be doing, but you know what? It starts to feel a little better by here. You start to get over here.

And by the time you get to this phase, I call it the false confidence phase. And you think, you know what? I'm not even tempted anymore. This is great.

I finally broke through. I finally learned my lesson. This is great.

I, this is working for me. I used to be this spiritual guy. Oh, my old church or my old ideas or my old whatever.

Oh, they didn't know. But now I am strong and you didn't do anything. You didn't cut off the arm.

You didn't pluck out the eye. If the iPhone has been the pluck it out. You know, if, if, if, if you, if honestly, if I could put in this box and you could say 90% of the, of the, of the areas that you fell in life can be put into that box.

90%. Let's say, could you say that 90% of your failures of your spiritual life could be put in that one box? Probably a good reason to get rid of that box. So let's just ponder Jesus's drastic terms here.

And then what Paul is saying, and don't end up here. I'm actually not tempted anymore. This is great.

This is actually good. I don't even desire to look at pornography anymore. I'm like, I don't even look at girls.

This is great. And then it builds and you get depressed and you fail a test or a girl doesn't like you or, or something happens. You get to fight or whatever.

And it builds and you push for that drug that you always use over and over again called pornography. And there you go in there. I've been there.

It's terrible. You don't want to do this and this will eat your lunch. It will kill you in the cycle over and over.

So how do you do it? So what Jesus says at this point, say, okay, I'm going to have my wife get every single thing I get on my internet. I'm going to make sure I do this. You've got something you have to do at this point.

That's cutting something out. That's uncomfortable for you. It's got to be practical.

Stop spiritualizing it. And this is what we do in radical circles. We either do something dumb, like castration, or we do something like, or are we, we hyper-spiritualize this thing.

And I think this is where radical Christianity ends up in trouble. So many times, so many times, every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his whole body. That's a weird passage.

I looked it up and both the ancient commentaries and the, and the new would say that it's hard to know exactly, is this a slogan from the Corinthians or is it another? Nevertheless, the bottom line is, he seems to be saying nothing is worse than sexual sins. Origin, excuse me, Chrysostom makes this point. I looked it up to see what an ancient Greek speaker would have said about the passage.

He said not abstain from fornication, but run. That is with all zeal, make to yourself deliverance from that evil. Every sin that a man does is without the body, but he that commits fornication sins against his own body.

Have you ever thrown your phone? I have, you know, throw it. I mean, you know, it's like, it's you, you, you have to fight sometimes in a practical way. He goes on and he says this, it's interesting, his take on this.

Chrysostom, what then say you does not, why doesn't the murder strain his hand? In other words, this whole passage of every sin is out of the body, but he who, but sexual sins, you know, make you sin against your whole body. He says, what does that make sense? Do murders not hurt their hand? What of a covetous person and the extortioner? I suppose it is plain to everyone, but since it was not possible to mention anything worse than a fornicator, he amplifies the crime in another way by saying that the fornicator, the entire body becomes defiled. This is why we have to be so careful with this stuff for it is as polluted as if he had fallen into a vessel of filth and had been immersed in defilement.

And this too is our way for, for, from covetousness and extortion, no one would make haste to go into the bath, but as nothing had happened, returns to his house. But if the person going to the harlot, he runs to the bath to such a degree, does the conscience, watch this, the conscience retain from this sin, a kind of sense of unusual shame. Both, however, are bad.

Both covetousness and fornication are both cast into hell, says Chrysostom. But as Paul does everything with good management, so by whatever topic he has been magnified, the sin of fornication, it's serious. Every sin the man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

This is, and think about it. I, it is really scary. I, and I tell you in radical Christianity, I've been just amazed at how we've messed up on this.

It's scary. I mean, think about all the other sins and other sins that he already said will not send us to heaven covetousness, gluttony. But you know, you don't hear people in a support group when they're 30 years old saying, yeah, my parents took me to a buffet when I was seven and I'm still struggling with it.

Gluttony is wrong. Or yeah, I stole that piece of candy. People talk about that sometimes and sexual sins mess you up.

They mess you up in a way that's like he and Chrysostom saying, it's just like, if there's a, some kind of a, some kind of way that you hear people. I mean, I can't tell you how many times I've heard confessions or, or talk to people and they're just wounded. They're broken because of this stuff.

It's, it's, it, we have to guard, guard our children. You hear about the one moment of not guarding our children or other different things. And now when we think of the cell phone and the pornography that we can get to this, you know, the scientists, whether this is true or not, I don't know, but it scares me.

They say it is that your subconscious doesn't know the difference. And so when you're feeding yourself on these movies and these things that your mind, as far as your mind is thinking, you're practicing these things and we're defiled and we're defiled and we're defiled and we're defiled. It's, it scares me.

It scares me. And it's, it messes us up so much. First Thessalonians chapter four, verse three, for this is the will of God, your sanctification.

And here's how he defines it. That you should abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel and sanctification and honor, not in passions of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God. You know, what I've seen radical churches are magnets for a lot of these bad sins and they should be for right reasons.

Don't forget the list in Corinth, the list of sins that are there in Corinth. They were fornicators and sodomites and all these things that are now healed were sanctified. We're cleansed and we're now walking with God.

Any group that goes and says, we've got some answers. We are here and we're going to be evangelizing. We're going to go forward.

We're going to naturally attract people that are broken and we should, we should. But here's the thing. We've got to be careful.

And here's my, my, my whole point through the lens of radical Christianity. We've got to understand that we take this piece seriously. Paul says, you know, remember back in chapter four, so that for though you might have 10,000 instructors in Christ, you do not have many fathers.

I love the kind of things like we do around here with the freedom groups and the different things that talk about this very openly. I love the accountability. Probably one of the best reasons I took the job at Sattler College and the different things that we're doing is trying to have an answer to this terrible plague that's coming upon the church and getting habits of accountability and being real because here's what happens.

You, you tend to think that this doesn't happen if we're hyper-spiritual. One of the abuses that I've seen again in radical churches, particularly against what people who tend to be more revivalistic and pietistic, which I'm probably more a fan of revivalism and pietism than most of you in here. Okay.

I love it. I believe in the power of working at the altar. I believe strong in it, but here's a big risk for radical Christianity.

You tend to think that all this broken pieces is completely taken care of and you don't, and you don't keep looking. You don't keep checking. I've seen terrible things happen for, I can think of young men who have had terrible abuse and then they've been abusers, but then they've come through and revivals and, and the church says, Whoa, he's fixed.

And then you, then you don't continue with the shepherding. You don't continue with the honesty. And here's what happens.

That young man and the church play a game and they say, Oh, if we start getting too, you know, um, practical, we're going to sound like a bunch of dead Mennonites or something. And we're going to sound, we're going to sound too legalistic or something. And we're going to sound like Pharisees.

So we just need to keep it spiritual. So that person, that young man lies to himself. I'm walking in life.

I can't let myself, the church is lying to themselves and everyone's looking the other way and the sins increase and they increase. And I've seen terrible, terrible, terrible things. I remember one time at a church years ago, not here years ago.

And I was in a, and somebody was standing up giving a big testimony of how from the church that they came from, Oh, they had all these hidden sexual sins and all this was happening. And, and particularly, you know, here we have victory over these different things. And, and I started thinking of the people that just in my little circle who have come and talked about the struggles that they were going through.

And we've got to be careful with that kind of a language. Let's be honest. God can't change the person we're pretending to be, be real, be real.

And I'm telling you, it's, this is the kind of thing that, that I think, uh, we have to watch out for whatever it is. Um, if after responding to an altar call, a rebaptism, a theological epiphany, a new set of new doctrine, any of those things, I do believe as Paul is talking to the church of Corinth here, these things still need maintenance. They still need pastoral help.

They still need you to talk about it. They still need you to be honest. And it doesn't mean you're not a Christian by saying, guys, I need some help here.

I need some struggle. That's no, that's Matthew five. You're, you're, you're reaching out here.

You're doing this. This is what I see in app when, when y'all, uh, some of you young men will say on there and help me. I'm feeling tempted.

I love that. That means you're checking this box because if you get here, oh, you're in trouble. And I'm telling you at 56, I still need the brothers.

I still need my wife. I still need the kind of accountability. It doesn't go away.

You have to always walk in holiness and transparency and sanctification. You always do. All right.

Last point that coming up here before the cure is the really understanding the depth of this. Again, this concept of defilement, he hits again in verse 19, or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy spirit who is in you, whom you have from God. You are not your own.

Tertullian actually makes the point. He says this quote in the platonic view, the body is a prison in that of Paul. It is the temple of God because it is in Christ.

We must get that platonic Gnostic kind of ideas out of your mind and realize that your very bodies, your eyes, your flesh, your relationships, the things that you do in the body are part of your Christian experience. And he says that these things matter. And it's the literal temple, not you, when you go to a funeral and they say, Oh, his body is here, but his spirits in the heaven, you know, that's Gnostic thinking that all of us are to be walking in sanctification in our bodies and everything.

And that kind of gets your mind about the areas that you go to and your defilement, the things that happen to you, that if you, again, think of that communion wafer, think that communion bread, not wafer, excuse me, bread, um, that, that communion bread that you have and, and to just, just, you would not even want it to be common. That's the body of Christ. We keep ourselves holy and we join one another and we keep each other walking in holiness.

And that's the beautiful of what we have, uh, in the church and you are not your own Chris awesome finishes that whole section. He has this beautiful metaphor. He says, let's imagine, he says, for supposing you had a daughter and in extreme madness had let her to out to procure for hire.

You sent her out as a harlot. He says, but then a King comes by and rescues her and marries her. He says beautiful Christmas, Victor language, incredible Christmas, Victor language.

So you have a daughter and you, by your complete benighted ignorance, let her out for prostitution. But a King came by rescued her and married her. Now you have no more right.

He says over her, then you would then over your own body as you would over that daughter anymore. He belongs to the, she belongs to the King. And so is our bodies.

It's no longer ours. We don't have the right now to take that body and to give it to a prostitute, to give it to pornography or to give it anything that we are under control of. All right.

Then finally, the cure verse 20. Here's the cure. He doesn't leave us just with all this, these strong things, but actually gives us a cure of how we can have such a victorious life in Christ through all this.

Again, with beautiful Christmas, Victor language for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's belong to God. You, you, you can't in life try to have victory over trying not to think of something.

You know, one of my favorite books is George Lakoff. He's a guy who talks about frames and he says, you know, he was, he was a political scientist and, and he was talking about the idea that if you, by saying something or thinking something, it puts those images in your mind and it takes a conversation or an argument down one way. If we continue to just focus on the sin or on the problems or on the things, you're never going to have victory.

So what's the cure? Glorify God and your body in God, in your body and in your spirit. So in your body, in a physical way and in your spirit. But again, the scientists say your brain has trouble telling a difference between what is real and what is imagined.

So it produces all these serotonins and all these things. Gratitude practices are popular for this reason. They are reminders of mental pictures of all the good things that you've experienced.

So by waking up and praising God and giving thanks to God, and when you're under temptation to thank him and to turn your, what's the, the mourning into garments of praise, these types of a thing makes the difference. Lamentations 321 puts it this way. This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.

The Lord's loving kindness indeed never ceases, for his compassion never failed. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness.

The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in him. That kind of reminding ourselves. And then Ephesians 515 puts it this way.

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Time, boy, when you start to go down that wrong road, don't you just waste a lot of time, huge amount. Ephesians 517, therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

And do not be drunk with wine, and which is dissipation, but be filled with the spirit. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God, the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord. That's the cure.

Instead of being drunk to hit your limbic system, drinking, or don't be drunk with pornography, don't be drunk with shopping, don't be drunk with movies, don't be drunk with other things, but psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and gratefulness unto the Lord, you'll have this beautiful thing. For we are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit. Glorify God in your body, practical steps, and in your spirit, worship with your gods.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for the word. We thank you for grace.

We thank you for your mercy, O God, of so many ways we've failed you. The Lord pray. Spare thy people, O God, and give not your heritage to reproach that the enemy shall say, the heathen will say, where is their God? Lord, I pray that you would send your Holy Spirit to us and make us holy.

Encourage us as to be a body that walks in holiness and purity and loves you and serves you. And O God, these are sins that are common to man and common to woman. And so, Lord, we pray, God, that you've promised us, you've given us this word, not to say that something's impossible, but to give us encouragement that your grace is sufficient for us to accomplish these things.

So, God, I have mercy on me. Have mercy on us, Lord. And I pray that you would give us your grace in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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