

(1 Corinthians) ch.6:7-6:20

by Zac Poonen

To be a spiritual Christian, one must not only avoid sinful things but also avoid things that are unprofitable, and be mastered by nothing.

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Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 15:3, 1 Corinthians 6:12-13, 1 Corinthians 6:15, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Christian Discipline", "Temple Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of avoiding not only sinful things but also unprofitable things in the Christian life. He specifically mentions the area of food, cautioning against becoming slaves to fancy or excessive eating. The speaker highlights the need for discipline in this area and encourages believers to eat only enough to sustain themselves. Additionally, he reminds listeners that their bodies are not their own, but rather members of Christ, and should be offered to God.

Transcript

We turn now to 1 Corinthians and chapter 6 and verse 7. Last week we were considering how a brother going to court against his brother is a defeat for both brothers. Satan gets the victory. And this is what he refers to here in verse 7. Actually then, it is a defeat for you that you have lawsuits with one another.

You are defeated, that you have disputes and difficulties with one another. In other words, when two brothers have a difficulty, and though each may try to prove his point, the one who really wins in the battle is Satan. You may think you are 100% right in your stand, and your brother 100% wrong.

And that may be true, legally speaking. Your brother may be 100% wrong in a particular situation, and you may be 100% right. But the fact that you have a dispute with him, the fact that you have a bitterness, and the fact that you cannot get along with him, proves that Satan is the one who gets the victory finally.

So it's not just a question of being legally right, but of being spiritually right. Let's never forget this in our relationships with one another, that the church is not something which is under law. We live in the realm of the spirit, and it's possible to be legally right in a matter, and to be spiritually utterly wrong.

To be right, and to prove that I'm right, in something that has arisen between me and a brother. And yet my attitude to that brother can be satanic, unchrist-like. And that proves me to be in the wrong as well.

I can be wrong in my attitude, even when I'm right as to the fact of the matter. And therefore I'm defeated. That's the point of verse 7. He says, how can you overcome Satan? How can you avoid being defeated? Here is the answer.

Why not rather be wronged? Why not just accept mistreatment, and leave it at that? It would be far more honoring, the Living Bible says in verse 7, to the Lord, to let yourself be cheated. There's no sin in being cheated. There is a sin in cheating others, but there is absolutely no sin if somebody cheated you.

In fact, it would be honoring to the Lord if you just left it, and refused to pick up a quarrel over the fact that somebody cheated you, or somebody wronged you. This is where we need to understand to take up the cross, and die. Dead people do not fight for their rights.

Dead people do not seek to justify themselves. Dead people do not get offended if somebody cheats them, or defrauds them, or wrongs them. It's when we have not died with Christ, when we are not crucified with Christ, when we have not taken our place with Christ on the cross, then we are offended when we are wronged or cheated.

We are hurt when somebody speaks evil about us behind our back. All these are means by which God seeks to show carnal Christians that they have not died with Christ. A dead person cannot be offended.

Just think of yourself, dear friends. If you claim to be a believer, and you are hurt by what you heard someone speak about you evil behind your back, that may be wrong what that person did. In fact, what that person did is wrong, to speak evil about you behind your back.

But the fact that you got offended proves you're also wrong, and proves that you yourself have not died with Christ. And maybe God is using this situation to show you your need. Maybe the other person is so carnal that he will not see his need.

But why not you see your need in that situation and say, Lord, even though the other person may be wrong, yet I see that I am wrong too, in the sense that I got offended, in the sense that I got hurt, in the sense that I've got a wrong attitude towards that person. Now, I cannot love him anymore. Can you love someone who has defrauded you? You can, if you are filled with the Holy Spirit, and you take your place as crucified with Christ.

Otherwise, it's impossible. The children of Adam don't love those who hate them. They don't bless those who curse them.

But those who have come into the New Covenant, as described in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6 and 7, they know how to die, so that they are willing to be wronged, to be defrauded, to be cheated. And they do not seek to defend themselves. There are many Spirit-baptized Christians who have absolutely no understanding of taking up the cross.

And therefore, even though they are baptized in the Holy Spirit, they are just as carnal as other Christians who are not baptized in the Holy Spirit. Remember that the Corinthian Christians were Spirit-baptized Christians who had a Pentecostal experience, who had all the gifts of the Spirit. And yet, they were carnal.

They were carnal. That teaches us that gifts and Bible knowledge does not make us spiritual. If you are not willing to be wronged, you're a carnal Christian.

If you're not willing to be cheated, if you're not willing to be defrauded, and you want to fight for your rights, that proves you're a carnal Christian. On the contrary, verse 8, he says, instead of behaving like a spiritual Christian who's willing to be cheated and defrauded, he says, you yourselves are wronging and defrauding and cheating others. Are you ever guilty, dear friends, of cheating your brothers or cheating anyone else in the world? For example, when you sell something secondhand to someone, do you explain to that person what is wrong with this particular item that you're selling secondhand? Or do you seek to hide that from the person you're selling it to? Do you charge an exorbitant, unrealistic price for something that you're selling? Well, then you are wronging and defrauding and cheating your brothers.

That's terrible. That's not the mark of a spiritual Christian. That's the mark of a carnal Christian.

He says, well, have you forgotten, don't you know, verse 9, that the unrighteous will never inherit the kingdom of God? Is he talking about those who have never been converted? He's talking about people who claim to be believers but are living just like the children of the devil. The unrighteous. He doesn't just say the unbelievers, but the unrighteous.

Those who are living in unrighteousness in their life. Those who have cheated others. Those who have wronged others in financial matters.

Those who have spoken evil and destroyed the character of others by their words. They shall not inherit the kingdom of God, certainly. They don't belong in God's kingdom.

They have no share in God's kingdom. He says, don't be deceived. There are a lot of people who deceive themselves into thinking that once they have accepted Christ, they can live just as they like and that they will enter God's kingdom.

He says, don't be deceived. No one who is a fornicator, that is, who is sexually immoral, can ever inherit God's kingdom. What about this person that was mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5, who claimed to be a believer and who was sexually immoral? Well, according to verse 9 of 1 Corinthians 6, he doesn't have any share in God's kingdom.

No. What about the idolaters? Those who worship idols, whether idols of wood or stone or the idol of money and making more and more money. That's another form of idolatry, more subtle.

Such idolaters who love money cannot have any place in God's kingdom. Adulterers, those who are guilty of adultery, and that can happen among believers too, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Effeminate means those who are homosexuals, perverted in the area of sex.

They have no place in God's kingdom by perversion. And he specifies it more clearly there. Homosexuals, those who are sinning sexually through perversion.

Thieves, those who steal what doesn't belong to them, perhaps what belongs to the government. Perhaps they steal things from the office, maybe papers and pencils and rubbers for their home use, which they have no right to take, which belongs to the government, to their office. Maybe medicines from the hospital you work in, which you have no right to take.

Thieves, there are believers indulging in such things. Thieves have no place in God's kingdom. Covetous people, those who are living for the pursuit of wealth.

Drunkards, and revilers. Revilers are those who are slanderers, backbiters, who speak evil of others. They shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

He repeats that twice, in verse 9 and verse 10. A list of people who will never inherit God's kingdom. Now that's something we need to take seriously.

He says, such were some of you. He says, you Corinthian Christians were living in all these sins yourself. But now, you've been washed.

You've been cleansed from all that. Your sins are washed away. Jesus' blood has cleansed you.

You've become Christ's people. You've been set apart to God. The word sanctified occurs here again, which we saw earlier in chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians, that they were sanctified in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1.2. That means set apart to be exclusively the Lord Jesus Christ. Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That means declared righteous by God, in a right standing with God, accepted by God because of Christ, and in the Spirit of God.

They had received the Holy Spirit. And he says, now, if after you have been cleansed from all these things, you go back to living in all these things all over again. It's just like the condition mentioned in Hebrews chapter 6, verses 4 onwards, of people who were once cleansed to baptize in the Holy Spirit, who went back into all the sins that they indulged in before.

Like Peter says about the dog going back to eat up what it has vomited. Then, it is a dangerous situation indeed. And Paul is seeking to warn them to be careful that they don't miss out their inheritance in God's kingdom.

We turn now to 1 Corinthians chapter 6, and verse 12. In the previous verses, as we considered in our last study, Paul was speaking about the danger of missing out our inheritance in God's kingdom. If after being justified, verse 11, being sanctified, receiving the Holy Spirit, being washed, we go back, like a dog turns to its vomit, and like a pig turns back to wallowing in the mire from which it was cleansed.

If we go back to those sins that we have given up, Paul is giving them a strong warning. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, verse 9. And the unrighteous are the people who are fornicators, idolaters, verse 9, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and swindlers, and many others such like. In verse 12 he says, all things are lawful for me.

He is talking about being spiritual. But not all things are profitable. And here is a mark of a spiritual man, that even the things that are lawful, he avoids if it is not going to be a help and a profit for the kingdom of God.

Now, he is not referring to the type of things listed in verses 9 and 10. It is not lawful to be a fornicator. Fornication is not lawful.

Think of the things listed in verses 9 and 10. Idolatry is not lawful. Adultery is not lawful.

Homosexuality is not lawful. Stealing or covetousness or drunkenness and reviling or swindling, none of these are lawful. And yet, the Corinthian Christians were living in some of these things.

But Paul says it is not enough just to get rid of these things. Once you are finished with fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling and swindling, that still does not make you spiritual. You have given up external sins.

And now you can live in a realm where you do only lawful things. But he says, if you really want to be spiritual, like me, you have to give up even the things that are profitable. Paul was not indulging in any of those sins listed in verse 9 and 10.

He had given up unlawful things. And the things that Paul did now, there was a whole realm of things he could indulge in and every one of those things were lawful for Paul. All things are lawful for me, he says, because I've been crucified with Christ, the old man is dead and the new man in me desires only the things of God and there are many, many things in the world which are lawful for me.

But he says, not all these things are profitable. In other words, there was a selection that Paul made from amidst the lawful things to choose the things that would be most profitable for him in his spiritual life. For example, it's lawful to read clean novels.

But it may not be profitable for a spiritually minded Christian. Music may be lawful, but in certain situations it may not be profitable to have too much of an interest in it so that it robs us of time spent in prayer and time spent in meditation on the word of God. This is a word that particularly has relevance for people who are engaged in singing in choirs in various churches.

It's amazing to see how many choir members who spend hours in practicing and training their voices have no time for prayer or for the study of the word. They'd spend three hours training their voices, but not even 15 minutes in prayer or the word of God. In such a case we can say that choir practice is not profitable.

It's better to give it up if they want to be spiritual. Most choir members are usually carnal. They have more interest in singing than in prayer and in the study of the word and in living a godly life.

Now, this is just one example. Sport, for example. There's nothing wrong in playing football or hockey or cricket, but if one is so taken up with that that one doesn't have time for God and for His word and for the things of God, then that which is lawful, a game, a lawful game, can become unprofitable.

So this is what Paul is speaking about in verse 11. A carnal Christian is one who always asks this question, is it right or is it wrong? A person who is living in that level, is it right or wrong to go to the cinemas, is it right or wrong to watch television programs, is living on a very low level. A truly spiritual-minded Christian, the one who wants to count for God on this earth, is not going to live at that low level of is it right or wrong, but a higher level of is it profitable? There may be nothing wrong in watching a particular television program, but it may not be the most profitable thing for you as a man of God, or one who wants to be a man of God, to spend your time in.

That's a very searching question. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. So if you want to be a spiritual Christian, dear friend, it's not enough that you ask yourself this question concerning your activities, is it right or is it wrong? That's a low carnal level to live in.

But rather ask yourself this question, is it profitable? Is it something that will help me towards godliness? Is it something that will help me to be more wholehearted in living for Christ and his kingdom? That's the question that the spiritual and the spiritually minded Christian asks himself. Another thing he says here is, all things are lawful, but I will not be mastered by anything. It's possible for various activities which are

lawful to have a mastery over us.

I mentioned sport. Sport can have such a grip over some Christians that they can be so taken up with it that most of their time is spent in that. It can be playing a musical instrument.

It may be developing one's ability in playing the guitar or playing an accordion or playing any musical instrument, all of which is useful. But when one becomes a slave to that musical instrument in the sense that one spends hours with that musical instrument and neglects fellowship with God and fellowship with God's people, we can say that such a believer has become a slave. Not a slave to fornication or idolatry or homosexuality or stealing as mentioned in verse 9 and 10, but a slave to legitimate things.

It's possible to be a slave to legitimate things, to lawful things, and then one cannot be spiritual. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 12 is one of the most important verses for any person who wants to be a wholehearted Christian. Because it speaks about lawful areas.

Lawful things that need to be given up if one wants to be a wholehearted Christian. There's a verse in Romans 15 verse 3 which says that Jesus Christ during his earthly life never pleased himself. It's an amazing verse which means that he never did things just to please himself.

He always did things to please the father. There were many lawful things that our Lord Jesus could have indulged in and engaged in while he was on earth. He would certainly never do anything sinful.

But once having cut out all the sinful things, there was still a whole range of lawful things that he could have engaged himself in. But, if he had engaged himself in many of those lawful things, he could have missed out on his father's highest first life. And this is where many believers are missing out.

They're living upright lives, they're not stealing, they're not living in adultery, they're not in the pursuit of money, they're not drunkards. But yet they are failing. They're not progressing spiritually because they have not understood 1 Corinthians 6.12. I will not be mastered by anything.

He speaks about food in verse 13. Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Food is an area where one can become a slave.

It's possible for one to be a slave to eating fancy food, or to eating plenty of food. And in this area, God wants us to be disciplined. God wants us not to be slaves either to tasty food or to large quantities of food.

We need to eat only enough to keep ourselves alive. And we should not be such slaves to fancy food that we get upset when the food served in the home is not up to the mark. And we can get upset with parents or with our wives, and that shows us we're carnal.

We love food. We're slaves to food. Our God is our belly.

As it says in Philippians 3 verse 17 onwards. Our God is our belly. And then we are carnal Christians.

Food is for the stomach. It's not for God. The stomach is for food.

But one day in eternity, we won't need food. God's going to finish with the stomach and finish with food as well. God's going to do away with both of them.

Well, He says, I'm going to live for the things that are eternal. That's the point. Not the things that are going to perish.

Food's going to perish. And I'm not going to be a slave to that. I will not be mastered by anything.

I will not waste my time on things which are unprofitable. Here are two important statements in verse 12 which are very, very important for anyone who wants to be a wholehearted disciple of Jesus and who wants to be a spiritual Christian. He should be able to say I will not be mastered by music or sport or food or by any lawful thing.

I will not waste my time in things which are unprofitable. I will not waste my time reading unprofitable books, watching unprofitable programs and wasting my time in unprofitable conversation. I want to discipline my life so that it can count for God's kingdom.

Indulging in that which is profitable alone and never becoming a slave to anything. We turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 13. In our last study we were considering the importance of verse 12 for anyone who wants to be a wholehearted disciple of Jesus Christ.

That his attitude towards the Christian life must be not only of avoiding things that are sinful but also avoiding things which though lawful may be unprofitable. Also making sure that no lawful thing becomes the master over his life. A person who does not take 1 Corinthians 6 verse 12 seriously in his life can never ever hope to be a spiritual Christian.

Paul says all things are lawful for me. 1 Corinthians 6 12. But not all things are profitable and therefore I will not indulge in them.

All things are lawful for me he says but I will never become a slave to anything. And then he mentions food. I will not be a slave to food under any circumstances because food has no eternal value.

Paul was certainly a person who knew how to relax. There is a place for relaxation and a certain amount of moderate entertainment in the life of the Christian because he has a body that needs relaxation. But nothing that brings us into slavery.

And then he continues to say that the body is not for immorality. God has given us a body but that body is not for immorality. Now that is understood by many Christians that we are not to present our body for the purposes of an immoral life.

A prostitute for example gives her body up for immorality. A person who visits prostitutes or lives in adultery or lives in sexual sin of any sort also gives up his body for immorality. Now many Christians have understood clearly that God has not given us our body for any such immorality.

But on the other hand the second half of that verse, of that sentence is not understood by many Christians. It's not for immorality but for what? Is it for myself? Is it for me then to make sure that I don't do anything immoral or unrighteous with the body? No. The body is not for me either.

It's not for immorality neither is it for me to use as I like. But it is for the Lord. Which teaches us that the Lord has absolute right over our bodies.

But he will not take that right until we offer our bodies to him. And so we see a further characteristic of a spiritual Christian is that he recognizes that his body must belong to the Lord. It is not his own.

He recognizes the truth of Romans 12 verse 1 that because of the mercies of God he must present his body as a living and a holy sacrifice to God. God does not desire external sacrifices. He doesn't want our money.

But he wants our body. In the Old Testament he asked the Israelites to give their money. He asked the Israelites to give sacrifices external sacrifices of lambs and bulls and goats.

But today we are told in Hebrews chapter 10 verses 5 to 8 a very important passage Hebrews 10 verses 5 to 8 that God does not desire those external sacrifices. Those external sacrifices were only symbolic. Not just symbolic of Christ offering himself to the Father but also symbolic of our presenting our lives as it says in Romans 12 1 as a living sacrifice to God.

So our bodies are not for immorality 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 13 neither are they for us to be used just as we like but they are for the Lord. In other words I offer my body to God just like I would sign over in a sale deed a house to someone else or if you have a scooter and you sell it to somebody else and you sign that transfer statement and once the other person has bought that scooter he can do exactly what he likes with it. You have no right over that scooter anymore.

If you have sold your house to someone else and that person has bought that house and you have signed the deed you have no more right to ask what that person does with that house he can paint it black or blue if he likes and you have no right. He can do what he likes with the various rooms in that house and you have no right to question it. This is the meaning of handing over our bodies to God.

That I have no more right thereafter to use my eyes which is one room in my house as I like. Those eyes are now for the Lord to be used for the Lord. The tongue is another room in the house of our body but the Lord has right over it now.

The ears can no longer listen to the gossip that I used to listen to in past days. It belongs to the Lord. The hands can no longer do things which I used to do in past days because it's handed over to the Lord.

It's a very meaningful thing to present our bodies to God when it says our body is for the Lord. It is a tremendous statement. In the Old Testament there were many offerings that the Lord called the Israelites to offer to Him.

You read about them in the first five chapters of Leviticus. Prominent among those offerings were the burnt offering and the sin offering. Among the five offerings that He had specified.

The sin offering speaks of Jesus dying on the cross as a sin offering for us. In that we have no part. But the burnt offering mentioned in Leviticus chapter 1 speaks of Jesus offering Himself to His Father throughout the 33 years of His life.

His body was a burnt offering upon the altar right through His life. He never did anything that pleased Himself. He sacrificed His body as a burnt offering to His Father.

And it is in this aspect that we are exhorted in Romans 12.1 to present our bodies as a burnt offering, as a sacrifice to the Father. That means I offer everything I have as a sacrifice to God in my body. But when you read Leviticus chapter 1 you find that in the offering of that burnt offering to God they had to cut the animal piece by piece and lay it piece by piece on the altar.

The legs and the various parts were cut and laid, even the internal parts were laid upon the altar. And it's a good thing for us to present our bodies to God like that. To say Lord I present my eyes to You and I never want to use these eyes again for my own purposes.

Or my tongue, I want to present it to You now piece by piece, our ears, my hands Lord, my legs. Every internal desire in my body, I lay it on the altar. I want it all to be used.

Desire for food, desire for sex, desire for sleep. Everything I lay it on the altar to be used exclusively for You as a burnt offering. This is the meaning of presenting our body for the Lord.

It's not enough to keep our body from sin. I cannot use it for myself, I must use it for the Lord. This is connected with verse 12, that this body does not come under the slavery of anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ, or of any earthly thing, not food, not sleep, not sex, not music, not sport, but Jesus Christ has total authority over every part of my body.

This is the mark of a spiritual Christian. And when a person gives himself to the Lord like this, there is a tremendous promise here in 1 Corinthians 6.13 that the Lord will be for His body. This means that the Lord will take care of His body.

We can ask God to heal our sicknesses. We can ask the Lord to prove Himself sufficient for our bodily needs, which means the need of food. God will always give us enough money for our food, for clothing, for shelter for this body, and for every need of this body, for healing from physical sickness, and for every single imaginable need of the human body, if I have fulfilled that one simple condition of presenting my body as a burnt offering to God.

The reason why many Christians pray for healing and nothing happens is because their bodies are not given over to the Lord. When the body is for the Lord, verse 13, the Lord is for the body. So before you ask the Lord to heal your body of some sickness, you need to ask yourself this question first.

Have you presented every part of your body as an offering to God? Does it really belong to God? And if you want healing in your body, why do you want it? Is it to be healthy so that you can live to make more money and to live for the world or to live for yourself? Or is it that you might be healthy to do the will of God and to wholeheartedly live for Him as His disciple on earth? That's a very important question. God is merciful and He heals many people, even unbelievers and many carnal believers. But if we want God's highest in the area of healing, here is the principle.

First of all, the body for the Lord and for the Lord alone, not for sin, not for myself, and then the Lord for my body. And then it says here in verse 14, God has raised up Jesus from the dead and He will also raise us up through His power. The resurrection of Jesus' body from the grave is something supernatural.

Jesus conquered death. And the Lord will do the same for us in the final day if I have used this body for His glory. And when we speak about healing, what is healing essentially? Healing is a foretaste of that supernatural resurrection of the body which is going to take place in the future.

God gives us in this world, as we read in Hebrews 6 verses 4 to 6, a foretaste of the powers of the world to come. We don't get to experience it in fullness, but we can experience it partially. And in our earthly body we can experience physical healing if our Lord has complete control over our bodies.

We turn today to 1 Corinthians and chapter 6 and verse 15. We have been considering the importance of our body and the way we use it if we are to be spiritual Christians. In the letter of Paul to the Corinthians, we see the characteristics of a carnal Christian.

And among the many characteristics of carnal Christians, one is this. That he does not realize that his body belongs to the Lord and is totally for the Lord. He uses it perhaps not in sinful things, though he may use it in sinful things too, but perhaps in legitimate things in such a way that worldly things have a power over him and over his body.

This is the context, beginning in verse 12. And now he says in verse 15, do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? In verse 13 we consider that our body is for the Lord. Here is another truth, that our bodies are members of Christ.

The fact that we ourselves are members of Christ when we are born again, members of his spiritual body, the church, is a truth perhaps we have understood. But it is not just our spirits that are joined to the Lord. He refers to that later on in verse 17, that we become one spirit with the Lord.

But here he also says about our body that our body is a member of Christ. This is why I can ask the Lord to make available his mighty power for my body. In the last part of verse 13 he says the Lord is for the body, and through his supernatural power, verse 14, with which he will raise up this body from the dead one day, he can also touch my body now, and give me strength to do his will, give me help so that I can accomplish all the will of God in this earthly life, but provided I realize that my body is for the Lord, and that my body is a member of Christ.

Then, verse 15, the middle, shall I take the member of Christ and make it a member of a harlot? May it never be. He is saying that if this body is a member of Christ, how can a member of Christ become one with a harlot? Don't you know, verse 16, he says that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For he says the two will become one flesh. Now this quotation is from Genesis 2.24, as we know, where it speaks about Adam and his wife Eve, and it's a marriage verse, the two becoming one flesh.

When a man is joined physically with his wife, he is one flesh with her. But here, in verse 16, the Holy Spirit uses it also when a man commits adultery with a woman who is not his wife, even if it is with a prostitute. He becomes one flesh with her, which teaches that adultery is a very serious sin.

It's a violation of the marriage bond. When a woman gives her body to a man, in a sense, she is accepting him as her husband, and she can have only one. When a man gives himself physically to a woman, he is accepting her as his wife.

And he can have only one wife. It's a serious thing, adultery. A very, very serious thing.

And particularly, when we realize that our bodies are members of Christ, he says, how can we take this, which is a member of Christ, and permit the member of Christ to engage in adultery? Is that possible? When we do it, can we still claim that we are members of Christ? Can we say that Christ is committing adultery through us? That's so ridiculous. And yet Paul says that's exactly what happens when a believer offers his body to commit sin. What about when a believer tells a lie? His body is a member of Christ, and with that tongue, which is a member of Christ, he's telling a lie.

Can you say that Christ is telling a lie through him? That's ridiculous. He separates himself from Christ when he sins. He is saying that my body is not a member of Christ.

I have right over my body to do what I like with it. That's what we do every time we sin. And since so many of the sins we commit are with this body, telling lies, hating people, glaring at people in an evil way, and lusting with our eyes, listening to things that Christ would never listen to with our ears, doing things with our hands and feet that Jesus himself would never do with his body, well, in all those situations when we sin, we are acting as people who are not members of Christ at all, who recognize that our bodies are not members of Christ, but our own, to do what we like.

Now that's the mark of a carnal Christian. He does not recognize that his body is a member of Christ. And that's what Paul is trying to tell them.

Don't you know, verse 15, that your bodies are members of Christ. They did not know it because they were carnal Christians. A spiritual Christian is one who recognizes that every part of his body is a member of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His eyes are members of Christ. What he looks at must be what Christ would look at. And the way he looks at things and people should be the way Christ looks at them.

And here is where we really need to judge ourselves and cleanse ourselves from wrong attitudes. And he goes on to say, verse 17, the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with him. When we are united to the Lord, we are one spirit with him, just like the man who joins himself to a woman physically is one flesh with that woman.

The union is so complete, it's amazing, the closeness of union that the Bible teaches we have with the Lord in our spirits, as close as a husband and wife physically, in exactly the same way spiritually. The Lord and his believer. His child, one with him in spirit.

Therefore, verse 18, flee from immorality. He doesn't say just avoid it. He says run away from it.

The only way we can avoid immorality in thought or in deed is by running away from it, not just by trying to avoid it, but by running away from it. Steer clear of anything that will tempt us in this area. Then he says in verse 18 that every sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man, the man who commits adultery, who practices immorality, is sinning against his own body.

That teaches us that immorality and sexual sin is in a category all by itself. Sexual sin has a special characteristic about it. There's something specially evil about sexual sin.

It's a sin against one's own body. You're sinning against your body which is a member of Christ. When you lust after a woman with your eyes you are sinning with what is supposed to be a member of Christ, your eyes.

If only we would realize this. There are so many sins we can commit. With our tongue we can tell lies.

That's a sin outside the body. There are many ways in which we can hurt others, by letters that we write, by words that we speak. But when it comes to sexual sin, he says it's a sin against your own body.

Of course it's a sin against the other person as well, in the sense that you hurt somebody else. But it's also a sin against your own body. You're destroying your own body every time you sin.

When you lust with your eyes or when you indulge in sexual sin physically, you're ruining your own body. Realize it, he says. And then in conclusion he says in verse 19 and 20 Do you not know that your body is a

temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? In the Old Testament, God dwelt in a tabernacle.

Now he dwells in your body. And this Holy Spirit you have from God and therefore you are not your own. When the Holy Spirit came to dwell in your body you ceased to be your own after that.

Many people seek for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and for the Spirit of God to come and dwell in them in fullness. What does this mean? It means that the Holy Spirit no longer can get an answer no from you when he wants to do something from your body. He always gets an answer of yes.

No longer do we have right over our own bodies once the Holy Spirit has come in. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price.

That price was the blood of Christ. Therefore glorify God in your body. Now there are three statements particularly concerning the body that come here which we need to take very seriously.

In this passage from verse 12 to 20 a very important section of 1 Corinthians which deals with the place of our body in the spiritual life. First of all 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 13 the body is for the Lord. My body must be completely available to God.

It is for Him. Secondly, verse 15 my body is a member of Jesus Christ. An actual member of Christ.

An actual member of Christ. Third verse 19, my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Here are three facts concerning the body.

My body is for God, for the Lord. My body is a member of Christ. My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit if I am a true believer.

Therefore there is only one thing that I can do with my body. Present it to the Lord and glorify God by the way I use my body. Glorify Him by the way I use my eyes, hands and every part of my body because I recognize I am not my own.

My body is no longer my own. It belongs to God completely.

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