

Lesson 20 - Your Body, God's Temple - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 - Craig Crawshaw

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.*

Now God has not only raised the Lord but will also raise us up through His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, “The two shall become one flesh.” But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.

INTRODUCTION – Focusing on the BODY

Today we find a rich passage full of God's very practical teaching on the use (and abuse) of our bodies. The Bible is full of teaching on our soul – the importance of committing it to Jesus and receiving the gift of eternal life.

And the Bible is full of teaching on our mind – that we must think on the good things of life (Phil. 4:8), and access the very mind of Christ, which has been made available to us as believers (1 Cor. 2:16).

But today we focus on our body. Thus far in chapters 5 and 6, Paul has been stressing that sexual immorality is not appropriate for a child of God, and that we must hold ourselves accountable to purity. In today's passage, as we finish chapter 6, Paul lays down a series of godly principles, all that relate to our body.

VERSE 6 – I am free – but for what?

Paul's opening statement is provocative – “all things are lawful for me.” Or, in our vernacular – “I can do whatever I please.” And he is speaking here specifically of those freedoms that pertain to the body. This was a statement that would have been applauded by the Corinthians, believing that they had been set free as Christians to enjoy the many pleasures of life that God had created.

After all, didn't Jesus proclaim:

John 10:10 *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

And does not God teach through the Psalmist:

Psalms 37:4 *Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*

Yes, God has opened up a wide door of blessings and freedoms for His followers. But Paul puts two important qualifications on “all things are lawful for me.”

1. Not all things are profitable, or beneficial. I have been given the freedom to choose, but to choose wisely for what will bring me both true, lasting pleasure and the pleasure of God.

Example #1: I have the freedom to binge on doughnuts or chocolates or “fast food” – but I will reap the consequences in my body.

Example #2 I have the freedom to build up my body to be super-buff or make myself as beautiful as possible with cosmetics and tummy tucks, or binge on my favorite sport or activity - but I may well be neglecting the more important building and beautifying of character.

2. I will not be mastered by anything. I may think I am not under the mastery of my favorite foods, or my beauty creams or my favorite activities – but when they cause me to look to them with more giving of my time and attention than to the building up of my spirit, I must realize that they have “mastered” me more

than I want to admit.

Here are a couple of Biblical thoughts on this subject.

1 Timothy 4:8 *Bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

1 Samuel 16:7 *The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

Our son-in-law related to us once that he noticed a few good-looking young girls that his teenage son might be interested in getting to know. He asked the son, "Which one do you think is the best looking?" to start a conversation. The son replied (wisely), "I don't know – I haven't had the chance to get to know any of them yet." You see, the son was not just interested in their appearance, but in their whole person." Wise!

May we take these two critical comments on the use of our bodies seriously:

One – I will not choose to use or abuse my body for anything that will not benefit me in the long term or would displease God. I will give serious attention to my food intake, whether to mark or pierce my body, how much time to allocate to physical exercise (enough, too much), how much to invest time and money in beautification, and most of all not give my body to promiscuity or any form of sexual immorality.

Two – I will not allow any use of my bodily activities to master me in time, energy or financial expenditure. I will keep them subservient to the highest calling of serving God.

VERSE 13 - "But I have cravings..."

Paul continues by saying that "food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food." Conclusion: we must eat. We get hungry and we satisfy that hunger by eating – hopefully wisely. But then Paul adds that our stomachs and appetite for food will not have the same cravings in the afterlife. Yes, we'll enjoy the "feast of the Lamb" at God's table; and Jesus ate fish in His glorified body – but apparently our stomachs and our appetites as we know them now, are temporary.

But he is saying that our stomach cravings do NOT relate to our bodily cravings for sexual fulfillment. He goes on to say, "YET the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord." This difference between food cravings and sex cravings is one of the important distinctions between man and animal. Animals crave food, they eat. They crave sex, they hook up and mate – most with whomever first comes along.

Our world, convinced by Satan, believes that sexual cravings must and should be satisfied. Thus, schools and health agencies distribute condoms. Thus, sex education teaches to be careful. Thus, the internet and "adult" magazines promote "soft-porn" as acceptable. Thus, TV and movies display casual sex as normal. And thus, the "40 Year Old Virgin" becomes a laughable anomaly.

But to this raging flood of social pressure comes the Lord of the universe who made us and knows how we are made to function, and He says "I have given you the freedom to choose wisely and purely."

VERSE 14-15a - "I am raising up your body – and it is part of mine."

Did you ever think that the discussion about the proper use of your body is related to Jesus' resurrection? Well it is! Though many (most) things in life will not survive in the life beyond this one – your body will! Now it will be a glorified body – in a lot better shape than the body you now have – but it will be yours, and recognizable as you (as was Jesus' glorified body). So, Paul's argument is that we had better take good care of this body of ours, for he says in 15a *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?"*

We, collectively, are "the body of Christ" who will become his "bride" in heaven. Just as a bride makes herself as beautiful and acceptable to her groom as she can, how much more should we make our bodies as acceptable in purity as we can for Jesus, our beloved forever.

VERSE 15b -17 - Intimacy is for a spouse and for God – period.

When you joined yourself to the Lord Jesus by faith, you became one spirit with Him. The miracle of the Spirit living in you from salvation onward is the "down payment" of that eternal relationship of unity.

Ephesians 1:13-14... *Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

who is given as a pledge of our inheritance... So, to join oneself to a prostitute or to one who is not your spouse in “casual sex” with no commitment, is to steal from the intimacy that God wants from you exclusively. The intimacy with your spouse is a human example of the intimacy that you will have with God forever. But not so with an interloper.

“No one can take sex out at night and put it away until wanting to play with it again. And nobody can go to bed with someone and leave his soul parked outside.” Smedes “Sex for Christians”

VERSE 18 - Immorality is sin against yourself

This is what Paul meant when he says, *“every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.”* Of course, there are other ways we can sin against our body – gluttony, suicide, drugs, alcohol. He’s saying there is nothing else that involves all of us – body, soul, mind and spirit – quite like sex does. With illicit sex – whether actual or fantasized, we give ourselves away. We hurt ourselves in ways we cannot imagine, for sin will find us out, eventually. Even with the forgiveness of God, the memory of actual or fantasized encounters cannot be undone or forgotten. Marriages are often ruined, careers uprooted, ministries cut off. You hurt others, but primarily you hurt (sin against) yourself. That’s why God, through Paul, pleads: *“Flee immorality.”* Run from it. It is a deadly sin. But, praise God, there is not one that cannot be forgiven and reconciled – for *“such were some of you.”*

VERSE 19-20 - Here is the capstone of Paul’s teaching about the body!

Yes, it is your body. Yes, you have the freedom to use and even abuse it. But never forget this, dear child of God: *“your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own.”* You inhabit your body, but you do not own it – God does, for He has *“bought it with a price”* - the price of Jesus’ precious blood. And when you gave your life to Jesus, you “sold it” to Him, whether you realized it or not. He has “purchased you” for Himself. *“Therefore, glorify God in your body.”* - in how you eat, how you exercise, how you practice hygiene, how you dress, how you care for your health, how you keep yourself sexually pure for your spouse and for your Savior. It matters – both in this life, and in the next. Remember, it’s bodily resurrection.

A STORY AS TOLD BY STEVEN UM, IN HIS 1 CORINTHIANS COMMENTARY

There’s a great story in the Bible about God telling Hosea to marry a girl, Gomer, whom he knew would absolutely break his heart. She was a girl with a spotty past and a fickle heart, who would time and time again spurn his love and seek solace in the arms of other lovers. The story, as you may know sort of comes to a head when the woman finds herself on a bidding block, destitute and dejected and with no other options to dig herself out of the debt she has incurred. So, she stands there on that block, naked under the scrutinizing gaze of her bidders, awaiting the verdict that would decide her fate forever.

But as the auction begins, something strange happens. She hears faintly, yet unmistakably, a voice in her ears. “Five shekels.” It’s one she knows all too well. “Ten shekels.” But why would he do this? “Fifteen shekels.” “Sold.” She’s been bought by the man she had spurned; the man whose heart she had broken time and again. As she’s trying to make sense of what had just happened, it suddenly dawns on her, and her heart sinks because she knows there’s only one reason why he’d do this. He’d have his revenge. So she lifts her head, bracing herself to get what’s coming to her, but what comes next is perhaps the biggest surprise of all, because she’s greeted not by indignation, but by a kind smile and a warm embrace that seems to say, “I love you more than you’ll ever know. Let’s go home.”

Romantic drama eat your heart out. Yet this is a faint echo of the Great Drama of God purchasing each of the lives of those who would become His bride. God loves you more than you could or will ever know. You are the “apple of His eye.” So, keep your body, soul and mind clean for Him. And let Him help you.