

## I. The Corinthian Problem:

### A. The Problem

1. Corinthian Christians engaged in pagan sexual worship practices for the sake of intimacy with God
2. using the excuse that as long as they were being “spiritual” the physical didn’t matter.
3. This same attitude, that as long as I’m being spiritual it doesn’t matter what I do in and with my body, pervades the church in America today
  - a. Sexual perversion
  - b. Alcohol and substance abuse
  - c. Racial prejudices and violence
  - d. Abortion

### B. Paul’s Gospel Response:

1. The body and the spirit are one in Christ.
2. Here’s what a Christian needs to know about the body and it’s relationship to the spirit.

## II. Paul’s Points

### A. Grace is no license for lawlessness. v. 12

1. Corinthian conventional wisdom
  - a. “All things are lawful . . .”
  - b. is the misapplication of what it means for a Christian to be under grace and not under law.
2. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”
  - a. He institutes the law of love.
    - (1) The Christian does not live a lawless life.
    - (2) They simply live devoted to love for God and love for their neighbor.
  - b. If what they do is not done out of love for God and neighbor, then their conduct in that moment is not only loveless, it is lawless, and therefore, sin.
    - (1) So, “all things” should be helpful
    - (2) And, we should be “enslaved by nothing.”

### B. God created the body for Himself and His purposes. v. 13

1. What you do with your body matters.
  - a. Corinthians took a somewhat cavalier attitude:
    - (1) the body is no more important than one food over another.
    - (2) “It all goes in and it all comes out and God will destroy it all”
  - b. Paul corrects their thinking with God’s truth about the purpose of their bodies.
2. ***“The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”***
  - a. Don’t mistake what you were equipped with with what you were meant for.
    - (1) ***Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV) <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that***

*creeps on the earth.”<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

- (2) **Genesis 1:28 (ESV)** <sup>28</sup> *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*
  - b. God equipped Adam and Eve with the means to be fruitful, to multiply, but why?
    - (1) Why does God so command them and equip them?
    - (2) **Malachi 2:15 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> *Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.*
  - c. Why does God equip human beings to multiply?
    - (1) In order to fill the earth with godly offspring.
    - (2) And why would God want to fill the earth with human beings who bear His image, who know and appreciate and love Him and live according to His ways and purposes?
    - (3) **Habakkuk 2:14 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*
  - d. Sexual pleasure and reproduction are tools for filling the earth with the knowledge of God’s glory.
    - (1) They are not the end but means to an end.
      - (a) The goal of sex is not personal pleasure
      - (b) The goal of sex is not even babies
      - (c) The goal of sex is the glory of God
    - (2) The purpose of bodies equipped for sex is not the quest for selfish pleasure
    - (3) The purpose of bodies equipped for sex is the consummation of God’s mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory by filling the earth with human beings who know and love and bear His image in the world.
3. God did not create your body for simply for sexual pleasure.
- a. He created your body for His glory and He added pleasure for your joy in accomplishing His purpose.
  - b. Sex is not primarily about you and your interests, but God and His interests in filling the earth with the knowledge of His glory.
  - c. Don’t mistake what you were equipped with with what you were meant for.
    - (1) Just because the body is equipped for sex does not mean the body exists for the purpose of sex.
    - (2) Just because sex is a source of pleasure does not mean that sexual pleasure is the highest goal a body can achieve.
    - (3) Sex merely for pleasure, no matter what form it takes, and sex outside of the parameters of one biological male and one biological female in a lifelong, committed, monogamous marriage, besides being simply sin, undermines and destroys the testimony of God’s glory that authentic, God-given sexuality is meant to convey.

**C. If you can’t imagine Jesus doing it with his body, you, being his body, shouldn’t do**

it either. v. 15-17

**D. Since your body belongs to God, glorify God with your body v.19-20**

1. ILLUSTRATION: Someone passed along an article about gun control they wanted me to read.
  - a. In the body of the article, the author makes the assertion that “a man owns himself and therefore all his property, including the right to defend himself and his property.”
  - b. I don’t want to explore the implications of the current gun control debate here, but I do want to explore with you Christians the idea that you own yourselves.
  - c. I believe the genuine followers of Jesus must recognize a different state of existence that must shape every value and decision we make in this world.
    - (1) Paul states the difference quite clearly:
    - (2) **“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.”**
2. God has purchased you with the blood of Christ
  - a. Your body belongs to God for His purpose
    - (1) **God bought you to glorify Himself in the world through you.**
    - (2) The driving question the body must always ask is: how, in this moment, can the glory of God be revealed in me?!
      - (a) Your body is not a neutral component of your existence.
      - (b) Your body is not simply a biological process from which you derive occasional pleasures, nor is it simply the mechanism for a particular biological process.
    - (3) You belong to God
      - (a) Your marriage, your body, your experiences, your life is not primarily about you; you are for Him.
      - (b) Your faith is for Him.
      - (c) Your desires are for Him.
      - (d) Your sexuality is for Him.
      - (e) Your conduct and behavior is for Him.
      - (f) Your possessions, abilities, and achievements are for Him.
      - (g) Your family and children are for Him.
      - (h) Your strengths and weaknesses, your passions and joys, your griefs and sorrows, your repentance and faithfulness are all bought by Him, belong to Him, and are all for Him.
      - (i) YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN.
        - i) You are NOT your own.
        - ii) You have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Your entire life as a Christian hinges on you understanding and accepting that faith in Christ means every aspect of your existence, all you are, all you possess, all you love and cherish, even sex and sexuality, belongs to God through Christ’s death on the cross.
    - (1) As a matter of faith your body belongs to God to use for His glory in any way He sees fit.
    - (2) It is this faithful understanding that allows Paul to say in **Philippians 1:20-21**, “. . . *it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*”

- (3) It is love of this truth that has upheld men and women for two millennia as they have faced the wrath of the world and given their lives in testimony to the worthiness of Jesus!

### **III. Final Considerations**

#### **A. Evaluate how you behave in your body**

1. In any given moment, evaluate behavior and attitudes with this criterium: “Would God be honored if my behavior at this moment became public?”
  - a. (And some folks, who are given to public displays of sin, need to ask themselves, “Would God be honored in my behavior at this moment?”), and, if not, cease the behavior.
  - b. “Would people be moved to love Jesus and praise God if they could see me now?”
2. Any negative answer indicates a behavior we ought to run from.
  - a. “Flee from sexual immorality.”
  - b. Flee from any behavior or sin that denies the glory of God, the worthiness of Christ, or the effectiveness of saving, transforming faith

#### **B. Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith**

1. Some have the idea that once having said the sinner’s prayer they then can sin without repercussion.
2. One should assume that if one continues in intentional, habitual sin after having confessed Christ, one’s confession has come from the head and not the heart, and one’s genuine conversion should be held in question, especially when sin is pointed out to you and you continue in it with regret, remorse, or most importantly, repentance.
3. Sins like pride, anger, selfishness, lust, etc that are embraced rather than denounced are the evidence of unregenerate hearts
4. and what you need more than anything else in the whole world is the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus.
5. And you need to seek God until you have it. Nothing else matters.