

SDG

1 Corinthians 6:12–20 (NKJV)

12 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. **13** Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. **14** And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. **15** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! **16** Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” **17** But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. **18** Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. **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, and you are not your own? **20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

YOU ARE GOD’S

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Who’s to say what is right and what is wrong? Who’s to say I can or can’t do this or that? What gives you the right? And are you perfect? These are not only the questions we grapple with and are challenged by today, but they were also the questions being raised 2000 years ago in a city known as Corinth. As Paul writes his epistle he is well aware of the background that conflicts this Corinthian congregation. Corinth was a culturally and economically, socially one of the most prominent Greek cities in the Mediterranean. Located as a busy sea port it was the trade route for people coming from all over the world. A clash of cultures and philosophies this sea port was home to a varied bed of immorality and paganism.

The congregation at Corinth was founded by Paul around 51AD and now some 3-6 years later we find the congregation backsliding, most likely due to the ungodly influence of the surrounding culture.

And are things so different in the Church today? Who’s to say what is right and what is wrong? Who’s to say I can or can’t do this or that? What gives you the right? Are you perfect? The place the apostle Paul will take us to find the answer to these questions, is to the gospel – as he says in v.19, “you are not your own.” Indeed, **YOU ARE GOD’S**.

1. He created you

You were created according to God’s purpose. (**v.12**). This phrase “all things are lawful for me” is more likely a quote of a Corinthian slogan than the words of the apostle himself. The background to this epistle shows us that the apostle is responding to a letter perviously written to him by the congregation. There are some quotes in 1 Corinthians that were probably the challenges being laid forth by Paul’s antagonists.

We especially find challenges being raised in the chapters ahead regarding food and freedom from OT ceremonial laws about what meats you can and can't eat. They were using their freedom, or so-called freedom as a license for one to live however he like. "All things are lawful for me!" We see how this affected not only their attitude toward food but also their attitude toward moral issues.

"I will not be brought under the power of any." All things in this world were created according to God's design and purpose. This is true of food (**v.13**) and it is also true of our bodies.

I came across a book written by an athiest entitled, "The Athiest's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life Without Illusions." In it the author begins asking a series of the basic questions of life: "Is there a God: No." "What is the purpose of the universe: There is none." "What is the meaning of life: There is none." And then he gets to morality — "what is the difference between right and wrong? There is no moral difference." "why should I be moral? Because it makes you feel better than immoral." This is where the denial of a Creator will take you. If there is no Creator, then there is no one to design what is right and what is wrong. There is no one who has the right to tell me I am doing something wrong – all things are lawful for me.

However there is a Creator. This is why we are aware of right and wrong. This is why we feel guilt. This is why we have morality.

(v.13) The stomach was indeed created for the consumption of food and vice versa. On the other hand, our bodies were not created for immorality. This is where the difference lies in the freedom to eat whatever meats we like, and the use of our body. Our body was not created for sexual immorality, but for the Lord. You are God's own.

2. He joined you to Christ

Indeed He joined you to Christ. (**v.15-17**). Something changed when you came to faith. You were no longer joined to the world and sin, but you became a member of the body of Christ, of which we are all joint members.

Ephesians chapter 5 describes the Church as having been married to Christ. We who were once strangers to Christ have now been united with Him. And here in our text, we are "one spirit with Him."

At times in the Old Testament the Spirit would describe Israel's idolatry and rebellion as adultery. And this is what persisting in sin becomes – cheating on God. For you are His, you are joined to Christ.

Today, we are faced with much the same immoral surroundings as the church in Corinth was. Pornography is readily available as it never was before. I remember a pastor describing how at least in his day it involved a much greater risk of public

embarrassment to pursue such sins. Today, it can be done easily without anyone but God ever knowing.

In fact even if you aren't seeking out these sins, this society we live in still wears away at us. TV, government, schools, and the world continue to make intimacy outside of marriage common place. I grew up with it and I am sure it has made me less sensitive than my parents were at my age. It is just so prevalent. Not just be prostitution as our text refers to, but all sorts of physical and emotional relationships that have been reserved by God for a husband and wife.

Let us emphasize what a great blessing God has placed upon marriage. He has given to man and woman the most intimate of relationships – (**v.16b**). How much more can we then see the emphasis placed on the blessing of being joined to Christ. That we are members of Christ is the most intimate of relationships we will ever know – as Ephesians 5 says, “that He might present us spotless, blameless; as a bride adorned for her husband. God has made us His own.

3. His Spirit dwells in you

You are the temple of the Holy Spirit as verse 19 says. What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife asked him to lay with her? He fled. He ran. (**v.18a**) Joseph left his coat behind and booked it out of there. **Genesis 39:9 How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”** May this be our attitude when confronted with sin – any sin. Whether it be anger, contempt, disobeying parents, disrespecting our superior, speaking bad of someone behind their back, or sins against the body. How can I do this great wickedness?

For the Holy Spirit dwells in you. God no longer has made His home in the Temple at Jerusalem, but He comes into your heart and dwells within you.

This is where warnings against sexual sins take a prominent place in Scripture. As Paul says, you are sinning against your own body.

We can think of how Menassah, King of Judah, treated God's holy place. Menassah in 2 Kings 21 actually sets up altars to false gods within the God's Holy Temple. Would God's Spirit continue to dwell and be worshiped along side of these idols?

And yet it is the Holy Spirit who dwells with us, who makes His home in your body. It is the Holy Spirit who is within you who is working within you a heart that does flee sin, that doesn't want it within you. For you are not your own – you are God's and God is going to keep you as His own.

4. He paid the price for you

This is why God has laid down such an extraordinary price. (**v.20**) Despite whatever your debt might be, God has come up with the necessary funds to make you His own.

As Paul says just prior to our text, **11 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.**

The difference between you and the world then becomes faith in Christ and repentance. While we are weak and we do fall into sin, unlike Menassah we don't set up altars within our lives and hearts to other gods. You are forgiven in Christ Jesus. These other gods are hated and thrown out.

Think of your balance with the bank. We accumulate nothing but debt, we earn nothing but death. So God takes your debt places it on Jesus' account and makes Him work it off. He sends Him to the cross to face bankruptcy for you and suffers for all your sins.

“For you were bought at a price.” That price was one we could never imagine. The sacrifice of our Savior is something beyond what man could ever face – for He carried the weight of the whole worlds sins. As Luther confessed, “Not with silver and gold, but with His holy precious blood ... He redeemed us to be His very own and live under Him in His kingdom.”

You are God's. Unlike the atheist who writes: “Why be moral? Because it makes you feel better than immoral.” Our morality and upright living is not on the basis of what makes me feel better. It is not on the basis of what gives me the glory. We give our bodies to the Lord because they are His. We serve Him out of thankfulness and rejoicing for the life and forgiveness He has given to us.

In a culture not that much different than Corinth, may the Holy Spirit lead us to glorify the God with our lives and bodies. We are His witnesses before a corrupt world to stand for Christ's righteousness. Let us show the world that we belong to God – that we were created according to His purpose, that we have been joined to Christ, that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and that we have been bought back from sin at the cost of our Savior's death. Amen.