



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Bought With A Price

No. 15
Series: 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

September 28, 2025
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Text

[12] "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. [13] "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14] And God raised 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 prostitute? Never! [16] Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." [17] But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. [18] Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. [19] Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (ESV)

Introduction:

- Arouse Interest:
 - In 2010, a student at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City accidentally tripped and fell right into the famous Picasso painting known as, *The Actor*. The painting was worth \$130 million dollars, and in falling into it, the young woman punched a six-inch hole right into the canvas. It could have been a devastating loss. But fortunately, the canvas was able to be restored by experts. By the time it was finished, no one could tell that anything had happened.
 - But, after the incident, the Museum decided to surround the piece with a thick layer of plexiglass to ensure that this priceless painting wouldn't be subjected to any more accidents.
 - All of us value the things we have to different degrees and measures. It's part of the reason why, after we've bought that new iPhone, we also shell out an additional \$50 for a case and screen protector. It's why some of you even carry your keys in one pocket and your phone in another so you don't scratch up the nice surface.
- Surface Needs:

- But when it comes to our bodies, how much value do we place in our own physicality? And how should we best care for our bodies?
 - In our modern world, there is sometimes a tendency to undervalue the body and its relationship to ourselves. Many people seem to believe that the body is fleeting and fading, and the way to make the most out of life is to make the most of the good times we have.
 - For Christians, we believe that God values our bodies. That God created us not simply to be souls but to be embodied people. That is because our bodies are so integrally related to who we are, we ought to be careful in how we use our bodies. We ought to be especially careful in the realm of love and sexuality.
- Orient To Text:
 - For the people of Corinth, sexual promiscuity was a normal part of their world. It would have been astounding to hear that any one young man or woman chose to remain a virgin to honor the commandments of God. Maybe as astounding as some of you are when you hear such a thing today.
 - If you are a visitor here, and you are sitting there asking yourself, “Why would anyone ever want to save themselves for marriage?” this is the sermon for you.
 - And for those of us who are Christians, my hope and prayer is that this sermon would encourage you as well to flee from all forms of sexual immorality and to remain faithful to Christ in this area of your life.
 - In encouraging the church in Corinth to remain faithful to the biblical sexual ethic, Paul’s argument here is very simple: ***Flee immorality, for you belong to God.***
 - Organizational Sentence: Now, as you read verses 12-20, you’ll see clearly here that there is really only one command in this section of texts. It’s in verse 18, “Flee immorality.” The rest of these verses give us various reasons why we ought to flee immorality. In verses 12-14, Paul calls Christians to flee immorality because we were created for God (12-14). In 15-18, we are going to see that we are connected to God (15-18). Finally, in verses 19-20, we are going to see that Christians are called to flee immorality because we are claimed by God (19-20).

Context:

- Now, before I go too far into the sermon for this Sunday, one thing I wanted to do was make another pass through 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. I don’t think I explained everything I needed to from this passage, and I just wanted to very quickly touch

on some things here. As we've been talking about in our study of 1 Corinthians, Paul is writing to a church that is still struggling to walk away from their former ways of life.

- These are Christians who are saved, but they still have a tendency to live in sinful patterns of life that they need to repent of. You can see in verses 9-10 that these are Christians who are struggling with sexual immorality, idolatry, greed, and various sorts of lusts of the flesh.
- But I want to be clear about this. Paul isn't saying that you need to get rid of these sins so that you can be a Christian. If we read this letter closely, we can clearly see that Paul is actually saying that you should abandon these sins because you are a Christian. Because you've placed your faith in Christ, and you really do belong to him.
- These three categories which Paul uses in verse 11 to describe the Corinthian church, are very important. Paul writes,
 - [11] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- I actually think all three of these descriptions here are referring to the objective aspects of our salvation. If you are a Christian who is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation, the Bible says you have been washed clean of your sins. You have been sanctified or set apart for God. You have been justified or declared righteous based on Christ's righteousness imputed to you.
- And I think it's important for me to get this clear, because if you're here today and you're struggling with sexual sin, you need to know upfront that you will never be sexually pure enough to earn your place before God. And you will never be so sexually immoral that you can't have a place with God because of what Christ has done.

Created For God (12-14)

- So let's get into verses 12-20 today. As we said earlier, Paul is dealing with a church that has all kinds of problems, including sexual immorality. The Greek word for sexual immorality here is (πορνεία). And the term is kinda used for a catch-all term for any kind of sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage.
- If you're wondering whether your particular pet sin is included in the term (πορνεία), I'm here to tell you it is. Paul is knowingly stepping on everyone's toes today. And as soon as he confronts them about their sexual sin, Paul knows that he is going to receive all kinds of pushback from people. This is what Paul is dealing with here in verse 12.

- [12] “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.
- If you are using an English Standard Bible, you can see the Corinthians' excuses are put in quotation marks with Paul's response following up right after.
- The weird thing about these excuses here is that they sound almost right. This first excuse, “All things are lawful for me.” Well, that sounds like something Paul would say. There's a significant sense in which Christians today are not under the laws of the Mosaic Covenant. But that doesn't mean Christians can just do whatever they feel like. As Paul responds here, “Not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.”
 - For the Christians here today, we need to be careful when we are being tempted by sin. Sometimes Satan likes to twist the true parts of our Bible just a little to help justify the sins in our hearts.
 - Jesus saves by grace alone...so it's okay if we dabble with this sin just this once. God forgives, so there won't be any real consequences if I falter in faithfulness just a little bit.
 - Brothers and sisters, Paul thought sin was dangerous. Throughout this letter, Paul is consistently warning the Corinthian church to watch out. To flee lest we be dominated by sexual immorality. Sin always takes us a lot farther than we ever thought we would go. And it always costs a lot more than we ever thought we would pay.
 - You and I need to be wiser when it comes to the craftiness of Satan. We need to do our best to know our Bibles better than the devil so that when he twists Scripture to tempt us, you and I are not deceived.
- Now, this second excuse here in verse 13 is a little trickier. And this is an encouragement, if you don't have a Bible open in front of you to 1 Corinthians 6, you're gonna have a hard time following along. So if you need help getting a Bible or finding the passage, just tap the neighbor next to you, and they'd be happy to help you get to where you need to be today. Paul writes in verse 13:
 - [13] “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14] And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.
- The English Standard Version of the Bible cuts this Corinthian argument off right after the stomach for food. The way this is laid out is that the Corinthians are making this argument that sex is just natural for us. It feels good. We crave it. And just like we eat to meet our hunger cravings, we ought to indulge in sexual

immorality to satisfy our sexual cravings. And then Paul's response to this objection would follow right after this. "God will destroy both one and the other."

- Now I'm gonna be honest here. The ESV translation doesn't make a lot of sense to me. And this is a good time to remind everyone that the quotation marks in your Bible aren't inspired. There are no quotation marks in the Greek manuscripts.
- This is also a good place to point out that it is often useful to use various Bible translations. Here, I actually think the New International Version makes a lot more sense.
- The NIV moves the quotation so that the full Corinthian objection here would be
 - [13] "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food—and God will destroy both one and the other."
- In other words, the Corinthians were arguing that they can do whatever they want because one day God himself is going to destroy our bodies. In their minds, God can't care a whole lot about what they did in their bodies if one day he is just going to destroy them.
- How does Paul respond to this?
 - The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14] And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

Application

- Friends, this verse is profound. According to Paul, the fundamental reason you have a body isn't for sex. Isn't for food. No, according to Paul, the fundamental reason you have a body is so that you can know the Lord.
- Why do you have eyes? Why do you have ears? It's so you can see the glories of God displayed all around in creation. It's so you can hear and respond to the good news of Christ's Gospel. It's so that one day you will be able to see Jesus Christ face to face and hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."
- Friends, according to Paul, you were made for God so that you can know God.
- And this body you have is not temporary. If you are a Christian who is trusting in Christ, then just as Jesus Christ rose again in his physical body, so also you and I will one day rise from the grave in our physical bodies as well. We will be transformed and glorified so that we will one day be able to perceive in our own bodies, with our own eyes, the full ecstatic glories of Jesus Christ our Savior.
- Make no mistake, God cares what we do with our bodies.
- And when you and I sinned, when we broke God's law, we were cut off from knowing God the way that we were supposed to. But Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, set us free from the curse of God's law. He did this so we

can do whatever we want. But so we can be free to do what we were always created to do. We can be free to know him and make much of him.

- That's what Christian freedom really means.
- Friend, if you're here today, and you're stuck in some sort of sexual immorality, and you're telling yourself, "It's okay, I have needs." I sympathize with you. I know good and comforting sexual sin can feel sometimes. I'm not here to say that I'm better than anyone here because I'm not.
- But I think you know that there is something about sexual sin that's just not as good as you thought it would be. And if Paul's right, it never will be. Your life was meant to run on God. And if you don't know him, then nothing in this world can ever fill that void in your heart.
- In my life, I have met people who were some of the most godly, well-rounded, happy human beings I have ever known, and they have never had sex in their lives. But they knew God, and knowing God was the greatest joy of their life.
- I have also met people who have had several sexual experiences in their lives. And they were miserable. They're not happy. And how could they be? Friends, if our lives were meant to run on God, what could ever take his place?

Connected to God (15-18)

- Not only is your body created for God, but as we see in verses 15-17, your body is also connected to God. Look with me starting at verse 15:
 - [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 prostitute? Never! [16] Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." [17] But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. [18] Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
- According to Paul, if you are a Christian, your body is actually deeply connected to Christ. It's a member of his body.
- This is touching on the doctrine known as union with Christ. It's one of the most beautiful Christian doctrines we have. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, loves us so much that he is willing to unite himself to us in the most intimate of unions.
- This is a doctrine that Paul regularly circles back to throughout this book.
 - In 1 Corinthians 1:30, Paul argues that all the benefits of Christ's salvation come to us because we are intimately united to him.

- [30] And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
- In our text here in verses 16 and 17, Paul states that our union with Christ is similar to the union that comes about when two people get married. Paul actually quotes Gen. 2:7 here, where God first laid out the design for marriage.
 - For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.”
- Later in chapters 11 and 12, Paul is going to argue that the Christian’s common union with Christ ought to also unite us believers in a Church to one another in love and fellowship.
- And finally, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul will say that because Christ has risen from the grave, and we are united to him, one day we too will be raised from the dead like he was raised.
- This union we have with Christ is honestly a little hard for us to get our heads around. The implication from Paul is that this union is actually deeper and more profound than the unions husbands and wives share in marriage. John Murray called this union the mystical union believers have with Christ. It’s hard to understand, but it’s comforting to know just how close Jesus is willing to get to his people. People like you and me.
- But notice what Paul does with all of this. Paul takes this theology of marriage and union with Christ, and he uses it to ground the Christian sexual ethic.

Application

- If you’re here today and you’re wondering why Christians reserve sex for marriage, this is Paul’s answer here. It’s because sex is designed by God to bind two people together for the rest of their lives. The sensations, the physiological, psychological, and spiritual union that comes about from sex is so powerful, so transformative, that it needs to be kept within the confines of marriage. It needs to be kept within the context of two people who solemnly promise before God and all their community to stay together for the rest of their lives.
- Because as beautiful and powerful as sex can be, it can also be incredibly damaging if two people promise with their bodies what they can’t promise with their lives.
- Even if you’re not a Christian here today, I think you understand this kind of pain and damage caused when physically intimate people decide to part ways and walk away as if those experiences didn’t matter.

- But for Christians here today, Paul also gives us a deeper reason why we ought to flee sexual immorality. For Christians, for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, Paul states here that you and I are intimately connected to Christ and his Church.
- And for a Christian who shares in that kind of spiritual intimacy, it is unthinkable for us to want to drag Christ and his church into the mess of our sexual sin.
- Here, in verses 16 and 17, Paul makes it very clear that union with Christ and union with sexual immorality are antithetical to one another. Either you will love the one and hate the other, or you will be drawn to one and leave the other. But you cannot have both.
- Paul wraps up this section here by stating clearly in verse 18 that the only way for a Christian to cling to Christ is for them to flee from sexual immorality.
 - [18] Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
- Brothers and Sisters, I want to be compassionate here, but also clear. The solution the Bible gives to sexual sin is not to wrestle with it, not to learn how to live with it, but to flee from it. Get as far away as possible from your sin as you can.
 - This means you place as many barriers as you need on your phone, on your computer, on your TV as you need.
 - This means you pay attention to yourself and to all the situations where you find yourself most vulnerable to temptation, and you do your best to avoid those situations.
 - This means you bring your struggles out into the open with trusted brothers and sisters in the church who love you and can help keep you accountable. Who can help you flee from sin.
- Friends, there is no price too high to pay for you to stay pure in Christ. Sin really is that dangerous. And I say this as someone who's not perfect here; I never knew how much sin would cost me.
- It has devastating consequences for you and for your family. It has devastating consequences for the members of your church. As we saw in 1 Cor. 5:6, sin is like leaven in bread. It just has a way of getting everywhere and damaging everything. It compromises our witness to Christ. It distorts our fellowship with one another. And it is a fundamental offence before the Lord our God.
- And if you need help, talk to me about it. I am not here to judge you or hurt you. I'm here to help. And if you don't feel comfortable talking to me, talk to someone in our church today whom you do feel comfortable talking with. This is what the

church is for. Wherever you're at, whatever little bit of sin you're playing with, you need to know it is not worth it.

Claimed by God (19-20)

- Now, I know that some of you have been faithful in fighting sin. You've been trying your best to cut off your hand and tear out your eye if it is causing you to stumble. And many of you feel like this is just not working. I want to encourage you that the damage you are mitigating by making it hard to get to sin is significant in and of itself.
- But you're right. Realistically, you can be alone on an island with no access to anyone or any piece of technology and still find a way to sin in sexual immorality. And ultimately, it is not enough for us to constantly be fleeing from something. We also need to be fleeing to something as well. Or fleeing to someone.
- This touches on the final reason why Christians are called to flee sexual immorality today. As we see in verses 19-20, Christians are called to flee sexual immorality because we have been claimed by God. Paul writes starting at verse 19:
 - [19] Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
- There's some context here that we need to get to understand this language of price. In the Old Testament, after Israel was delivered out of Egypt, the Lord gave instructions to his people to set up his tabernacle in the midst of their assembly. This would be the place where God's people, despite being sinful people, could still meet with God himself. They could still commune with the Lord.
- But there was a price that needed to be paid. Day after day and year after year, God's people were expected to offer a sacrifice. Some animal whose death would purchase the forgiveness of God's people so they could be purified and stand before the Lord without fear of punishment. And for a little while, this system of sacrifice functioned okay and gave God's people some semblance of a relationship with him.
- But it was imperfect. There were still several barriers in place before the Lord and his people. And over time it became clear that there were not enough earthly sacrifices that could be made to fully purchase the forgiveness of God's sinful people. Our sins were just too great.
- So God himself did a new thing. He came down himself in Jesus Christ, and he paid the price on the cross that we could never pay.

Application

- Friends, this is what Paul is getting at here in verse 20. Christ has fully paid the penalties for our sins. In the language of Paul, God has purchased us for himself. And now, God's people don't need a temple to worship the Lord; we are the temple of the Lord.
- And now we no longer need another sacrifice for our sins; we have the perfect sacrifice, and we can go before the presence of God and commune with him freely now. Because now, we belong to him.
- If you're new to this whole Christianity thing, you might be a little uncomfortable with this language of being purchased by God. Of being owned by God. I understand, but you should just know, in Paul's mind, there are really only two ways for human beings to live. Either you will live as a slave to the things of this world. Or you will live as a slave to God.
 - Romans 6:17–18
 - [17] But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. (ESV)
- There's really no middle ground here. Either you will belong to sin and serve this world, or you will belong to God and become slaves of righteousness. But friends, it is not a bad thing to be a slave to a good God. If you belong to God, you belong to a God who created you to know him, who intimately connected you to him, and who claims you for himself by paying the price that you could never pay on your own.
- And because God is the one who pays the price for our sins, you and I can be assured today that we are never too far gone to come home to the mercies of Christ. Friends, no matter who you are or where you are today, the blood of Christ is enough to purchase even someone like you.
- And the paradox of this passage is that if you truly want to be free from sexual immorality, it doesn't come simply from being free. Instead, freedom comes when we lean into the fact that we are slaves of God. When we realize the great privilege we have of knowing him and serving him. When we not only flee from our sexual immorality, but we also flee towards our king.

Illustration:

- There's a story about a group of men riding in a train car together. And one of the men broke out a deck of cards, and he invited the others to join him in a high-stakes game of poker.
- The cards were shuffled and dealt. But one of the men just looked at his cards lying facedown on the table. He didn't pick them up.

- They asked him, “What’s the matter? Don’t you want to play?”
- And he said, “Well, yes, I really would.”
- “Well, pick up your cards then.”
- “Well, sir, you see I would but...I don’t have any hands.”
- All the other three men were gawking at him. So embarrassed by the situation. So they cleaned everything up and decided to order lunch.
- Well, when the food came around, all the other three men started watching this man closely. What’s he gonna do? Is he gonna just go for it with his face?
- The man bowed his head. Said a prayer. And then, popped his hand out, picked up his fork, and started eating.
- Now the other three were livid. “What is this? I thought you said that you didn’t have any hands!”
- And the man answered simply back, “These are not my hands to do with as I like.”
- Friends, this is the attitude of the servant of God, and this is what it looks like to be free from sin. What it looks like when God’s people today flee sexual immorality, because we belong to God.