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1 Corinthians 6:12-20 - What Of Our Freedom In Christ?

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Good evening. Let's open our Bibles tonight to 1 Corinthians 6:12.

Paul had planted the Corinthian church on his second missionary journey. They are probably eight years old or so, as a church, by now. Paul is in Ephesus planting a church there; he would be there for three years. When news came to him.....both from the religious leaders of the church at a home (kind of) hosts where the churches were meeting as well as some folks that were just passing through town; also got a letter, it seems, delivered to him from those in the church that began to share with him how badly things were going. The church was planted in a cesspool; it was nothing good about this city. To commit sexual sin – what was called to “Corinthianize” – that’s how bad it was; the city was named after the action. But needless to say, Paul loved the church. He saw what God had done. The Lord had miraculously watched over Paul, kept him safe, multiplied the fruit. And, as a result, certainly Paul, though he was a long way away, was still very much in love with the people there. Apollos, the fellow that he knew, had gone to take over for the church for now, being their pastor. But Paul wanted to write them. They sent questions. He had questions for them.

But he starts off in chapter 1 very hopeful. He had seen the Lord’s work, seen the fruit of God’s Spirit, and was just sure that the Lord could take what He had begun and continue it in their hearts. Having said that, both this letter and the one that follows, as well as a letter that we don’t have that Paul referenced in chapter 5:9, were very corrective. I mean, Paul goes after topics. I said to my wife the other day, “I wouldn’t teach these subjects if I was just doing topicals.” You have to run into these. But having run into them, there is such good, practical counsel for us. And what Paul began in chapter 5, after having spoken to them about side-taking and party spirit and using worldly wisdom, if you will, to evaluate teachers and lining behind pastors, he just said to them, “Who saved you? Who died for you? I didn’t, Apollos didn’t, Peter didn’t. We didn’t! He’s the One who came to save us. And all of you got saved – you in Corinth – by a simple message that was not really long on worldly wisdom but was very short on it; it was very long on prayer and the presentation of God’s Spirit.” And so Paul spent the first few chapters talking to them about how the Lord was able to use the skilled and the unskilled and the polished and the coarse and you and me because it was His work. So, “What’re you doing causing all this division and taking sides? That’s not the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. That’s the wisdom of the world. You guys are stuck, you’re carnal. You should be grown up and teaching others by now. You’re still learning the principles of faith.” And so Paul wasn’t easy on them, but he loved them. He was like a father to them, told them the truth, if you will. And so he talked to them about God’s Son coming again and He’s going to reveal our motives, and then we’ll get our own rewards. But Paul thought, “Your judgment of me or anybody else is no big deal.” He called it a

“small thing. I can’t wait for the Lord to come and reveal the hearts. That’s not something I can do; that’s outside of my perusal. That’s God’s decision.”

He changed topics in chapter 5. He turned to immorality in the church. There was a fellow in the church who was having an affair with his step-mother and sitting in church as if all was well, and the church was proud of their openness and their liberal thinking; fit right in with the Corinthian city, if you will. And Paul said, “You can’t let that happen. You’ve got to deal with that. That’s going to destroy your fellowship; it’s not going to bless it at all.”

Last week Paul turned from that to talking about the other thing they were doing. They were suing each other in front of the world, trying to get their best out of the world rather than the wisdom in the church, losing witness and reliance upon the Lord for gain and a place in the world and their standards. And he said, “You’re losing, you’re losing. Even if you win, you lose.” And so he talked about that. He ended up, in verse 11, by saying (as he made a list of the kinds of sins that he could find there – the immorality, the covetousness)he said, in verse 11, “You used to be those kinds of people.” And all of those verbs there are in the past tense. “That was you back in the day. But there’s this completed transaction as God has saved you, and now you’re obligated to seek His face, to live His life, to use your body and your plans and your decisions to honor Him.” Sometimes you do portions of Scriptures – and you like to do a lot. I really think that chapters 5, 6 and 7 go together. Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 are all about liberty and the way that you use your liberty in the world, amongst the lost, amongst the church, amongst the poor, the weak, the strong. He covers it from every angle. There’s a lot of good lessons there, but they come in big chunks.

When Paul started talking about immorality in chapter 6 and then about lawsuits, and he said, “This is not the old life that you live,” he returns back to this abomination of immorality today. But then, in chapter 7, he goes out of his way to give us what has to be the longest and most insightful chapter in the Bible on marriage and on remarriage and on divorce; and it’s a long chapter of forty verses. But I think you have answers there that you probably can’t find anywhere else in the Scriptures because this was now the second generation of the church, and they find themselves in all kinds of situations and, “What do we do now, as Christians?” And it kind of all is leading to that from what Paul began in chapter 5, if you will.

But tonight we’re going to start with that. One of Paul’s favorite subjects is the freedom that you have in Christ. It’ll be his subject, like I said, in chapters 8-11. It’s the thing that he.....it’s one of his favorites. He covers it in lots of books, if you will. But he applies it here to the rampant adultery and fornication that were so commonplace in Corinth. For one reason, the temple of Aphrodite stood in the middle of town, and the worship of Aphrodite involved having sexual relationships with thousands of prostitutes that would come out of the hill every night. And it was a wickedness that had become a part of the fabric of the society. In other words, it was commonplace; it was well-accepted. It was just fine. It wasn’t just fine, but it was just fine in the world. And so this was this ever-present danger to the Corinthians. Here’s their battle: it was legal.

And a lot of these folks interpreted legal as moral. But that's hardly a true statement. You certainly can't come away from the Scriptures with that understanding. Cultural practices that legalize sin – it's still sin. God's Book doesn't change. The culture changes, the acceptance of people changes.

We took a group of our folks to Holland. We planted a church in Holland. And so we took, I think, 10 or 15, maybe 20, folks. We were going to go to do a couple of concerts there. And so we took all the kids out one day. We said, "Let's go to the beach and hand out flyers" until I remembered they have nude beaches in Holland. So we got on the bus.... "No, we're not going to be going here, we're going to....." had to turn them right around. I didn't even think. But it was legal, but I'm not sure it was so helpful. So we learned an Arabic phrase, "Ship kedem." It means "look at your toes" and let's get out of here.

The marijuana issue....I remember, in school I wasn't a Christian but praying that marijuana could be legalized one day because I smoked pot every day going to school, for four years, as far as I can remember. Now it's legal. Not good. Abortion in many ways, legal. Same sex marriage legal. It's legal. But is it moral in God's sight? And that's certainly, at least in part, what the Corinthians were facing in terms of their religious worship and then their sexual misconduct, if you will.

For the Corinthians, eating was temporal. It was a daily exercise. But so was the worship of Aphrodite in the evening with a prostitute that came down from the hill. It was legal, it was well-accepted, it was a natural response to desires. But the church has been called out of the world. It's not beneficial, and we know it now to be sin. And so Paul's issue is – and it will become for chapters to come – we're the only group in the world that has the freedom to do the right thing. The world is bound to do the wrong thing. Sin binds your life. "Oh, I'm free to do whatever I want." Yeah, that's not freedom. Freedom is to do the right thing and to honor the Lord. We have the freedom to honor the Lord.

And with the subject of the first eleven verses of this chapter still in view, Paul kind of returns to this because it's an important issue before getting to.....in the next couple of weeks, Lord be willing, we'll cover all of these verses on marriage, and I think you'll learn a lot because, like I said, it isn't things that you would probably teach unless you're in a married couples class or you're getting ready to get married or whatever it might be. But in the context of what Paul was writing to this church, it was vitally important that they see things from God's perspective.

So, verse 12, we'll start there, and we're going to finish at verse 20 tonight. Paul says this, "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." And then if you'll jump ahead – well, you don't have to do it now – to 1 Corinthians 10:23, Paul will say the same thing. "Everything is lawful for me, but not everything is edifying." And he really kind of parks on that. And the idea is not sin, obviously, but there are plenty of things in the world that are lawful, but the problem is they don't help you in what God has given you to do.

When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he said, “No one should judge you in terms of what you eat or drink, or the festival or the new moon and the sabbath; all of those things were shadows of things to come, but the substance is Jesus” (Colossians 2:16-17). And certainly these Corinthians had taken a liberty that, certainly, God never intended. Paul’s point here, and he makes the point several times in the next several chapters, is that there are things in your life and mine – practices – that may be fine. Now he’s not talking about this sexual relationship with these prostitutes at the temple of Aphrodite; that’s obvious sin. But he takes that example to say there are so many things that, in our lives, might be fine in and of themselves, but do they really help me to begin to walk with God? And are they very helpful to me in terms of my sharing my faith and enjoying the liberty that God has given me from sin, what He has delivered me from?

You know, there’s a lot of talk about conservatives and liberals and progressives. But Paul says the real issue is twofold. Number one – is it helping my walk with the Lord? Or two – is it binding my life, is it taking away from me the energy and the devotion that I need to be God’s person that He wants to use? You know, as a child of God, He would want you to be goal-oriented (I’m sure of that) and very pragmatic. In other words, I’ve got to make decisions that will allow my life to be useful and available to God to use.

When Paul wrote to the Hebrews in chapter 12:1, he said, “Seeing we’re surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us run the race set before us, laying aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us.” And he makes this comparison between weight and sin; weight in the sense that there’s no sinfulness in weight. I think that’s the hardest thing for us. Over here where it says, “Lay aside sin,” all of us go, “Yeah, it’s sin. We shouldn’t do that.” But here’s weight. You know, if you’re running a marathon, you don’t want to be carrying 20-pound weights in your hand. Those slow you down. You might carry them to train but not to win, not to race. So there are weights that keep you from running the way that you could. When you bring up these weights to people, they’ll get angry and say, “Well, hey, what’s wrong with this?” And you go, “Nothing in and of itself, but what is it doing to you?” We have parents who will literally keep their kids out of church for six months to play softball or Little League or football. Nothing wrong with that until it begins to impact your spiritual well-being. These same parents sometimes bring their kids back at 16 and say, “I don’t know what to do with them.” And you want to say, “Well, you’ve taught them that there’s much more important things in life than your devotion to the Lord.” But if you say that, they’ll just go somewhere else. But that’s what I think. It’s a weight. Nothing wrong with it. It’s just not very helpful. It’s not expedient, it’s not encouraging. The sin that easily besets us, that’s easy; you can deal with that just in a minute. But this weight. And Paul starts with the same thing. “Hey, look, there’re a lot of things I can do, but which things are helpful to me in my relationship with the Lord?” One day we’re going to stand before the Lord and hopefully receive a reward for what we’ve done in this body. You hope to hear, “Well done good and faithful servant, you’ve been faithful in a few things.” But I suspect that, in my life, there’ll be a lot of things that I’m looking for a reward for that I’m going to get nothing for. He’ll know why I did them or I should know why I did them; not sin, just kind of worthless

endeavors that neither helped me but actually can deter my growth in the Lord. And, look, we could spend all evening looking at examples.

I'll tell you my personal example. I love hockey. My wife and I had tickets to the Ducks – sorry, Kings fans – for twenty-two years; won a Stanley Cup. It was great. Had good seat when it was still affordable. The problem was because the Kings were in town, they got Thursdays and Saturdays and Sundays to play, and we got Wednesdays. I'm busy on Wednesdays. (Laughing) I don't know why they didn't check with me. So a lot of Wednesday games I just missed. I missed going. In fact, we had tickets to the Stanley Cup finals and a great seat.....on a Wednesday. So I did like this.....(Laughing) Do I feel a cold coming on? (Pastor Jack clears his throat.) Am I really not feeling under.....maybe I'm under the weather. We sold the tickets, and we came to church. Because I had to decide – as you will – what's the best for you, what's the best for me. And when it comes to those weights – and that's a weight – it can easily begin to lean on me and take me out. Did I miss goin'? Sure. I was happy with the income, but I would have rather went to the game. But I would rather be here with you, and that's the way we should feel about what God is doing.

So, like I said, there're a lot of things we can choose from; things that won't damn your soul but they're not exactly helpful either. And I think that's what Paul's point is as he starts this. "First things first." That's his cry. You're free to miss church, have a beer with the boys down at the end of the hall, stay out late. You can do whatever you want. But is it helpful? There're so many things that I can get involved with that are perfectly acceptable, but they don't contribute to my spiritual well-being. Permissible but not advisable. How about that? It is vital for us, as believers, to be able to prioritize our time and involvements with an eye on one thing: spiritual progress. I want to be strong in the Lord. I want to be more faithful. I want to know Him better than I know Him now. I want to do better.

Paul talked often about running the race to win the prize, but there's no sense competing for second place. I've never heard anyone....well the Olympics are coming up this week....say, "I'm just training for silver." Silver is the first loser in that category. That doesn't work! Imagine spending your life training and you get – especially in these really short little 100-meter dashes – you lose by a tenth of a second. Your whole life! Second place. Nobody does that. We train to win. Oftentimes when you ask people about their lopsided devotion they argue, "Well, is this sin?" "No." "Well, then, leave me alone." But to spend an ever-increasing and inordinate amount of time on the non-essentials doesn't help your spiritual growth at all. You're not moving forward. A marathon runner sees anything that's not a wing to be a weight. I don't know if you've ever seen people that run marathons. They wear next to nothing. It's almost embarrassing. Put some clothes on, you know? (Laughing) The mentality is the less I weigh, the faster I can go.

In reality, only a Christian has a true freedom to do as he pleases. The world is bound to sin, living in darkness, driven by the flesh; not exactly free. But we're free in Christ. You has he made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once

walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience, in whom you conducted yourself in the lust of your flesh, fulfilling the lust and the desires of your mind (Ephesians 2:1-3). That's where you were, but you were.....now you're delivered. God has moved into your heart. You are now free to serve the Lord. We're not taken captive any longer. Paul said to Timothy, "Be gentle with people as you share with them if perhaps God will give them a repentance that they might know the truth, that they could come to their senses, that they can escape the snare of the devil who has taken them captive at his will" (2 Timothy 2:25-26). That's not free. You're free. You're free to be in church tonight. You did not catch me dead in church before I got saved. Except for Christmas and that's 'cause Dad made me go. The lost who drink every weekend and do their drugs and cheat on their wives and cheat on their taxes are not free. The believer's greatest freedom is to step away from sin because we love Him. Spurgeon, the great Victorian evangelist and Bible teacher, smoked cigars like they were going out of business. He loved them. Didn't have any problem with them; thought, "I'm free to do what I want." Until an advertisement came out for another cigar company and it said, "The same brand that Spurgeon smokes." And he never picked up another one the rest of his life.

Paul said, "Look, don't be so proud of your liberality." You have an obligation....no I won't even say an obligation...you have a privilege to say no to sin. You can say no to sin. You can put first things first. You can decide what will profit you. You can make spiritual decisions. You can allow your use of freedom to bring you closer to Jesus. And you even did that tonight. You went to church. Maybe you're tired, you've been at work all day. It's hard to get through traffic on a Wednesday night. You know, we have a fellow that comes to church first service on Sunday. He has to work every night, all night. And he comes, and he said to me one time, "Sorry if I fall asleep." I said, "Well I don't blame you. But good on you for trying!" And that's where his heart was. We can use our freedom to pursue things at a very high cost with little return, but they don't achieve anything that helps us grow in the Lord.

Now Paul applies this, and we'll beat it to death for four chapters later on. But he goes on to say, in the same way, that there's an obvious sin – this sexual immorality in town – though the culture finds it acceptable and usual. And the excuse is, "Well, everybody's doing it, what do you mean this is wrong? God made us sexual beings. We have urges that are perfectly natural." And Paul will, like I said, it turns Paul, in chapter 7, to just go for that whole marriage and divorce and how do you handle your body. But there's certainly no sin that has more pitfalls than sexual sin. I mean, just come work at the church for a while and do some counseling. One in every one it seems marriage counseling that we start with that's really at the end of their rope often involves sexual sin. It ruins homes, it divides families, it produces life-threatening illnesses, it robs people of their dignity, it brings violence and shame and unforgiveness. It's horrible! But you're free to just go, "I'm not gettin' involved with that. I'm walkin' with Jesus." That is illustrated in great detail if you've read Solomon's letters to his son, there, especially Proverbs chapter 5. There're a lot of places as well. But he said to his son, in chapter 5, "Listen to me. The allure of an immoral woman is tempting and it promises

much. But in the end," he said to him, "you get closer to hell than you've ever been. It's a dark road. Don't go there." He even lists some interesting consequences there in chapter 5 about those who would go that direction. He said, "You'll have to end up giving your honor to somebody else, and your years will be cruel to you, and others will get your wealth, and labor will go to your foreign house, and mourning will catch up with you, and physical suffering will follow, and you'll be regretting your life by the time it is over." And then, chapter 5 beginning in verse 15, Solomon turns around, and he says, "Now that's not at all true of being married. This is where God blesses you, but the rest has horrible consequence."

God sees sexual immorality with tremendous seriousness, and he'll say (in a minute) it's because of Him coming to dwell within your body. David, the man after God's own heart, fell into adultery, and though he repented, the consequences in his life were horrible, for the rest of his life. Go back and read 2 Samuel 10-12, through there. The LORD said to David, "Because of the sin, the sword won't depart from your house; and your adversaries are going to rise up against you from your own house; and your wives are going to fall in love with the guy down the street, in public; you're going to lose them; you're going to suffer the consequences of your behavior. But you're not going to die, except that your behavior has caused the enemies of God to blaspheme Me. And you're going to lose that little son that was born to you." None of it was any good. It was horrible.

So, sin.....I don't think there's a sin that enslaves more. Maybe alcoholism as well. But sexual immorality, it'll take you out. We counsel with guys all the time stuck on pornography on the internet. It's just a move that destroys you, and it usually starts with a small indiscretion that gets worse over time.

So imagine this Corinthian church living in this very, very immoral society. We have it bad here; they had it horrible there. I don't think you could walk outside. Just read about Corinth. From a historical standpoint, you just shake your head. How would I ever survive there? You couldn't go outside to look people in the eye. But it's like David wrote, there in Psalm 1, "If you walk with the counsel of the ungodly and then you stand in the path of sinners, you're eventually going to sit with the scornful." It just takes you over. And Paul was worried about the church; he was concerned about their decisions. Solomon advised there, in Proverbs 5, to his son, "Flee immorality. Get away from it as quickly as possible." Paul will say the same thing down here in verse 18. "Flee sexual immorality. Just run! Run away!" He said, in verse 12, "I don't want to be brought under the power of any." The word "power" there is the word for being brought under the authority of another. Paul uses that same word in chapter 7:4 in that same context.

So he says, in verse 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. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power." The argument out of Corinth was, "Hey, look, food and the stomach – they kind of go together. Sexual activity and my body kind of go together." Biologically,

they're both temporal, they're both for this life. The problem is as far as your body is concerned, you have a place in this life where God can dwell....in your body. You're a temple. But you also have a place in the life to come in that body that's going to be changed. But it's going to have a direct attachment to this body. So, I at least have to make the connection that, "My citizenship that's in heaven," Paul said to the Philippians (3:20-21), "we're eagerly waiting for the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who will transform our lowly body to conform it to His glorious body, according to the work with which He can subdue all things to Himself." Here's the problem with sexual immorality: it involves your body, and it is unique. Paul will say in a minute, "When you commit sexual immorality, you sin against your body. Everything else is done in your body outwardly; this is against you, against your body." So, today we are God's vessels. He has purchased us. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, here in a minute) who has taken up residence in our mortal, temporal bodies. As such, these bodies have eternal designs to them. They're not intended by God to have you use them for immoral purposes while waiting for Him to come get you. God doesn't give you sexual drives so that you might defile His vessel with immoral relationships. He gives them to you so that you can have a relationship in marriage with your wife or your husband. And the statement in verse 13 is pretty simple and uncompromising. Just say no to sexual immorality; it isn't for you and for the body that God has put you in that He has now come to fill with His Spirit. You have a body. There's a statement in Hebrews 10:5, which says of the Lord, declaring, "Sacrifice and offering you didn't desire, but a body You have prepared for Me." And you know from the Scriptures that Jesus came, and He took flesh, and He dwelt among us, and He used that body, if you will, and kept it free from corruption, free from defilement, free from decay in the grave; and then this glorified Jesus goes, sits at the right hand of the Father, with marks in His hands and feet over the payment that He made, and He, from there, administers the universe. And then he says, "In like manner your bodies will be glorified one day."

So you read, in verse 15 here, "Do you not know" (remember we said to you, he says this a lot – verse 2, verse 3, verse 9, verse 15, 16, 19; sarcastic but a great teaching tool; you mean you didn't know?! You eight-year-old Christians in the Corinthian church? Did 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! 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.' But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." You see, it's not just the physical union. Sexual relationship produces oneness with a partner that involves your entire person – heart, emotions, flesh, mind. It is a sacred covenant in fact that, once it is broken, there are places in the Scriptures that certainly, unrepented, become a just cause in God's eyes for divorce because of the violation of the covenant, if you will. Not that God would not have you forgive and be restored, and Hosea certainly would argue that there's a better way, even, than separation. However, here's a point you want to grab hold of in your mind. From God's standpoint, your body, first of all, being saved, belongs to Him. He's moved in. This is His address. And you're a part of a body, one body, and one day the Lord is going to take this body, and He's going to raise it out of the grave, and regardless of how much we can tell between

the two, like a bulb with a flower, we may not see the attachment, but they're from the same place. So we can't really separate them.

So while upon the earth, this body of believers, we are the body of Christ who dwells in each of us by His Spirit. We are encouraged, for example, when Paul wrote to the Romans in chapter 12:1-2, that "we present our bodies...bodies...a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. It's our reasonable service. Not be conformed to this world, be transformed. Have our minds renewed. Find out what is good and acceptable and perfect in God's will." So, to surrender our bodies and lives is something that we need to do. Yet to get involved in intercourse – the word here is "*porneia*" – it is a general word for immorality in the Bible; it is defined by the context in which it is used, and that's the word that is used here - but any kind of sexual gratification outside the marriage bond is sin, and any joined to a prostitute or anyone else violates this sacred relationship that we have with God who has moved in. You're no longer your own. You've been bought with a price.

Which is why, in verse 18, you will read in a minute, "Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." Permanent changes occur. You're no longer pure. You're no longer as resistant as you were. You see yourself differently. There's no casual sex in the Bible. Maybe in the culture, just not in the Scriptures. And sexual immorality, at least from a biblical standpoint, takes the joy and the purpose and the happiness God intended for husbands and wives to produce family and life, and it violates it. It separates you. It takes away from you. It fills you with guilt and steals away the pleasure. Sex outside of marriage is like robbing a bank. You get what doesn't belong to you, and one day you pay for it. Whereas physical relationships in marriage is like putting money in the bank; it provides long-term security. It's a place God will bless. Pays dividends the rest of your life.

So, the church is in a very difficult place. I mean, put yourself in Paul's shoes. He was there with them for a year and a half. He's heard, and he knows what they're up against. We're living in a very godless society today. You can't trust anybody. You don't know where it's comin' from next. There's great upheaval and tremendous sadness, and people don't know where to turn. But we're goin' to heaven so we have to keep ourselves from the world in which God has planted us.

Verse 18 says, "Flee sexual immorality." Maybe the best advice you can get when it comes to temptation to sexual sin is to just run for your life. Paul wrote to Timothy his last letter before they killed him, chapter 2:22 of 2 Timothy, and he said, "Timothy, flee youthful lusts." Timothy was 40. Poor guy. Can't get it right, you know. But the best advice for any temptation, obviously, is to just flee. Run for your life. Especially in the area of sexual temptation. We do a lot of pre-marital counseling, and we do everything we can to talk young kids into just, "Come on, do this right." They don't always do it right. You'll say, "Well, what happened?" "Well, you know, we were parked, 2:00 in the morning on a deserted street....and things just happened." "Yeah, that's a great idea. No wonder you had a problem." "Yeah, it got a little steamy." "How 'bout get out of the

car and run?!” I mean, Joseph did that. Read Genesis 39. Potiphar’s wife grabbed him, he ran out of the house naked. “No way, man!” God was happy with that. It’s all right to run. Better than fallin’. His brothers, Reuben and Judah, just read chapter 35, 38 and 49 (I think those three chapters) – these boys did just the opposite from running. They ran to the trouble. David might have been the ultimate example of far-reaching, long-term consequences of sin.

Sexual sin is a violation to the very body that you live in, and that body has an eternal future. Everything else is outside the body. This is against your body. Why? Well, God has purchased it. It’s His house. You’re no longer your own. It’s a mystery. The Holy Spirit lives in you. The eternal God dwells in you. You’re one body with the other saints. And we need to be pure.

Verse 19, listen to this, “Or do you not know” (now Paul’s gettin’ on my nerves, how ‘bout you, “don’t you 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? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Don’t you know from the minute you got saved that you no longer belong to yourself? God moves in, and He makes your life His dwelling place. You’ve been bought with a price. That’s redemption, right? God paid. His Son paid so that you could have life. I was a slave to sin, I wasn’t free at all, and then Jesus came, and He set me free, and this body that might very well have been so abused by sin now has Him making His home, and He has purpose for it, and I have to let Him dwell in it, and I have to give it all to Him, and I have to let Him use it for His purposes, and then one day He’s going to take me and change me and equip me for eternity. The word for “temple” here is the Greek word “*naos*,” and “*naos*” is a word for the Holy of Holies. It was that place in the Old Testament where the presence of God dwelt, where the priest would only go in, if you will, once a year with tremendous sacrifice and fear. It was into the place of God’s presence in the Old Testament temple. Well, we’ve come to Jesus, and we’re saved, and we now become the holy place. The Holy of Holies. God dwells here. He dwells in you, He dwells in me. And Paul wants them to see it that way in a culture that sees it exactly the opposite.

We live in a very immoral society. You know that. And it isn’t getting any better. And I suspect, between you and me, that after November it still won’t get any better. Jesus is coming.....that’ll make it better. And the best we can do as a church is to rally the gospel to the world. That’s the only solution that will last.

So I’m not to use His house for immorality and become one with another than my wife or husband, which is His design. I am one in the spirit, verse 17, with Him. This body that you used to live in and chased sin has now become God’s instrument in God’s hand. It was Joseph, when he ran out of the house there with Potiphar’s wife hanging onto his robe or whatever he was wearing that she tore off of him. And by the way, he was a young kid, and she was an old kind of....she was Mrs. Robinson, you know that kind of thing? (Laughing) It’s pretty good that the young kid ran, isn’t it? High five, Joseph. He did good! But he said to her, in argument, “There’s no one greater in this

house than I am. He's kept nothing from me but you, and you're his wife. How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8-9) He saw who he was, and he responded appropriately.

So even before he gets to marriage.....and I think the marriage chapter follows on the heels of this because he's been dealing with this immorality for a chapter and a half now, and he'd really like to give them some positive ideas about marriage and physical relationships and the things that matter. So Paul turns to this lengthy discussion of marriage and divorce and remarriage, and even staying single. And is that better? Because he'll start with the question, "You wrote to me, is it better for a man not to ever touch a woman?" Because whatever he wrote them in that first letter that we don't have, apparently that's the impression that he left them. "Well, if that's the way it is, maybe I shouldn't get involved!" And Paul will say, "Well, that's great if you're called to that, but most of us are not called to that." Like I said, it's probably the most definitive chapter in the Bible on those things that we're going to tackle starting next week. But Paul's point in these things is, look, you have to glorify God in your body. It belongs to Him. Now, granted, as you get older, the thing looks pretty run down. You can't really fix it up. Things don't grow where they should and.....I've got hair growin' out of my ears now, but my head....(Laughing).....nothin'. I'm a little upset. I'll be honest with you. Hey, but it's His. It's His problem. And eventually He'll go, "Yeah, we gotta trade that sucker in for a new one." Hey, do the right thing. We can do.....we have the freedom to serve the Lord. You can make the right choice. Do we make it? Not always. Not always. But we can, with God's help we can choose to live for Him.

So, in a perverted world, let's have a pure church. That's what He's looking for. You and me. How about that?

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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