

I CORINTHIANS: HANDLING BELIEVERS' PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

V. Arguments Against Sexual Immorality For Believers

(1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

I. Introduction

- A. The people Paul disciplined in Corinth lived in a city that was known for its immorality, alcoholism and worldly pursuits (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians: The City of Corinth," p. 1619), so the formidable influence of the city's culture on the Corinthian believers left Paul addressing "(a)berrant beliefs and practices of an astonishing variety" in his letters to them, *Ibid.*
- B. However, in a vision Paul received from God as he ministered at Corinth in Acts 18:10b NIV, God told him, "I have many people in this city," so Paul was to keep on ministering regardless of the trials he faced there.
- C. This epistle is timely for us who face our own decadent culture today, so we view 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 on five arguments against sexual immorality for believers for our insight and application (as follows):

II. Arguments Against Sexual Immorality For Believers, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

- A. When Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, some of his readers were apparently "trying to use their Christian freedom to justify their sins" of sexual immorality, *Ibid.*, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:12.
- B. Thus, Paul revealed righteous limits to Christian liberty that prohibited sexual immorality for believers, presenting five arguments in favor of moral purity in this realm in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (as follows):
 - 1. The argument of **what is helpful**, 1 Corinthians 6:12a (*Ibid.*, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:12):
 - a. Some believers at Corinth argued that all things were lawful for them due to their liberty in Christ.
 - b. However, Paul argued that not all things were helpful, and sexual immorality was not spiritually helpful since it was sin against God, 1 Corinthians 6:12b ESV with 1 Corinthians 6:9.
 - 2. The argument of **what is not enslaving**, 1 Corinthians 6:12b (*Ibid.*):
 - a. Though some believers argued that all things were lawful for them in their newfound liberty in Christ, Paul argued that he should not be enslaved by anything, 1 Corinthians 6:12c,d.
 - b. Sin enslaves a person to sin, so committing immorality made one a slave to sin, cf. Romans 6:15-16.
 - 3. The argument of **what does not violate God's ownership of the believer's body**, 1 Corinthians 6:13-14:
 - a. Another argument used by some in the church at Corinth was the claim that meats were for the body and the body for meats, meaning that the body with its drive for sexual expression should be used to indulge in sexual immorality, 1 Corinthians 6:13; *Ibid.*, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:13.
 - b. However, Paul retorted that the body of a believer was not meant for fornication, but to glorify God, and since the Lord had raised Christ from the dead, He will also raise our bodies by His own power so that our bodies will be used for His glory, 1 Corinthians 6:13b-14; *Ibid.*
 - 4. The argument of **what does not give God's property to a harlot**, 1 Corinthians 6:15-18:
 - a. Paul added that the believer's body was a member of Christ, 1 Corinthians 6:15a.
 - b. It was thus unthinkable for a believer to take his body which belonged to Christ and in a practical way make it a member of a harlot (1 Corinthians 6:15b), for one who joins to a harlot in sexual immorality is reckoned to be one body with her according to Genesis 2:24. (1 Corinthians 6:16)
 - c. Also, he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17), so when a believer commits immorality, that act affects the Lord and that believer's relationship with the Lord!
 - d. For this reason, Paul urged his readers to flee immorality much like Joseph exemplified in fleeing from Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:12, for though every other sin a believer commits is outside of his body, immorality sins against one's body, a serious offence, 1 Corinthians 6:18; *Ibid.*, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:18.
 - 5. The argument of **what does not corrupt the temple of the Holy Spirit**, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:
 - a. Paul stated that the believer's body was the temple of the Holy Spirit Who was in him, Whom the believer had from God, that the believer did not even own himself, 1 Corinthians 6:19.
 - b. Since the believer was purchased with a price and did not belong to himself, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he was obliged to glorify God in his body, what included avoiding immorality, 1 Corinthians 6:20.

Lesson: *Though liberated in Christ, we are limited from doing what is not helpful, enslaving, violating God's ownership of us, giving our body to a harlot, and using our body for immorality since it is the Holy Spirit's temple.*

Application: *May we enjoy our liberty in Christ but realize that that liberty has limits as to our conduct in that we should not perform acts of sin with our liberty, especially in reference to committing acts of sexual immorality.*