

1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE

Part XIII: Supporting Moral Purity In The Christian Walk

(1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

I. Introduction

- A. With the effects of the 1960s sexual revolution, even many professing Christians have modified their past views to become morally lax with involvement in suggestive clothing, pornography, divorce and remarriage.
- B. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 is Paul's call against moral laxity in favor of supporting moral purity (as follows):

II. Supporting Moral Purity In The Christian Walk, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

- A. Paul's readers were exposed to and had been affected by the wretchedly immoral culture of the city of Corinth:
 - 1. The great temple of Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, with its 1,000 temple prostitutes, was located at Corinth, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1619; Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dict., 1965, p. 41.
 - 2. The Greek term *korinthiazomai*, "to act the Corinthian," came to mean to practice fornication, *Ibid.*, Ryrie.
 - 3. There were taverns on the south side of the marketplace and many drinking vessels were found there, *Ibid.*
 - 4. Greek philosopher Plato used the expression "Corinthian girl" to refer to a prostitute, and a proverb of the ancient world warned, "Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 505.
- B. Thus, some of the Christians at Corinth, affected by their culture, claimed that as food and the belly go together without restraint, so the body and unrestrained sex go together, *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:13.
- C. Against such great moral laxity, Paul called for moral purity in Christian living in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20:
 - 1. The expression that introduces 1 Corinthians 6:12 KJV, namely, "All things are lawful unto me," had likely "become a slogan to cloak the immorality of some at Corinth," *Ibid.*, p. 516.
 - 2. Though it is true that the believer at salvation has been released into the liberty of Christ, Paul explained that exercising that liberty in a way that was not beneficial was to be avoided, 1 Corinthians 6:12b; *Ibid.*
 - 3. Repeating the slogan, "All things are lawful for me," Paul clarified that neither should one's liberty in Christ be used in a way that left him mastered by immoral lusts, 1 Corinthians 6:12d; *Ibid.*
 - 4. Another slogan at Corinth, that of, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats," that was used at Corinth to sanction using the body for sex and sex for the body through immoral indulgences was countered by Paul's explaining that the body was not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body, v. 13.
 - 5. Indeed, Paul taught that the body was not perishable but to be resurrected in God's glory (1 Corinthians 6:14), so debasing the body through using it to commit fornication was deeply offensive to the Lord!
 - 6. In addition, the believer's physical body is a member of Christ, so to take what belongs to Christ and join it to a prostitute is obviously very evil, 1 Corinthians 6:15. Paul used an emphatic negative *me genoito*, "Never!" (ESV, NIV) to express his loathing of such a sin! (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 590)
 - 7. To accentuate the evil of committing immorality with a prostitute, Paul added that such an act makes a man one body with the harlot, for Genesis 2:24 claims such a union joins two to become one flesh, v. 16.
 - 8. To the contrary, a believer who is joined spiritually to Christ at salvation is one spirit with the Lord just as joining his body with that of another makes him one flesh with that person, 1 Corinthians 6:17.
 - 9. Thus, since immorality for the believer is such a terrible sin, Paul called his readers to make it their **habit to be fleeing** (*feugete*, present imperative of *feugo*, "to flee, take flight," *Ibid.*; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 424) from sexual immorality, *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:18. Every other sin a man commits is outside his body, but committing immorality sins against one's body, so it is to be avoided as truly as Joseph fled from the grasp of Potiphar's wife to try to seduce him, *Ibid.* (cf. Genesis 39:12)
 - 10. Paul added that the believer's body is also the temple of the Holy Spirit in contrast to Corinth's vile temple of Aphrodite (*Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.). This Holy Spirit the believer has as God's Gift to him so that the believer does not own himself since he was bought by God by Christ's blood, making the believer obliged to glorify God in his body, not to use it to commit immorality, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
 - 11. [Since looking on another with sexual lust is adultery (Matthew 5:28), pornography is also very evil.]

Lesson: Due to his salvation, his spiritual position in Christ, God's ownership of his body and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit along with how sexual union makes him one flesh with another, using the body for immorality as a believer is utterly wicked. Thus, we must watch that though we have liberty in Christ, we must flee immorality.

Application: (1) May we not let ourselves become morally lax, but recognize that what we do with our bodies is very important to God. (2) May we make fleeing immorality in every form an habitual practice in our lives.