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## Living the Christian Life in Physical Purity | 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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Verse 12 –

- Because the previous verses are applicable to Jews who *were* living under the Law and *are* granted an inheritance in the Kingdom (under the right lifestyle), Paul now moves on to talk about their life as a Christian, removed from their inheritance as Jews and living free in Christ.
- Paul says that, for the believer (Jew or Gentile), **all things are lawful** (literally, *authorized*).
- However, **all things are not expedient**. The word **expedient** is συμφέρω [symphero], or *worthy to be carried*. Luke says that what is written in his Gospel is *fully carried*, using the same root (Luke 1:1).
- Paul's personal commitment to not **be brought under the power of any** is a perfect challenge for personal commitment to holy living for any believer.

Verse 13 - There are physical things that are fine (though fleeting), such as eating. There are other physical things that are not congruent with dedication to the Lord, such as **fornication**. Compare Romans 12:1-2.

Verse 14 - Paul's testimony of the resurrection (one of many) gives us encouragement to have a *doctrine of the physical body* that includes its eternity.

Verses 15-17 - The situation in Corinth (chapter 5) required Paul to spend extra time on sexual sins. The situation of modern society is no different.

Verse 18 –

- Sexual sins are especially harmful because they are sins **against** one's **own body**.
- This can only be true if (as the Scripture teaches) the body is *created in the image of God* and sexually designed for a monogamous, life-long marriage.
- Other sins (gluttony) and liberties (smoking) may be *harmful to the body* but **fornication** is a sin against the body because such sin is in direct opposition to the purpose of creation of the body.

Verses 19-20 –

- Paul interestingly switches from talking about a singular individual in vv. 16-18 to using the plural.
- Could Paul be speaking in vv. 19-20 about the **body** which is the church?
  - If he was being consistent, he would have written, **know ye not that a man's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost** (compare v. 16, speaking to a crowd (thus **ye**) yet of the individual (thus **he**)).
  - Perhaps Paul's switch to the plural possessive **your body** aligns him back to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 3:16 (see notes on that verse).
  - If this interpretation is accurate, then Paul is giving a summary conclusion to the church body, which would be contextually appropriate since he has been encouraging the church to handle the matter of the individual within the body since the beginning of chapter 5.

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## Marriage As An Aid Against Sexual Immorality | 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

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- Verse 1 - This shows us that communication with Paul (and, as seen in 5:9, vice-versa) was ongoing. Only that which the Spirit has preserved stands as Scripture for us.
- Verse 2 –
  - While celibacy may have its virtues and benefits, it goes against the biological and emotional realities of our composition. So, to encourage celibacy leads to **fornication**, and therefore marriage is the solution.
  - Note that the sexual revolution that began in the 1960s and the #metoo sexual harassment "uprising" of 2018 both failed to promote healthy marriage as the solution to the problems of fornication.

- Verses 3-4 –
  - In regards to sexuality in marriage, the Bible is perfectly clear: *one purpose of marriage is for the full expression of sexuality.*
  - Note that in the Garden of Eden, before sin, the man and his wife were **naked...and were not ashamed** (Gen. 2:25).
  - The ideal marriage provides a safety zone in which human sexuality is fully enjoyed.
- Verse 5 –
  - Paul's belief was that withholding sexual activity within the marriage was to **defraud** (i.e.: steal) from the other partner in the marriage, therefore should be done only **with consent** and then only **for a time**.
  - This is the only time Paul mentions **fasting** as a spiritual activity. It is, therefore, a spiritual activity which is not prohibited, not promoted, and not described in detail.
  - The reason that a married couple is not to withhold sexual activity is the same as in v. 2, with different wording. **Incontinency** is literally *lack of control*.
- Verse 6 –
  - Paul's instruction here is not a commandment of God, which does not make it *less true*. It does, however, prohibit us from calling the withholding of sexual activity a *sin*. The farthest we can go is to call it *unwise behavior*.
  - Paul speaks by **commandment** in v. 10, 12, etc. Paul spoke **by permission** in 2 Corinthians 8:8 (speaking of generosity). Concerning the inspiration of Scripture, this gives us added assurance that the Bible is clear when it speaks of *wise counsel* and when it speaks of *commands*.
- Verses 7-9 –
  - Verses 7-9 contain the words which Paul uses **by permission**. In Paul's view, being single has benefits that exceed the benefits of marriage, but brings the danger of fornication through lack of self-control.
  - When Paul says **it is better to marry than to burn**, is he implying that fornication sends a person to hell?
    - Such a conclusion would go against sound theology, in which all sin is forgivable and covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.
    - Furthermore, the word is used as a metaphor in 2 Corinthians 11:29 and Ephesians 6:16.
    - The use of the word as a metaphor is also found in many ancient Greek writings. For example, Aeschylus, the Greek playwright, uses the word in a manner which would be fitting in this passage when he says, "*Who is so childish or so bereft of sense, once he has **let his heart be fired by sudden news...***" (emphasis mine). Consider, then, that the phrase could be **it is better to marry than to let his heart be fired [with passion]**.

## Commands Concerning Marriage | 1 Corinthians 7:10-13

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- Verse 10 - Paul gives a **command** from **the Lord** that a husband and wife are not to *be separated*. Note that the verb translated **depart** is in the passive tense, not active. Therefore, *be separated* would be a better translation. Paul is not giving a command to the wife, but to the couple.
- Verse 11 –
  - The phrase **but and if** is used five times in the Greek text, and each time is a contrast to an instruction given.
  - Since the Greek for **depart** is in the aorist passive, this should read *if she be separated, let her remain...* (Disclaimer: the Greek doesn't have a past tense, so it could also be "*if she becomes separated...*") In either case, **depart** is in the active tense, not the passive, and is thus not accurate as a translation. Darby translates, "but if also she shall have been separated."
  - This is a direct command to **the husband**, given in the active sense, and is best translated *leave*, in v. 13, speaking of the wife.
- Verses 12-13 - In these verse, Paul comes again to his own *permissible opinion* which says that an unbelieving spouse should not leave the marriage (concerning **put her away** see note on v. 11). In these verses Paul clarifies that the rules for the separation of a spouse apply even if the partner is unbelieving.