



## You Do Not Belong to You (1 Cor. 6:12-20)

When God in his infinite wisdom created man, he created both male and female. God made man a spiritual, physical, and sexual being. Since God is unlimited in knowledge, power, and authority we can know with certainty that he created man as he wanted man to be.

Along with the nature of man, we learn that God owns man. Paul says it this way in **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**, *"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, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."* We could paraphrase this to say, *"You do not belong to you."*

There is a common statement or belief in society says: *"My body is my body and I will do what I want with it!"* This may mean that I get a piercing or tattoo over the objections of my parents. It can mean that I can smoke, or drink to excess, or overeat and say that it is nobody's business but mine because my body is my body. This belief leads to sexual relationships outside the bond of marriage. People will say, *"We are consenting adults and it's my body, I will do what I want. Besides, we are not hurting anyone."*

1. What are some of the ways you have observed people living as if their bodies were their own?

### I. The World Teaches Complete Sexual Freedom

In Corinth 2000 years ago and in Australia today, complete sexual freedom is accepted as an inalienable part of our life. Corinth was a sinful city. Geographically it lay on a very important trade route on the narrow isthmus which separated Aegean Sea on the east from the Adriatic Sea on the west. It also separated northern and southern Greece. Because of its location great numbers of people passed through the harbors of Corinth. The constant passage of people brought with it various religions, lifestyles, and sinful practices.



In Corinth's past the Temple of Aphrodite was the base for a thousand priestesses. These priestesses were simply temple prostitutes that serviced the men who lived in and passed through Corinth. Prostitution was accepted and even encouraged.

The Roman leader Cato is quoted congratulating a young man as he departed from a brothel, *"When your sexual passions are strong, it is better to have sex with a prostitute than another man's wife."*<sup>1</sup>

The Corinthian Christians came from this unholy background and continued to accept this lifestyle. They viewed sexual relations as natural just as eating. Since we eat whenever we are hungry we should engage in sex whenever the urge strikes us.

In **verse 12** Paul quotes what the Corinthians were saying. They said, *"All things are lawful for me."* The Corinthians were misunderstanding what Paul had said. Paul did tell them that Christ came and the Law of Moses had ended. He taught them about the freedom that we have in Christ.

The Corinthians seem to have misinterpreted Paul to mean that they could do anything that they wanted. They also said, *"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food..."* In other words, I eat when I get hungry. God made my stomach and made food to remove my hunger. Paul even taught that they could eat whatever foods they wanted to eat. The Corinthians brought this same logic into their sexual lives. They thought, "God created us as sexual beings, we should feed the urge however we want."

This was the normal Greek philosophy in the first century. Sex is simply a biological function, so do whatever you want. **"Isn't this what society says today?"**

2. How does it change society to view sex is a simple biological function?
3. What does modern society say about sexual freedom?
4. What are some of the affects of sexual freedom upon society and the church?

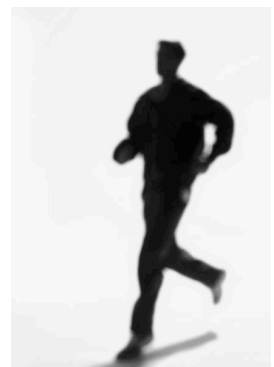
The world teaches complete sexual freedom. The Bible answers in **verses 12** and **13** by saying that *"not all things are helpful"* and *"I will not be enslaved by anything"* and *"the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."* Human sexuality is natural and it is a blessing within marriage, but there are limits on it. All sexual relationships outside of the bond of marriage are always wrong.

## II. The Bible Teaches to Flee From Sexual Sin

**Verse 18** says, *"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body."*

You have probably heard it said that all sins are equal, but sexual sin is more serious than many other sins because sexual immorality harms churches, destroys families, devastates children, and leads to lying, deceit, and humiliation.

5. Why does Paul say to flee sexual immorality instead of fighting it or holding on and resisting it?



6. Give a Bible example of someone who fled from sexual temptation.

Sexual immorality can be so enticing and so deadly that when confronted with this temptation the wise man will FLEE! The main reason why sexual sin is so terrible can be understood when we realise that God owns our bodies. Paul writes in **verse 19** that *"you are not your own."* Verse 20 adds, *"You were bought with a price."* In other words, YOU DO NOT BELONG TO YOU!

<sup>1</sup>Oster, Richard. *The NIV College Press Commentary*. College Press, Joplin, MO, 1995. p. 142

In all other sins we may use our bodies to commit a sin, but we do not become one with the sin. We may become intoxicated, but we do not become one with the bottle. We may steal, but we have not joined ourselves to those things we have stolen. When we join in a sexual relationship we are exposing our whole self to another. Body, spirit, and that which is most intimate within us. We are taking that which belongs to God and joining it intimately in sin.

Human sexuality is very profound. The Bible describes this as becoming one flesh. In the context of marriage this is a beautiful, fulfilling, bond which strengthens marriage, honours Christ, and gives us enjoyment. Outside of marriage a bond still takes place. The two still become one flesh, but the union brings dishonour and often pain, and sorrow. Sexual union is so profound that the Bible describes it as a mystery.



### **III. The Bible Teaches that We Belong to God**

#### **7. How do the following verses in 1 Corinthians 6 show that we belong to God? (v. 13, 15, 17, 19, 20)**

God teaches that we belong to Him. In our worship of God our bodies have special significance. With our tongues we praise God. With our hands we serve the Lord. With our minds we know the Lord. With our hearts we love the Lord. To take the body that He has given us and use it to sin sexually is grievous to Him. When we become Christians we unite ourselves with Christ. Verse 17 says we become one in spirit with Him. Imagine what the scripture is telling us there. When we become Christians we become a part of Christ.

Physically God has designed us so that a man and a woman can become one flesh. This is holy and proper within the context of marriage. Spiritually God has designed us so that man and God can become united. We become a part of the body of Christ. God's Holy Spirit lives within us (Acts 2:38). We belong completely and wholly to Him who loves us and who died for us. This makes our bodies a holy place.

In the Old Testament God's glory could be found in the Holy of Holies. Today God's Holy Spirit is found within Christians. **WE ARE** his temple. Can you imagine a priest in the Old Testament taking a harlot into the temple for an immoral sexual relationship? Of course not; yet today when a Christian takes his body, which belongs to Christ, and unites it with another who is not his or her spouse, he is taking the very temple of God and uniting it in sin.



**Verse 19** is used to condemn smoking and many things as an abuse of the temple of the Holy Spirit, but that is not what is being taught here at all. The defilement is spiritual when a person takes the temple of the Holy Spirit and unites it in sexual immorality. The Christian must live a holy life because he belongs to God and not to himself.

#### **8. What reason does Paul give to prove that we belong to Christ and not ourselves? (vss. 19-20)**

#### **9. How can we glorify God in our bodies? (v. 20)**