

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 8/17/11 Wednesday Evening  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20 “If It Feels Good, Do It...NOT”

“If it feels good, do it.”

That mentality is pervasive in our society. But it’s not just in the world. It’s invaded the church, too.

Discuss: What are some evidences of this view of life in the church?

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Craig Blomberg writes, “Every since the sexual revolution of the 1960s, large segments of our modern world have subscribed to the ‘if it feels good do it’ mentality. Yet when people adopt this ethic, families are destroyed and sexual addictions overwhelm many. We also overeat, particularly in the West, while our brothers and sisters around the globe starve. Other prevalent abuse of our bodies includes drunkenness, chain smoking, drug abuse, lack of proper exercise or diet, and workaholism.”<sup>1</sup>

Paul addresses this mentality in the latter part of 1 Corinthians 6...

*Review: In the first part of 1 Corinthians 6 Paul addresses two questions...*

I. Paul addresses the question *what?* (1-8)

**A. Don’t ask the civil authorities to solve the dispute (1-3).**

**B. Resolve the dispute in the church (4-8).**

II. Paul addresses the question *why?* (9-11)

Why should we refuse to go to the world to deal with our disputes? Two key reasons...

**A. God will deal severely with people who wrong other people (9-10).**

1. *The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Paul lists ten types of “wicked” people. What do these individuals all have in common? Basically, these are all people who *use other people* for personal and selfish gain. Don’t miss that.

2. *We must keep that in mind as we experience injustice in this life.*

**B. God has been gracious to us (11).**

1. *We aren’t what we used to be.*

2. *We used to be wicked.*

3. *We have been changed.*

⇒He washed us.

⇒He sanctified us.

⇒He justified us.

*New Material: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20*

It’s not easy at first to see the relationship between verses 12-20 and what precedes it. Commentators suggest that Paul is bringing up another issue, prompted by his discussion of our sinful past in verses 9-11. He’s already addressed the problems of:

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<sup>1</sup> C. Blomberg, p. 129.

- divisions (chs 1-4)
- the need for church discipline (ch 5)
- Christian lawsuits (6:1-11)

Now he begins to address another problem that plagued the Corinthians—sexual immorality, particularly as it relates to prostitution (something for which Corinth was infamous).

Corinth was a wicked society. Not only did it offer vice, it promoted it. And not only did it promote vice, it did so in the name of religion. At one time the temple to Aphrodite, located in Corinth had in service 1,000 prostitute priestesses. Sexual immorality was rampant.

Into that environment God placed a church. How do you help Christians face and withstand temptation? For starters, you talk about the challenge! Paul did. He didn't assume anything when it came to righteous living.

Too often, we think if we ignore the potential problem, it will go away. "That could never happen to our kids!" we assume.

Listen. If you are living in a city where there are 1,000 prostitutes, we'd better talk about the danger. We'd better get a hold of some solid reasons to fortify our arsenal before we face the temptation.

And my friends, we are living in a Corinthian society. We have more exposure to blatant immorality than the Corinthians did. It's on my tv screen. It's in the commercials. It's in the magazines that come across my desk. It's in the music.

Is the solution to leave Corinth? We may feel like it, and at times we may need to practice radical amputation (as Jesus put it). But Paul didn't tell the Corinthians to move out of the town and form a Christian compound. He did talk to them in straightforward terms about the necessity for purity. He gave them reasons for it. He also gave them a strategy to obtain it. And when they blew it (as apparently some had), he showed them what to do (that's what the verses we're about to study are for).

Is it possible to honor God with our bodies in a world that has gone crazy morally? The answer is—the battle will be fierce, but it is possible. Here's what it will take, two responsibilities according to Paul.

#### I. To honor God we must think right (12-17).

V 12 begins with a statement in quotation marks in the NIV ("Everything is permissible...").

Q: What do the quotation marks indicate? Apparently, this was something being said in Corinth. This mentality was paving the way for immoral activity.

Q: How could a Christian justify such a statement, "Everything is permissible for me"?

This erroneous *thinking* was leading to erroneous and sinful *living*. So Paul sought to correct the thinking in verses 12-17.

#### **A. What we do with our body matters to God (12-14).**

Read verses 12-14.

Some might think that since this body is going to die and decay, what we do with it doesn't matter. "It's the spirit that matters!" Wrong. The body matters to God.

How can we know whether we should do a particular activity with our bodies? Paul gives us four guidelines here. I'll put them in the form of four questions.

1. *Is it beneficial? (12a)*  
Some things are permissible, but not beneficial. Give an example...
2. *Will it master me? (12b)*  
Give an example... Watching television.
3. *Will it be for the Lord? (13)*  
Notice another set of quotation marks. What was being said in Corinth, and what does it mean?  
Q: What is the body meant for, according to v 13?  
See 1 Cor 10:31
4. *Will it matter in eternity? (14)*  
Q: What did God do with the Lord?  
Q: What will He do with us? He will raise *our bodies*.

**B. What we do with our body affects our relationship to Christ (15-17).**

Craig Blomberg says Paul uses the following syllogism to make the point...

1. *Our bodies are members of Christ.*  
Q: What does that mean?
2. *Sexual intercourse unites two human beings.*  
It's amazing how prostitution has been practiced in the name of religion and worship by false religions throughout the centuries. It was prevalent in Baal worship by the Canaanites, and by other false religions throughout the world. It was happening in Corinth.  
So Paul helped the Corinthians see what was *really* happening...  
Paul actually quotes Gen 2:24 here. What is God's intended purpose for the physical relationship according to Genesis 2?  
But what happens when a person engages in a physical relationship with a person outside of marriage? The conclusion...
3. *Sexual intercourse with a prostitute, therefore, unites the members of Christ with that prostitute.*<sup>2</sup>  
And why is this unthinkable according to v 17?

Application: Sometimes the approach that parents (and churches) take for resisting temptation is, "Just don't do it!" And Paul will likewise say, "Don't do it." But first Paul addresses the *thinking*. He gives reasons. Why?

Discuss: What can we learn from this?

II. To honor God we must do right (18-20).

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<sup>2</sup> The syllogism comes from C. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, p. 126.

Note: He follows the “put off” // “put on” pattern seen elsewhere.

**A. Flee sexual sin (18-19).**

Q: What does the term “flee” indicate?

Here are two reasons...

1. *It's a sin against the body.*

How so?

2. *It's a sin against the Holy Spirit.*

In what way is this true?

But the Bible doesn't just give us the negative. We need the positive, too. What *are* we supposed to do with our bodies?

**B. Honor God with your body (20).**

Q: Who owns our body, according to the end of v 19?

Q: Why are we not our own, according to v 20?

Implications:

1. What are some practical steps we can take to implement the instruction of 1 Corinthians 6?

-What can we do to make sure we are “thinking right” when it comes to morality?

-What can we do to make sure we are “doing right” when it comes to morality?

2. We mustn't just emphasize the “put off” without giving attention to the “put on.” What are some ways we can honor God with our bodies?