

## 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19, 20 YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN

“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.”<sup>1</sup>

Accepting Christ as Saviour transforms life—attitudes and actions take on new significance. The adage that is ubiquitous in contemporary society, “It’s *my* body; I’ll do what *I* want!” finds no application in the life of the Christian. The idea that we can live as the world lives and still honour God finds no comfort in His Word. Christians are countercultural, if for no other reason than their lives are distinct from those of the world. Perhaps some professing believers are indistinguishable from the world, but such lives do not change the reality of God’s claim on the life of His own child; He will not permit His own to disgrace Him with impunity.

Though Christians face unrelenting pressure to conform to the expectations of this dying world, and though believers in the Risen Son of God do succumb to this pressure more frequently than we could wish, the Christian cannot give in to sin and be comfortable in that sin. One former colleague used to say perceptively, “A sheep may fall into a mud puddle, but a sheep will never be content to lie down in the mud.” That assessment is correct!

Christians experience ongoing pressure as the world demands conformity to attitudes, as well as actions, that are agreeable to it. This pressure lies behind the admonition found in the Letter to the Romans, where, the Apostle has written, “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Thus, you will prove in practice that the will of God is good, acceptable to Him and perfect”<sup>2</sup> [ROMANS 12:1, 2].

Christians intuitively understand that “to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God” [ROMANS 8:6-8]. And yet, with alarming regularity, too many Christians succumb to sin, abandoning righteousness and permitting themselves to be controlled by the flesh. How can such a thing happen? What is missing from life that allows twice-born individuals to stumble into sin, displeasing God and exposing themselves to divine discipline?

I am not concerned with addressing cultural Christians—those individuals who imagine that joining a church makes them a follower of Christ. Tragically, our churches are filled with people who are casually Christian, thinking that if they participate in a rite, partake of a ritual, recite a prayer or formally unite with a church, that they must be honouring the Saviour. When I speak of Christians who stumble into sin, I am pleading with those individuals who through faith in the Risen Son of God are twice-born. These are individuals who have received forgiveness of sin, who want to do what pleases the Father, who are yet tripped up by sin. I understand that Christians are not perfect, though they are being perfected in Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Phillips, **The New Testament in Modern English** (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, Glasgow 1960, 1970)

The text for this message speaks of God's rightful claim over the body of the believer—"You are not your own!" It speaks of God's residence within the believer—"Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you." It speaks of the responsibility the child of God bears for employment of the body—"Glorify God in your body." What is lacking for integrating this teaching into our lives is context. While the text presents a general principle for life as a Christian, it is presented in a specific context; and that context could easily have been taken straight out of modern life.

**THE CONTEXT OF THE TEACHING** — Context is essential for understanding what is written. Isolated statements without context can be utterly misleading. An illustration of how context changes perception is demonstrated by a recent news item that tells how a mother's feelings were hurt causing a teacher to be suspended. The headline implies that a teacher used a racial epitaph and called a boy his slave. A video of the incident shows something quite different. The teacher was calling the student down for disrupting the class. The teacher says, "Did I call you a 'n\*\*\*\*\*'?" No, I said you are being controlled, by kids. That is exactly what happened to the slaves. They were controlled by their owners, you're letting him control you and you're the one who's getting in trouble." The reality is quite different from the mother's hurt feelings or those of her son. The teacher was demonstrating concern and attempting to help the boy smarten up.<sup>3</sup>

The identical principle applies in our text. When we read, "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" [1 CORINTHIANS 6:19, 20], we are inclined to think of caring for the body—getting proper exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, getting enough sleep and so forth. All these things are true, and the text could imply any of these actions or all of these actions. However, the context of what is written is specific.

Pay attention to the verses immediately preceding the text. In these verses, Paul writes, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two will become one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body" [1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-18].

The Apostle is immediately focused on sexual immorality. Sexual immorality was a serious problem in the ancient world, and it was especially a problem in Corinth. Sexual mores were notoriously degraded in the ancient world. Christians coming out of these various cultures held a low view of the concept of purity, which accounts for the frequent instructions in virtue and purity found in the New Testament literature. Reading some of the literature allows us to understand the cultural milieu in which the first churches existed.

As an example of the situation in which the first churches were established, recall the works of the flesh as listed in GALATIANS 5:19-21. "The works of the flesh are evident: *sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality*, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." It is significant that the first three wicked works listed are sexual immorality, impurity and sensuality.

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<sup>3</sup> Aris Folley, "North Carolina teacher suspended after comparing a student to a slave and using the N-word," AOL, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2017 (<https://www.aol.com/article/news/2017/05/18/north-carolina-teacher-suspended-after-comparing-a-student-to-a-slave-and-using-the-n-word/22098135/?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000058&>)

As another stunning example of the culture in which the first churches existed, recall the instruction found in the Ephesian Letter. “Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

“But *sexual immorality* and all *impurity* or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret” [EPHESIANS 5:1-12]. Again, note that sexual immorality and impurity are listed prominently as actions that displease God and that dishonour the Saviour.

Look at one other passage in the Prison Letters of Paul to see what was commonly accepted, if only tacitly, in ancient society. In the Letter to the Church in Colossae, Paul writes, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: *sexual immorality, impurity, passion*, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices” [COLOSSIANS 3:5-9]. Once more, sexual immorality is listed first. It is as though the Apostle is warning that a lack of caution in the realm of moral purity leads to a vast array of sinful behaviour.

Immorality leading to idolatry is a very real danger throughout the Bible. Recall one such instance found in the Book of Numbers. Balaam, was prevented from cursing Israel, though he did advise the Moabite king to seduce the Israelite men to be sexually immoral, knowing that God would judge them [see REVELATION 2:14]. In the Pentateuch we read, “While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So, Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel” [NUMBERS 25:1-3]. The principle holds to this day. Sexual immorality leads to approval of and participation in ever more wicked acts, leading ultimately to divine judgement.

The Apostle wrote the Letter to Roman Christians while he was in Corinth. Looking out on that ancient society, he provided a detailed description of ancient society in ROMANS 1:18-32. It is a sordid exposure of a society that has been surrendered to its own appetites, not unlike contemporary society. Corinth was a society sunk into moral depravity that was unimaginable throughout most of western history until recent times. It does appear that contemporary society, having expelled God from the public square, rushes to fill the empty lives of the people with something that will give purpose, something that will confer a sense of fulfilment. Tragically, when the divine is expunged from life, the soul is devoid of the capacity to find satisfaction.

Thus, contemporary churches are again confronted with the need to teach Christians to be moral, to eschew sexual immorality, to live holy, godly lives that reflect the beauty of the Risen Saviour. And when the instruction has been provided, the temptation will continue to flood into families through the ubiquitous presence of pornography, with unrelenting pressure to normalise immorality and to avoid making anyone feel uncomfortable because they embrace impurity.

**THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** — “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?” We are taught that the assembly of the righteous is a Temple of the Holy Spirit. In **1 CORINTHIANS 3:16, 17** we read, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” Note that the pronoun in these verses is plural, indicating that Paul is addressing the congregation. This congregation, and each assembly where God is honoured and Christ is worshipped, is a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

It is important to state that though there is no prohibition against worshipping the Holy Spirit, it would be irregular considering His mission among the people of God as revealed by the Lord. As the Master prepared His disciples for His departure, He spoke of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” [**JOHN 14:26**].

It is significant that the Spirit of God speaks not of Himself, but of the Risen Son of God. Jesus promised, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you” [**JOHN 16:13, 14**]. The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to Himself—He points to Christ!

In our text, we are informed that not only is the corporate assembly a Temple of the Holy Spirit, but the body of each Christian is a Sanctuary of the Spirit of God—the Spirit of God lives in each Christian. Review this vital truth by looking to several instances where this truth is presented. The Apostle had just been warning against surrendering to the desires of the flesh. He wrote, “Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God” [**ROMANS 8:5-8**].

He followed this by insisting that the Roman Christians to whom he was writing step back and consider their situation. “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact *the Spirit of God dwells in you*. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If *the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you*, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” [**ROMANS 8:9-11**]. The Spirit of God lives in the child of God.

Pleading with the Thessalonian Christians to be pure in their conduct, the Apostle pointed to the source of power living in each Christian. “Brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who *gives his Holy Spirit to you*” [**1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8**]. The Holy Spirit living in the believer is God’s gift to each of us.

Writing his final missive to Timothy, the aged saint instructed the younger servant of Christ. Among the instructions given is one that is significant when we are thinking of the presence of God's Spirit in the believer. Paul wrote, "***By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you***" [2 TIMOTHY 1:14]. The elder does not guard the gospel of Christ by scholarship, though scholarship can be important. The elder does not guard the gospel of our Saviour by soaring rhetoric, though the ability to speak well can be important. The elder guards the gospel of Christ the Lord by "the Holy Spirit who dwells within us!" The Spirit of Christ within us empowers us, enabling us to equip the saints for service, to admonish the froward and to rebuke the wicked.

Our bodies are under sentence of death. We are ageing do long as we are in this body. With each passing day, the body is growing progressively weaker. As the Apostle has observed, "In this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has ***given us the Spirit as a guarantee***" [2 CORINTHIANS 5:2-5]. Did you catch what Paul said? The Spirit of God is given as a guarantee to us who believe. God is providing assurance of our acceptance and that we shall receive a glorified body.

Permit me to expand our understanding of God's work in the life of each believer. God's Spirit has transformed the body of each one who believes in Him into a Temple for His glory. Though we speak of the Spirit of God living in the believer, the One who takes up residence in our body is none other than Christ the Lord—the Son of God lives in the believer. Writing the Christians in Galatia, the Apostle made an astounding statement when he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but ***Christ who lives in me***. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" [GALATIANS 2:20].

This reality is a divine mystery, I confess. However, this revelation of Christ in us is fulfilment of the Master's High Priestly prayer that He offered as He was facing His Passion. Listen carefully to Jesus' prayer. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that ***they also may be in us***, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world" [JOHN 17:20-24].

As exciting as is the truth of what God has planned for us who believe, I am even more encouraged by the knowledge that I derive from what is written in this passage—God shares our human condition. In a general sense—and I am not depreciating what God did—God shared our human condition when Jesus became a man. However, it is not only that God shared our human condition when the Son of God became a man, nor is it that we shall share God's condition when we are transformed—***God now shares our human condition***, individually! It is one thing for God to promise that we shall be saved, and quite another for God to now share our condition. God now lives with us. God actually lives in us. God is now sharing our condition. This is humbling in the extreme.

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:19, 20**  
**YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN**

God has dignified the human condition by accepting the body of each believer as His Holy Temple. We honour the body of the believer, treating that body with respect, not because the individual is someone special, but because God has dignified the body of the one who believes. When the believer has passed out of this mortal existence, we treat the body with respect, providing burial and appropriate funeral rites; we honour the body which God dignified through accepting it as His dwelling place. We do not mark the body, scar it or deface it because for those who are twice-born, this body is the dwelling place of God. In the same way, we seek to keep the body healthy, not merely because we want to live without undue limitations, but because we want to honour the Living God who has taken up residence in this body.

The Apostle is focused on a more immediate matter as he writes this letter—he insists that believers must not engage in sexual immorality because this body is a Temple of God’s Spirit. The believer must not permit himself to contaminate the body through viewing pornography. The believer must never be sexually active outside of marriage. The believer must not be unfaithful to his or her spouse. The believer must not seek sexual gratification outside of the condition which God has given to all. The body is sanctified by God’s presence; we who believe must not dishonour Him by employing our body for mere gratification of our own desires. This is the reason for the admonition, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous”

[**HEBREWS 13:4**].

**THE PURCHASE OF GOD** — “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” You were bought with a price. In eternity, before the throne of the Living God, the redeemed of God shall fall down to worship the Lord God. After we who believe are gathered to Christ, we read, “They sang a new song, saying,

‘Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and *by your blood you ransomed people for God*  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.’”

[**REVELATION 5:9, 10**]

Would that we knew the melody now. There should be no problem for any child of God to join in confessing that Christ Jesus is worthy.

Take note of the confession that the redeemed of God shall offer after we have been gathered to Him in Heaven. By the blood of Christ the Lord, people throughout this present age are being ransomed for God. This is not a ransom of one race, of one sex, of one nation—Christ Jesus has provided a ransom for all mankind if they will accept His sacrifice. Truly, we confess that Christ is worthy. No wonder the angels repeat:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!”

[**REVELATION 5:12**]

Worthy, indeed! By His blood the Son of God has purchased a people for His Name. Peter has written, “As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that *you were ransomed* from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but *with the precious blood of Christ*, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” [1 PETER 1:15-21].

When the elders from Ephesus met the Apostle at Miletus, Paul testified concerning his ministry to them. His testimony included these words, “I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which *He purchased with His own blood*” [ACTS 20:27, 28 HCBS]. He purchased the church, paying the price of His own blood.

Writing Timothy, Paul boldly testifies, “There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who *gave himself as a ransom for all*, which is the testimony given at the proper time” [1 TIMOTHY 2:5, 6].

This divine work of providing a ransom for sinners is emphasised when Paul writes Titus, “The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who *gave himself for us to redeem us* from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works” [TITUS 2:11-14].

As Jesus patiently taught the Twelve, He instructed them concerning the purpose of His coming the first time. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and *to give his life as a ransom for many*” [MATTHEW 20:25-28].

I’ve taken extra care to speak of what should be well-known among the people of God. We are saved through faith in the Son of God. We did not earn what He provided; indeed, we cannot make ourselves acceptable to God. We read in Scripture, “By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” [EPHESIANS 2:8, 9]. Christ the Lord performed the work necessary for our redemption; we are beneficiaries of His work.

I take care to emphasise this truth because some who call themselves by His Holy Name imagine that they are born into the Faith. You are not a Christian because you are Canadian. You are not a Christian because your mother or your grandfather was a Christian. You are not a Christian because you attend church. Being born in a bagel factory would not make you Jewish, and being born into a church-going family does not make you a Christian. Living in a garage does not make you a Mercedes Benz; joining a church does not make you a Christian. Tragically, there are yet others holding the opinion that they can provide in whole or in part for their salvation. They would contend that they believe that Christ died for them, but they negate the efficacy of that death by then insisting that they must hold on to what He purchased or they will be forever lost. However, that is not what is found in the Word of God.

Because we are purchased with the blood of Christ Jesus, we cannot claim exclusive right over our body. We are purchased by the blood of Christ and His Spirit now lives in us. To be certain, the assembly is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, existing contemporaneously with multiplied temples that are dedicated to false deities—gods of greed, pleasure and power in our modern world. Nevertheless, because the Christian has been purchased by Christ, even the body is meant for Him. We often hear the appeal that God saves the soul, but I contend that God saves the person—body, soul and spirit! That the body is included in redemption is clearly stated when Paul writes, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” [1 CORINTHIANS 6:13].

Consider, also, that though this body of flesh is temporary, we shall receive a new body. The Apostle has written, “We know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee” [2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5]. Though we are promised a new body, we shall be raised to newness of life; the seed that is planted is but a promise of what is to be.

This point is emphasised when the Apostle writes, “[Concerning] the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus, it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being;” the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” [1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-49].

Why do we emphasise sexual purity for Christians? Purity is important because the body is sacred to the Lord who has purchased believers. Sexual immorality is still sin, even though our culture exalts sexual experimentation, in fact justifies immorality with every conceivable rationalisation. We Christians are not prudes, nor are we legalists when we insist on sexual purity; we are following the teaching of God’s Spirit who has sanctified this body. Christians flee sexual immorality because our bodies belong to the Lord, and He is to be honoured in the deeds of this body as well as in all other behaviours and in the attitudes espoused.

**THE COMMAND TO THE BELIEVER** — “Glorify God in your body.” If you purchase a kitchen appliance, you get an owner’s manual with it. If you purchase a new automobile, you will receive an owner’s manual with the vehicle. If you purchase a new television, you will find an owner’s manual packed with the television. In each of these instances, the manufacturer wants you to enjoy what has been produced, the company wants you to speak well of their product. Therefore, they provide specific instructions on how to use the product to ensure that you enjoy what they have produced. Something like that happens with the life of the believer. God has purchased the believer. That saved individual is made new in Christ the Lord. God wants to ensure that His child knows how to use what God has provided, so He provides an owner’s manual. We know that manual as the Bible.



What is of value for our study today is to note that the Corinthians lived in an environment that had long-since jettisoned any semblance of chastity. Consequently, Corinthians coming into the Faith of Christ the Lord brought a dismaying amount of baggage with them. I am not saying that all Corinthians were immoral, but immorality was sufficiently common that it did not scandalise those living in that day. Various forms of impurity were normalised in that ancient culture. Tragically, contemporary society, especially over the past half-century, mirrors that ancient society in this respect.

The cure for those ancient believers, and the remedy for contemporary Christians, is to return to the Cross. Living with a focus on the Cross strengthens the resolve of believers and encourages righteousness. Christians are spiritual because we have God's Spirit. Because His Spirit lives within us, we are responsible to sanctify the Temple of God's Holy Spirit. The presence of the Spirit does not mean that we ignore the body; the presence of the Holy Spirit in the body serves as God's affirmation of the Body!

The Corinthian congregation had become quite carnal. The church was tolerant of incest [see **1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13**]. They were unconcerned when believers sued fellow Christians in the public courts [see **1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11**]. They were unperturbed when fellow saints went to prostitutes [see **1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-18**]. Perhaps those ancient saints were not as dissimilar to contemporary churches as we might otherwise imagine! No doubt these ancient saints told themselves that what others did was none of their business. Perhaps they didn't want to know what was going on. Nevertheless, sin that is tolerated contaminates the entire assembly in short order. The Apostle has warned, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump" [**1 CORINTHIANS 5:6**]? The problem that lay behind this ungodly acceptance of sin as normal was a loose view of sin. God inspired the Apostle to correct their distorted view—and thus he corrects our own skewed view today—so that our outlook and attitude might be transformed.

From the very beginning, when God made Eve for Adam, the sexual act was more than merely joining two bodies—the sex act is uniting as one. In the sexual relationship, a man and a woman become one flesh, according to what is written [see **GENESIS 2:24**]. Warren Wiersbe, a pastor who is always perceptive in his comments on Scripture, writes, "Sexual sins affect the entire personality. They affect the emotions, leading to slavery (1 Cor. 6:12b). It is frightening to see how sensuality can get ahold of a person and defile his entire life, enslaving him to habits that destroy. It also affects a person physically (1 Cor. 6:18). The fornicator and adulterer, as well as the homosexual, may forget their sins, but their sins will not forget them."<sup>4</sup> It should be abundantly clear to God's people that there is no such thing as casual sex.

The Christian brings another element to the relationship that makes the issues even more serious, and that is the Spirit of Christ. When we are saved, we become "one spirit with Christ" [see **1 CORINTHIANS 6:17**]. John MacArthur is correct when he writes, "All sex outside of marriage is sin, but when it is committed by a believer it is especially reprehensible because it profanes Christ, with whom the believer is one."<sup>5</sup> It is not that we sully Christ when we engaged in sexual immorality, but we besmirch His reputation through our actions at that point. And our purpose is to glorify God. With our mind? Of course! And we are responsible to glorify God with our body as well. As Christians, our goal is to glorify Christ the Lord. This means that we take seriously our responsibility to be godly. Since His Spirit lives in this body, we resolve to be holy, to reserve the body for that which honours Him.

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<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, **The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 1** (Victor Books, Wheaton, IL 1996) 589

<sup>5</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., **1 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary** (Moody Press, Chicago, IL 1984) 151

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:19, 20**  
**YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN**

I have spoken to Christians, those who are twice-born. I am adamant that those who name the Name of Christ are responsible to glorify Him in their bodies. Those who are unsaved, all who are outside of Christ the Lord, may want to honour Him, but they haven't the power to glorify His Name. The Spirit of God does not live in the outsider, though He does plead with sinners to believe the message of grace. God's Holy Spirit does not empower the unsaved to live holy lives, since they cannot please God. He does invite all who are willing to receive this life that the Son of God has provided.

This is the message we bring to all who are outside of this Holy Faith. If you agree with God that Jesus Christ is Master, believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be set free—free from sin, free to glorify God, free to be all that God calls man to be. It is with the heart that one accepts that Christ is alive—this sets one in a right relationship with God the Father, and it is through openly agreeing with God that Jesus is Master over life that one is set free. That is the call of God—believe that Jesus is alive and submit to Him as Master over life. “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved” [**ROMANS 10:13**]. Amen.