

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

PASTOR SANDY ADAMS

1 CORINTHIANS 5-6

Often we see today's amoral world and assume it's never been as bad. Then you read Romans 1... Paul's famous description of the moral breakdown of Greco-Roman culture. The Roman world was X-rated. It was full of *unbridled indulgence, calloused consciences, self-serving idolatry, and perverted sexuality*. It takes a strong stomach to read Romans 1. Three times Paul tells us, "God gave them up!" or "God gave them over!" In other words, *God abandoned those who had abandoned Him!* When the Empire fell to the Goths and Vandals it was not their spears and swords that conquered Rome – Rome's downfall was its own inability to control its selfish and sensual desires. Rome was *defeated by depravity*. Rather than being conquered from *without* - Rome fell from *within*.

And when Paul wrote Romans 1 he was looking out his window at the city of Corinth. Corinth was Paul's inspiration for his *portrait of perversion*. **Corinth was the city that had forgotten how to blush!** The Corinthian Church was a tiny boat afloat on a sea of immorality, and tragically, the Gospel Ship had sprung a leak. The city's evil had infiltrated the life of the church. In chapters 5-7 Paul tries to patch the leaks! He deals with the subjects of sex and marriage within the Christian community.

Paul begins Chapter 5 by addressing a shocking problem in the church... "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles - that a man has his father's wife!" A young man in the church was shacking up with his step-mom. Two church members were carrying on in blatant immorality. It was an *infest of incest* – and Paul was *appalled*... The NKJ translates the first words in verse 1, "It is actually reported..." But Commentator Alan Redpath renders it, "It is commonly reported..." or "It is everywhere noised abroad..." In short, "This is the talk of the town!" And Paul mourns, not even the perverted pagans tolerate this kind of immorality. This was so twisted it didn't even make sense to amoral minds.

And Paul doesn't just rebuke the perpetrators - he's asking the church, "Doesn't anybody see that this is staining our reputation and our witness?" Verse 2, "And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you." Worse than the sin, was the church's attitude toward the sin. They were not only tolerating this couple's awful immorality, they were proud of their tolerance. You can hear the Corinthian's boast, "The Bible says, 'Judge not that you be not judged.' Far be it from us to tell someone else what's right and wrong. We teach grace!" Sounds like a 21st century rationalization.

I like how Peterson paraphrases these verses, "One of your men is sleeping with his stepmother, and you're so above it all that it doesn't even faze you! Shouldn't this break your hearts? Shouldn't it bring you to your knees in tears? Shouldn't this person and his conduct be confronted and dealt with?" They were prideful, when they should've be in mourning. The Greek word translated, "*mourned*" in verse 2 was used for grieving the dead. They should've viewed this situation as a loss - a loss of virtue, purity, honor, character, witness. They were *patting themselves on the back* when they should've been *falling on their knees... and getting in his face*.

Verse 3, “For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.” Notice, without speaking to this guy personally - without hearing his heart – or listening to his rationalizations - Paul rendered a judgment. In chapter 4 Paul warned us about making superficial judgments of another man’s ministry. We don’t know all the facts. We don’t see a man’s motive. But this judgment has nothing to do with *motive* or *ministry* - its about *morality*. This couple had constructed a blatantly sinful relationship.

The OT Law was clear about sexual taboos. In Leviticus 18:8 God had plainly forbidden this kind of relationship. This was not an issue of culture or personal preference. This was not a gray matter - God had addressed it with Israel in black and white – and this was why Paul was so dogmatic. Paul wasn’t judging this man - the Bible had already judged him. Understand, Paul is no advocate of *spineless spirituality*. He’s not afraid to *stand up* where *God takes a stand* – and *speak up* where *God has clearly spoken*. Today’s church needs his example. We weaken our witness when we tolerate immorality. Church discipline needs to be taken seriously.

Paul commands them in verse 4, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Again, this was not a struggling believer trying to straighten out his life and get victory over his sin. We need to help the person who wants victory. Rather, this was a Christian who’d deliberately chosen to ignore God’s will and live in open defiance. This kind of attitude cannot be tolerated! In Matthew 18 Jesus tells us if a brother sins, another brother should go to him and seek to restore him. If he fails, he should come back with two or three folks. We can assume the Corinthians had already taken those steps. But Jesus says if the brother refuses to hear the two or three, then he should be brought before the whole church - and if that fails to convince him to repent - he should get the boot. You’ve heard of the *right hand of Christian fellowship* - there’s also the *left foot of Christian dis-fellowship*.

And notice the goal at each stage of the discipline process is to bring the brother to repentance. Even when he’s kicked out, he’s being “*delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*.” The idea is let him taste the full consequences of his decisions – without the safety net of the fellowship. Hopefully, that’ll convince him of the error of his ways, and he’ll repent! When a person is part of a church certain protections are inherent. He or she is surrounded by support, and encouragement, and resources. To a degree the church is sheltering him from the real magnitude of his sin. Paul’s advice is to turn this guy out into the storm. His problem was his flesh – his “*I know best...*” “*I can do it on my own...*” attitude – so let him *do it himself!* Let him learn the hard way how much he needs to humble himself and submit to God’s way. Hey, the Church does a person a disservice when we keep a them from reaping the full brunt of what they’ve sown.

It’s interesting, later in his second letter to this Church, in 2 Corinthians 2:8 Paul encourages them to receive this man again into their fellowship. He writes, “*I urge you to reaffirm your love to him*.” Apparently, the Corinthians obeyed Paul and kicked him out... and it had the desired effect! The man’s season of separation brought on an attitude of repentance. Church discipline is never easy, but it’s often necessary - *and it works*.

In verse 6 Paul addresses their previous attitude, “*Your glorying is not good*.” And wow, how the modern church needs to take this to heart. Today’s world is *tolerant* of every sin except *intolerance*. Just because the world loses its moral bearings – and gets mushy about what’s right and wrong – doesn’t mean the Church should too. Understand, *we cannot be for God – we cannot love people - if we’re not against sin*.

Paul warns us, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” Sin is like yeast. It works beneath the surface, but it eventually permeates and sours the whole lump. Sin is like a cancer - if its allowed to spread it can destroy the whole body - but if caught early, it can be cut out. When it comes to *bad attitudes* and *blatant sin* in the church it needs to be dealt with sooner rather than later. Tolerance or reluctance can be lethal. If these stubborn sins aren’t cut out they can spread and infect others.

Verse 7, “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened.” “Purge out the old leaven” – get rid of the infecting behavior that’s polluting the life and witness of the church. “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Notice Paul calls Jesus “Our Passover.” The Jewish Passover is part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the eve of exiting Egypt the Jews were told not to inject yeast into their bread. They were leaving the next day, and there wouldn’t be time for the bread to rise. It was a symbol of their faith. But the Passover Feast was full of symbols that all spoke of Jesus. Christ is the object of our faith, our sacrificed lamb, our hidden matzo, our cup of redemption. And as the Jews celebrated with unleavened bread, we can celebrate with sincere devotion and the avoidance of deliberate sin.

Verse 9, “I wrote to you in my epistle...” What epistle we’re not sure... We call the letter we're reading, “First Corinthians,” but in reality this was “Second Corinthians.” Paul says there was another letter prior to this one. Some Bible scholars suggest **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1** is actually the missing letter. Others conclude it was a correspondence that’s been lost...

“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly *did not mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner - not even to eat with such a person.” The Corinthians had gotten it backwards. They were turning up their noses at their *heathen neighbors*, while ignoring the *hypocrisy within their own ranks*. Rest assured, when the church views folks God wants to reach as the enemy we become worthless to God. When we come out of the world, we’re not suppose to shut the door behind us. We’re suppose to turn around with love and a helping hand. Yet, that's not what happens in a lot of churches. The *saints* become *snobs*. *Immoral people, irreligious people* get the impression the church is a *club for the clean-cuts*, rather than a *hospital for the messed-ups*.

I heard a sad statistic. That by the time a person has been a Christian for two years they've lost all meaningful relationships with unbelievers. After two years their whole life revolves around the church and other Christians. They lose opportunities to cultivate friendships with non-Christians. Hey, I believe in the importance of Christian fellowship, but *connecting to a church* doesn't mean *disconnecting from the world*. We become so worried and fearful about the world infecting us with evil we don't cultivate opportunities where we can effect the world for good. Its easier to hang with Christians in a sterile, temptation-free environment, than it is to rub shoulders with the lost - especially on their own turf. That's risky business. *That's like Jesus leaving the halls of heaven and coming to earth – or like the guy who took a risk and reached out to you to tell you about Jesus*. Maybe its time, some of us to stop playing it so safe - and took that risk! Our enemy is not the sinner who doesn’t know Jesus. He can’t change if he wanted – he lacks the power. The enemy is the person who claims to know Jesus, yet stubbornly holds on to his sin and has no desire to change. Paul says the church needs to shun - not the *heathen* - but the *hypocrite*.

Verse 12, "For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "*put away from yourselves the evil person.*" I get weary of pastors who are always eager to condemn the ungodly. They're always on their soap box pointing out what's wrong with the world. *But what do you expect?* Why should we expect sinners not to sin? Our place is not to judge the lost world. We need to love and reach the lost. If the church wants to judge someone – why not start with ourselves. Clean up the church, and we'll be a more winsome and effective witness. Then when God judges the world - hopefully, there'll be fewer to judge!

Chapter 6 deals with another problem in the Corinthian Church, "*Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?*" The Corinthians had become so dysfunctional they were settling their grievances before the pagan courts. And again, *Paul was appalled* by the horrible testimony. Who would want to join a group of folks so fractured they can't settle their own disputes?

Paul rebukes them in verse 2, "*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*" In Luke 19 - the parable of the minas - Jesus promises, "*Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.*" When Jesus returns to Earth He'll establish His Kingdom and reign 1000 years. Apparently, those who are *faithful now will reign with Him then*. So if one day you're going to rule over cities, why can't you solve petty problems among yourself? Why drag a brother before the worldly judges?

Verse 3, "*Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*" This is a verse that always boggles my brain. Who knows the full extent of what it means? Psalm 8 tells us man was created a little lower than the angels, but will one day be exalted above them... Hebrews 1:14 refers to angels as "*ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.*" *What's that?...* Am I going to one day give my guardian angel a report card? "*Yo Gabe, where were you in '78 when I had that fender bender?*"

It reminds me of the wife riding in the car with her husband, "*Aren't you driving a little too fast, dear?*" The husband counters, "*Don't you believe in guardian angels? He'll protect us.*" Imagine, a speeding husband getting spiritual on his wife. She replied, "*I do. But you left him miles back.*" *She apparently believed that angels drive the speed limit whether we do or not.* Exactly how, I don't know - but somehow we're going to judge angels. That's a heavy responsibility. Which obviously means, that in the here and now, we should at least be able to settle our own differences...

"*If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?*" Paul's being sarcastic. Earlier we saw that the Corinthians had looked down their noses at the heathen, *so why are you asking them to judge your disputes?* "*I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?*" Isn't there one wise brother with enough discernment to trust with a settlement? "*But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!*"

"*Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?*" It's better to be defrauded and take a personal hit, than to disgrace the name of Christ by taking a brother to court *We should rather suffer personally than for Christ to suffer publically.*

“No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!” It was a shame what was occurring in the Corinthian church. In most families, the unwritten rule is not to air your dirty laundry. The worse thing to do for your marriage is to hash over your spouse’s problems in public. Don’t chat up your husband’s faults at the next ladies brunch. The problem here was not that the Christians couldn’t get along. As long as we’re still subject to our flesh quarrels will occur. But we should make every effort possible to be discreet. To settle our disputes in-house. *The church* should moderate it’s own clashes - *not the civil courts*.

Paul writes in verse 9, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators...” This is the Greek word “pornos” – from which we get our term *pornography*. This is a sweeping term that refers to any form of illicit sexual activity... *prostitution, adultery, living together before marriage, hooking up casually, friends with benefits, oral sex, incest, pedophilia, threesomes, etc.*

This includes everything from seeing a pretty girl and thinking a lustful thought to grotesque bestiality. *And sadly, the internet has made both available at the click of a mouse.* Paul is warning that if you keep clicking that mouse – if you continually and persistently indulge in these perversions you rot out your soul. You get in a rut from which you may never escape. Paul isn’t saying that a person who’s tempted and fails in a moment of weakness can’t inherit the kingdom of God – that would contradict a host of other Scriptures. There’s forgiveness. What he is saying is that a true relationship with God won’t allow a uninterrupted lifestyle of sexual sin.

“Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...” A literal translation reads, “nor effeminate, nor abusers.” In other words, the passive and the active participants in a homosexual act. Again, this doesn’t mean a man or woman who struggles to overcome homosexual thoughts and tendencies cannot be a Christian. Not so... Even if they stumble and fall to temptation there is still forgiveness in Christ. But it does mean that a person who accepts homosexual relationships as a legitimate form of sexual expression, and practices these behaviors void of any repentance – is a person who will not inherit God’s kingdom.

His list continues in verse 10, “nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” Again, what applies to homosexuals goes for thieves, for greedy people, for alcoholics... If a person engages in the uninterrupted, unrepentant practice of these sins it’s evidence there’s something amiss in their relationship with God. Though you say you’re a Christian, the evidence speaks otherwise.

Notice again the weightiness of these words... “will (not) inherit the kingdom of God.” These people won’t be walking the halls of heaven! Again, let me put this passage in what I think is the proper context... 1 John 1:8 is written to Christians, and John tells us, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Nowhere does the Scripture say unless a Christian is perfect he won’t make heaven. All Christians sin at times - we stumble and covet our neighbor’s stuff - or lose our temper – or drink too much – sometimes it’s a sexual sin. But we don’t do it perpetually! We get back up, and repent, and learn to trust again.

But in 1 John 3:8, the same guy who wrote, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,” later writes, “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” The idea is that a believer, born of God, cannot continue in sin. He can stray, but God’s Spirit recalibrates him toward righteousness. An unbeliever occasionally slips up and does good, but he’s a sinner at heart, and sin colors his path. Whereas a believer might slip up and sin, but God’s Spirit lives within him. Love for

God and others colors his path. Here's what Paul is saying, when a believer sins its "out of character" – whereas, a life lived hostile to the will of God, won't inherit heaven.

Verse 11 – *and I love the first six words in verse 11* – these are some of the most hopeful words in all the Bible. "And such were some of you..." This is one of the most grace-soaked and blood-bought lines in all the Bible... Apparently, the church in Corinth consisted of a group of former fornicators, and adulterers, and idolaters, and homosexuals, and sodomites, and thieves, and covetous, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortionists... The Corinthian Christians didn't come from good, moral upbringings. They weren't former Boy Scouts and Brownies. They were a wild bunch. But notice the operative word "were." That was all in the past now. In Christ they became a "new creation." Later Paul writes, "old things are passed away, behold all things have become new." That's the Gospel. Jesus takes the *scum of the earth* and turns us into the *heirs of heaven*.

Paul writes, "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." We were *filthy*, but we've been "washed..." We were *worthless*, but we've been "sanctified..." We were *guilty*, but now we've been "justified..." He's *cleaned us up - set us apart - and made us right with God*.

Verse 12, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." This is what's called, "The Christian Ethic." Judaism has Ten Commandments. There's the Five Laws of Islam. Here are the Christian's dos and don'ts – and it's going to surprise you. **Here's the moral code by which all Christians in all cultures should live...** "All things are lawful..." What? "All things are lawful..." What kind of loose, permissive code of behavior is that? The person who accuses Christianity of being strict, and stringent, and repressive, and legalistic hasn't read verse 12. There are no taboos. *Anything goes*. You can't get any freer than "All things are lawful..."

Yet read the rest of the sentence, "...but all things are not helpful." The Christian is free from the Law – from the dos and don'ts. Because God does not want us *governed by law*, he wants us *governed by love*. Here's how Christianity works... rather than assigning new rules, God sends His Spirit to rule over our hearts. He changes us from the inside out. Whereas, once our nature was to buck God and beat out others, the Holy Spirit supplies a new nature – one that loves God and our neighbor.

The issue for a Christian is no longer "Is it lawful?" but "Is it helpful?" "Will this activity deepen my love for Christ, and benefit my brother?" The *decision-making filter* is no longer a set of laws, but love. Laws are like a leash on a wild dog. They choke the dog from doing what he wants. Christianity doesn't need laws and leashes. We're transformed from a dog to a child of God. Our concern is to love others and glorify God. The question is not "Is it lawful," but does it help me love and glorify God...

Paul writes, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Here's the Christian concern when it comes to conduct. Since Christ died to *make me free* – my priority should be to *stay free*. Thus, anything that threatens to take away my freedom in Christ – and impose some form of bondage - is sin to me. In other words, *if I'm not free to put it down, then I'm not free to pick it up*. Here's the Christian ethic... *I'm free to participate if it's helpful, and if it doesn't rob me of my freedom*. Take alcohol for example. I'm free to drink a glass of wine, as long as I'm free to stop after one glass. But if I have physiological tendencies that make me addictive to alcohol; then it's a sin for me to take the first sip of the stuff. Here's the only rule for a Christian... *Do what you want as long as you don't fumble away your faith*,

or cause your neighbor's faith to **stumble**. The Christian isn't governed by *Law*, but by *love*!

Verse 13, "Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them." *Smoking cigars, and eating lots of red meat, and fatty foods* – keeping your lungs clear, and your arteries open – has some definite short term benefit. But in the long run we're all dead. Both a healthy dead guy and a sickly dead guy are both dead guys. The ancient world was full of dietary and ascetic restrictions. Paul is saying to the Corinthians that they were right in exercising their liberty to eat and drink as they pleased. Feasting or fasting – kosher or non-kosher - cholesterol or no-cholesterol - has zero impact on our eternal destiny.

But the Corinthians had mistakenly taken the same attitude toward sex. The Corinthian logic is like that of many folks today, "I've got a hunger drive, a thirst drive, a sleep drive, a sex drive – so since it's not a sin to eat anything I want, or drink anything I want, or sleep anytime I want - it must not matter to God then, if I have sex whenever and with whomever I want." That's faulty thinking - but that was Corinthian thinking!

And in the remainder of the chapter he straightens it out.... "Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Here's Paul's logic... The Lord isn't all that interested in *what you do to your body* - you can take care of it and live to be 100 - or you can live off potato chips and drop dead of at 40. That's not God's chief concern. God is going to resurrect and perfect your body one day anyway. Therefore, **what you do to your body is not near as important to God as what you do with your body!** This is what really matters to the Lord!

Paul says... "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 harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

Unlike eating, drinking, and sleeping - sexual activity carries deep spiritual connotations. Sex is not just about human relationships, it speaks of and impacts eternal relationships - even our relationship with God. Sex isn't just another bodily function. It's a *spiritual act* as well as a *physical act*. I like to think of sex as super glue. It creates a permanent, unbreakable bond. Try to pull something apart after it's been super glued and it doesn't separate as easily as it joined. In fact, there's ripping and tearing – not just at the point where the two parties touched – but now the tear goes further and deeper and broader. This is what happens with sex. It doesn't just interlock two bodies, but whether you realize it or not, it fuses together to two souls - two spirits.

A man once wrote a letter to Ann Landers seeking advice. She posted it in her column, "Dear Ann, I've been sleeping with three women for several months. Until a few days ago, none of them knew the others existed. Things were fine. By chance, two of them met, compared notes, and found me out. Now they're furious with me. What am I going to do? P.S. Please don't give me any of your moral junk. Signed, Trapped." Ann replied, "Dear Trapped, The one major thing that separates the human race from animals is a God-given sense of morality. Since you don't have a sense of morality, I strongly suggest you consult a veterinarian." Tragically, our society mistakenly sees human sexuality as little more than animal instinct - but sex carries with it profound spiritual implications.

When you become a Christian your body is no longer your own. It's the property of Jesus - *literally, the Body of Christ*. The Holy Spirit dwells in your spirit. Verse 17 says, "**He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.**" This means if you engage in any form of sex outside the boundaries of heterosexual marriage you're prostituting the body of Christ. You've sold fidelity and loyalty to Jesus, for the cheap thrill of a moment's pleasure. When a believer logs onto to a pornographic website you've logged the body of Christ onto that website... For a believer to climb into bed with another man's wife you've pulled the bed sheets over the body of Christ... When a believer walks into a strip club, it's the body of Christ that enters...

Participate in sex outside marriage, and you're not just risking future rejection - or venereal disease - or unwanted pregnancy - or AIDS... More importantly you're violating the spiritual bond between you and your Lord. If you're joined spiritually to Jesus, why would you defile that union to be join to someone else? Yet that's exactly what you do when you have sex. Sex outside marriage betrays the fidelity between Christ and His Body.

That's why Paul writes in verse 18, "**Flee sexual immorality...**" A teenager once asked his grandfather, "**Gramps, your generation didn't have all these venereal diseases. What did you wear to have safe sex?**" Old gramps answered, "**Son, we wore a wedding ring!**"

Remember Joseph in Potiphar's house. Mrs. Potiphar was wearing an item out of the Victoria Secrets catalogue. She dropped her bathrobe right in front of him. Nobody was home. No one would ever know. Joseph stood there in shock... I'll bet you his pulse raced, and his hormones surged. She threw herself at him and grabbed his cloak. She started to undress him, as she invited him, "**Lie with me**". And what did Joseph do? Genesis 39:12 tells us, "**He left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.**" When the devil and a Mrs. Potiphar stir your passions - when temptation makes a pass - recall Paul's words and Joseph's example, "**Flee sexual immorality.**" Don't *sit*, and try to *fight* - just *split*, and take *flight*. Preserve your purity at all costs. Don't sell your integrity for a passing pleasure.

"Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." A person's identity is tied to their sexuality. Maleness and femaleness is apart of it, but it goes deeper. Our capacity to reproduce ourselves is tied to our sexuality. It represents who we are. That's not true of other bodily functions. What I put in my stomach sustains me, but it has nothing to do with multiplying my likeness. That's why you can watch me eat and it has no bearing on my personality. But if you saw me naked I'd blush. That's a bigger deal.

And this why every time you're intimate with someone you give yourself away. You break off a little piece of yourself that you can never get back. As Paul says, you share your spirit. And when you give yourself away with no guarantee of high return - it cheapens you and degrades you. This is one reason why Paul says sexual sin is a "**sin against your own body.**"

Allow yourself over and over - to be *used as a plaything*, rather than *valued as a person* -and it devastates your dignity and sense of self-worth. Illicit sex may produce some *enjoyment* and *excitement*, but it doesn't provide *enrichment*. And that's why God created sex. It's love's enrichment. Sex outside marriage is like robbing your own bank account - what you've saved, your treasure - gets taken from you. You never see it again. Whereas sex in marriage is like making a deposit into your account - there's safety, and a feeling of security - and the deposit becomes a long term investment that compounds interest and yields rewarding dividends.

Verse 19, "**Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your**

own?" The Temple was God's OT habitation. It had one owner - it was for one purpose - the service and worship of God. And likewise your body is the Holy Spirit's habitation. It too was purchased... by the blood of Jesus. Thus, you're not free to use it as you please – it too is for service and worship! That's how Paul finishes Chapter 6, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."