

Why Wait?

Thoughts on Sexual Purity from 1 Corinthians 6.13-20

Gregory A. Smith

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Introduction

Early in the class hour, ask the audience to write down one of the most important reasons we should wait until marriage to be sexually active. As a lead-in to the lesson, read the responses. (No names should be written down.) Responses may not reflect an understanding of the spiritual reasons for abstinence before marriage. For example, the audience may say “because God says so,” or “because premarital sex can have a lot of negative consequences, such as pregnancy, disease, and emotional dysfunction.” Announce the text, and apply the message not only to those who have yet to get married, but also to those who already are. Point out that sexual temptation does not stop when we say “I do.” In fact, the experience of sexual activity may make a married person more prone to engage in illicit sex than the virgin who would be in unfamiliar territory.

Explain why we are dealing with this (somewhat uncomfortable) subject: Sex is a real part of our lives—one that is a telltale expression of the quality of our relationship with Christ. We need to think of sex in accurate, healthy, holy terms. That is the purpose of this lesson. We want to find out why God has given us sexual parameters. He is not a killjoy; rather, he has given us instructions that are for our happiness and holiness.

Text

- 13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body [is] not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
- 14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.
- 15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make [them] the members of an harlot? God forbid.
- 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
- 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
- 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
- 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
- 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Body

This text suggests at least four spiritual principles why we should abstain from sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage. The four principles relate to the body but are not essentially physical. Sexual immorality is logically inconsistent with each principle.

1. The *purpose* of the body

- We are God's creatures. He has moral rule over us by reason of creation. God's creative design prescribes that sexual activity should take place only in the context of marriage—and then only under certain circumstances (Gen 2.24; Mt 19.4-5).
- The purpose of our existence is to glorify the Lord, not to indulge our lusts (1 Cor 6.13; cf. v 20).

2. The *prospect* of the body

- Our bodies will be transformed at the rapture. A new, incorruptible physique awaits us (1 Cor 6.14; 15.51-52). Our vile bodies will be changed (Phlp 3.20-21).
- There will be no marriage in heaven. When we are in God's presence, it appears our sexual nature will be suppressed, and we will become like the angels (Mk 12.25).
- Sexual expression is a function of time, not of eternity. While this does not mean it is inherently sinful, it does indicate that it is not of enduring value.

3. The *presence* within the body

- As believers, we are members of Christ's body, the church (1 Cor 12.12-13). Corporately we are the incarnation of Jesus' life in contemporary society (Eph 5.30). It is accurate to say that we take the Lord wherever we go. If we engage in immoral behavior, we compromise the presence of Christ (1 Cor 6.15-17).
- Our faith in Christ brings us into a new relationship with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, he takes up residence within us (1 Cor 6.19; Jn 14.16-17). We are charged to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5.18); to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5.16); to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5.22-23); to pray in the Spirit (Eph 6.18; Jude 20). Conversely, we are not to quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5.19).

4. The body as *property*

- At the moment of salvation we were made servants of righteousness rather than servants of sin (Rom 6.17ff). By inference, we belong to a new master.
- No man lives or dies unto himself (Rom 14.7). This does not refer to our interdependence with fellow believers (though that principle is biblical), but to the fact that we are the Lord's (v 8).
- An awesome price has been paid for us. We were redeemed—set free by payment of a price—by the blood of Christ, God's perfect Lamb (1 Pet 1.18-19).

Conclusion

Two applications follow from the above—one negative and one positive. A negative application is to flee sexual immorality (1 Cor 6,18). A positive application is to develop our relationship with the Lord so as to glorify him in our bodies as well as the immaterial part of our beings (v 20). Considering the effects of sexual sin on spirituality, family life, and ministry should cause us to face temptation with utmost caution.