

## 1. Christian Freedom is About Belonging to Another

### a. "All to me are *permitted*" - BUT - "NOT all are *beneficial*"

- i. The first phrase seems to be something that Corinthians were claiming to be true because of the gospel of grace
  1. Thus, the ESV puts the phrase before the adversative ("but") in quotations
- ii. This general view sees that I have a "right" to live according to my own desires, because I'm saved and going to "heaven"
  1. Therefore, nothing is off-limits in the physical body, because it's dying anyway
  2. Now, even the "all things" here are most likely limited, as "all" usually is within its context
    - a. The context here is in regards to sexuality, particularly sexual relationships outside the marriage bed
    - b. Thus, the entire context of this section are those sins which we would consider to be only affecting ourselves (they don't seem to harm others) by which one would say, "It's not hurting anyone."
  3. It appears that the Corinthians are taking Paul's teaching on the freedom from the Law, which the gospel brings, and using as an opportunity for the Flesh, and are biting and devouring one another in the process (Galatians 5:13, 'through love serve on another')

### iii. The Corinthians are asking the wrong question

#### 1. "Is it permitted?"

- a. This is the wrong question, as if that hanging fruit was the centerpiece of my joy
  - i. "How close to the line can I get?" or "What is the farthest that I can go emotionally or physically?"
  - ii. When we find ourselves asking these questions, then we have already been deceived that our joy is found on the other side of "the line"
- b. We should, rather, ask what is driving this desire? What is its root? What is my goal in taking this action and then ask...

#### 2. "Is it beneficial?" is the right question

- a. Does it bring about *goodness* rather than just *pleasure* (they are not always mutually exclusive)?
- b. Does it move others to flourish in life, bringing joy and peace in believing, hope in the promises and power of God, etc.?
- c. Does it press them toward deep soul rest?
- d. This is why pornography, while claiming not to harm the man or woman who doesn't even know you, is asking the wrong question, for it doesn't even care about their life at all, and as such is included in this sexual immorality

### iv. *Benefit to another* is the proper guide to virtue, not permissiveness

#### 1. contrast between "it is permissible" and "it is beneficial"

- a. *ἐξέστιν* and *συμφερεῖ*
- b. prefix comparisons: *ex* and *sun* ("apart from" and "together")

#### 2. Paul is showing that embracing the things for which Jesus had to die is actually divisive and harmful rather than building intimacy and closeness with the Lord and with each other

- a. Asking of permissiveness is seeking to take something away from another person, to use them for one's own pleasure, to become an emotional pimp

#### 3. To seek another's benefit is more than to seek their pleasure, but to seek their Life, capital-L, flourishing of what they are meant to be

- a. This means both spiritually and physically

- b. Noting that we appreciate this Creation while anticipating the New Creation, resurrection and glorification
- b. "All to me are *permitted*" - BUT - "I will certainly not be *overpowered* by anything"
  - i. Sin is seen as a possible "master" or "overpowerer", which Paul discusses in Romans 6 - "do not let sin *reign* in your mortal bodies, for you have died to it."
  - ii. The word, "overpowered" is rooted in the word, "authority", or "right", which seems to be the real issue for the Corinthians
    - 1. They were clinging to their "rights", demanding their "rights" – their "rights" were trumping everything else
    - 2. In a sense, they were like that type of person who always says, "Well, I have a *right* to do whatever I want."
      - a. It is a statement of authority, "I have the authority to do it."
      - b. This is untrue.
  - iii. The irony of immorality is that it promises freedom and power, but overpowers and enslaves
    - 1. Remember, the Corinthians were big on power, authority, etc.
      - a. This has extended to every area of their lives, claiming that grace *freed* them to empower them to all things
    - 2. Paul says, "NO!" – grace never empowers you to sin, for you were made for holiness
      - a. We are not set free in order *to sin*, but we are freed in order *not to sin*
      - b. If "freedom" becomes the filter by which we see everything in the gospel, or the prism by which the Light is dispersed in various colors, then we are in danger of making sin, that which disintegrates, appear virtuous
      - c. In this, we also minimize the Cross and thus minimize the glory of our Savior *from sin*
  - iv. We shall not allow ourselves to be overpowered or enslaved to sin, for we have been freed from its power and "greater is He who is in us than he that is in the world."
    - 1. It is ridiculously dangerous to assume that sexual immorality is "not a big deal."
      - a. To be casual with sin and expecting intimacy with the Lord is like sleeping with the one who killed your children and expecting to grow in intimacy with your spouse
        - i. Sleeping with the Enemy is not merely foolish, it is insane.
      - b. It is destructive: life-taking rather than life-giving

## 2. We are Physically Designed to Belong to the Lord, not to Belong to Your Sexuality

- a. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy both one and the other."
  - i. The Corinthians seem to have deduced that since all foods were not permitted, then all sexual relationships were also permitted, since they are "fleshy/body stuff" and not "spiritual/eternal stuff"
    - 1. Thus they deduced that since sexuality will not be a part of the future eternity with Christ, per Christ Jesus' words in Luke 20:34-36, then it is simply doomed as well and *inconsequential*
    - 2. They presumed that "sexuality is for the body and the body for sexual immorality" and it's just "fleshy stuff with no eternal significance"
      - a. Many who struggle with illicit sexual desires, be they adulterous or homosexual, etc. assume that sexuality is a "right of being a human"
      - b. That is what "sex is for the body and the body for sex" means – "I am human, so whatever sexual desires that I have are what it means to be human."
  - b. Paul disagrees with both aspects of the Corinthians deduction: the body is NOT meant for sexual immorality and it will NOT be destroyed, but resurrected.
    - i. Paul argues that the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord

1. Thus, he disagrees with both the premise they made (God will destroy both) AND the correlation of food/stomach and body/immorality.
  - a. Your body is not MADE for sexuality, it is MADE for the Lord!
  - b. Your sexual desires do not make you human, nor the absence of them, but your body belongs to the Lord and that is what it means to be human!
2. He corrects them by means of arguing the reality of the resurrection of Jesus' BODY (with which he consumed food, btw)
- ii. Since Jesus' body was raised, then the body is not destroyed by kingdom glory, but transformed: What you do with your body, sexually, *matters*
  1. Thus, sexual expression is NOT inconsequential, but very consequential, *for the body belongs to Jesus, the Lord*, for ETERNITY
    - a. Sexuality doesn't matter for some philosophical or moralistic reason, but because of a theological relational reason: It belongs to Christ.
  2. How we care for the body shows what we think of resurrection, the New Creation (this would extend to all creation, by the way), and particularly *its ownership*
    - a. Thus, it is about "rights" and "authority" – who has it?
    - b. Who has rights and authority over my body and for whose purpose do I even have one?
- c. Paul makes the statement that the body has a design and an owner:
  - i. It is meant for the Lord - the design
  - ii. It belongs to the Lord - oneness
    1. You are members of Christ, in your bodies
    2. You belong to Him, and your bodies belong to Him
      - a. This idea of oneness, that of belonging, also extends to marriage in chapter 7
    3. You are spiritually one with Christ Jesus
      - a. Meaning that you don't belong to yourself, you belong to Him
        - i. The comparison between the body sexually and the spirit communally is one of *belonging*
        - ii. Whenever you engage in sexual immorality, you involve Christ Jesus in that, for you are united to Him
      - b. When you unite yourself to a prostitute, you are saying that you belong to her and are united to pour out your life for her flourishing, just as Christ has for you
  - iii. The proper question of v12 is still the point: "What will benefit and strengthen and bring life to flourish for the other?"
    1. This is not the question one asks a prostitute, for there is no *life commitment* to such flourishing. Only marriage speaks of this life commitment to the flourishing life of the one to whom we commit and therefore engage in sexual relationship for the sake of Christ and one's spouse
    2. Secondly, one is also uniting the prostitute (typically idolatrous) with Christ Himself, to whom you are united
      - a. Thereby bringing idols into the Temple of God – a gravely serious offense to God
      - b. This is not merely "I am free from those old sexual boundaries because my body will be destroyed anyway"
      - c. Sexual immorality is saying to God, "I am free to bring idols into your presence and bow before them as one which *belongs* to them."

### 3. Therefore, Glorify God With Your Body, For You Belong to Him

- a. Finally, FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY, for it is a harmful abuse of your own body
  - i. Paul has taken great care to show that this whole issue of sexual purity is about oneness, about belonging, about "authority"

- ii. Sexual immorality is a oneness, a belonging, a giving another mastery over you, and as such, is antagonistic to your life in Christ, particularly towards the eschatological resurrection of the body which one treats so carelessly
- iii. To pursue sexual sin is to give another mastery over the very body which Christ intends to raise to glory, not eradicate as useless
  - 1. The Corinthians figured that the body was going to be destroyed anyway, and only the spirit mattered
    - a. Paul showed them that the resurrection means that the body is important now
- b. Thus, sexuality is about “belonging”, not about “my needs” or “my rights”
  - i. In one sense we belong to our sexual partners
    - 1. Sexual oneness is to reflect the belonging for which God made us in union with His Son
  - ii. In the greater sense, our bodies belong to Christ Jesus, to whom we are united in spirit
    - 1. This belonging is a oneness *which seeks to glorify the other* – the God-like reflection of oneness
    - 2. The wife is the glory of her husband and the husband of his wife
    - 3. Triune Other-Glorifying
  - iii. Two Images of Belonging:
    - 1. Temple – you belong to God and He indwells you with His Spirit – His HOLY Spirit
      - a. You have a new purpose, having been washed, sanctified, and justified
      - b. You belong to God *for God*
    - 2. Slaves
      - a. You were bought with a price – the blood of Jesus
      - b. How shall you offer yourselves up to the very things for which He spilled His blood to rescue from?
  - iv. The Spirit (Temple) and the Blood (Cross) testify that you belong to Christ Jesus
    - 1. You are not your own – and that is GREAT news!
      - a. The presence and reception of the Holy Spirit “whom you have from God” proves Paul’s original point:
      - b. They believed that being spiritual meant that the body was dispensable and insignificant, but Paul shows that the presence of God’s Holy Spirit *indwelling* the body is an affirmation of the body
    - 2. So glorify God in your body, not merely with your spirit
      - a. Your *whole person*, material and immaterial, belong to God and thus we ought not use either for purposes opposed to God, but ought listen, hear, and submit to His Word for its proper use
      - b. Flee sexual immorality, for you belong to the Holy God

#### Conclusion:

The only command in this section is to flee sexual immorality. The rest is reason. Your body matters. You belong to Christ. Your body belongs to Christ. It is not your own, for you are His holy habitation for His glory and you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body. It makes sense. It is right. It is beneficial.

Flee sexual immorality, for Christ died for you, the Holy Husband for the Wayward Wife. He is worthy of our love, affection, and glory. Note that the command is the same, even if you have sinned. Flee now to Christ! He is the only Master who loves to the death, who gives Himself for your benefit, and let us adore Him lavishly.