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A1213 – March 25, 2012 – 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
Flee From Sexual Immorality

Q: If God doesn't have a body then how did Adam and Eve hear God in the Garden of Eden?

A. The passage in question is Gen 3:8 and 10, after the fall it says of Adam and Eve, "They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."

Gen 3:8 can be translated differently; the participle may go with *qôl* rather than with "Lord God," in which case the translation would be "the voice of the Lord God which was going through the garden on the wind of the day."¹ The language is unquestionably temple imagery. The temple is where God meets with man. The first temple in the OT is the Garden of Eden. The last temple is a great city called the New Jerusalem where the Lamb of God serves as its light. What dwelled or moved into the garden in the cool of the day was the same Shekinah Glory that dwelled the most holy place in the later tabernacle and temples and which at this time indwells the believer's body. You are the most holy place in the present era.

If you'd turn in your Bible to 1 Cor 6:12. This is the most important passage in the NT on the body and the proper use of the body, not the body of Christ, the believers individual human body. We're not going to be on the topic of the body again until we get to Rom 6 where Paul addresses it again and I suspect that's about three years away so we want to take some time to nail down the Christian view of the body and it's proper use now and hopefully this will tide you over till we get to Rom 6. The argument is not easy to follow because it presupposes you have tremendous theological knowledge. Paul is a master at weaving together multiple doctrines to draw his conclusions. He assumes you understand the doctrine of man's constitution, that you understand the

doctrine of resurrection, that you understand the doctrine of union with Christ, that you understand the doctrine of marriage and that you understand the doctrine of the Temple. So he's taking a lot of doctrine and like a tapestry, weaving it all together into a grand theology of the body and the proper use of the body.

Paul was a brilliant theological thinker and he expected Christians to be able to see the integrated system of doctrine, to understand how one doctrine relates and impacts another doctrine. He even expected the carnal Corinthians to be able to understand this. Why? Because Christians still sin and Christians try to justify their sin. Now if you tried to justify your sin to Paul or if you try to do that with me we're going to shut you down with these "do you not know" kinds of statements like vv 15, 16 and 19. Don't fool yourself, you can't pull one over on me, I've lived with myself long enough to know what goes on inside of me and I know enough Scripture to detect blame shifting and I'm a victim and poor little me; it's all rationalizations and I've seen it in myself and I've seen it in others and it's all a big paper lie. You're not getting by with anything, people that are theologically sound can see right through you like glass. So you're not going to pull any wool over my eyes and the Corinthians weren't pulling any wool over Paul's eyes. Paul knew and Paul expected them to be able to connect doctrine and see how it relates to the details of life. So what Paul is doing in this section is he's tying all the loopholes. Believers caught in sin are naturally looking for loopholes, a way out; a way to justify themselves. To deal with that Paul takes doctrine after doctrine after doctrine and weaves it into an impenetrable web that will tie up all the loopholes.

Notice his rebuke in verse 15; **do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?** Let me close that loophole, the idea that my body is my body to do with it as I please. Wrong, wrong, wrong, and you should know better, it's doctrine 101, basic. Verse 16, **do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."** There's another loophole - oh, I can have sex with a prostitute and it's not a big deal, nothing more than some mechanics has taken place, uh, uh, uh, there's some kind of relationship that has been formed. And he says, you should know this, this is freshman level theology, basics, Genesis taught this. And then verse 19, **Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,**

whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? Again, here's tying another loophole: that the Holy Spirit indwells my spirit but not my body, so I can use my body however I want and it won't grieve the Holy Spirit. Sorry, that's a no go. You should know this, every Christian should know this, this is basic, basic theology. So he's ending all their excuses, all their sinful rationalizations because Paul knows that's what sinners do, always trying to justify their sin. So he just cuts it all off with a fantastic tapestry of doctrinal truths.

Now let's start this over going back to verse 12, this is a Corinthian slogan, commentators are almost certain this was what the Corinthians trumpeted around as a justification for their permissive behavior. We can do whatever we want. The grace of God is so great, what the grace of God has done is freed me to sin. That's what they mean by trumpeting the slogan **All things are lawful for me**. I can sin, sin, sin because hey, I'm covered by God's grace. Paul retorts **but not all things are profitable** or "beneficial." Tell me, Paul would say, how fulfilling your little bodily desire with a prostitute at the local Temple of Aphrodite is beneficial. How does that benefit your wife? How does that benefit your children? How does that benefit the testimony of Jesus Christ? Huh, go ahead, let's hear your dissertation on this one. Paul is shutting them down.

Again he repeats their slogan. **All things are lawful for me** but he shuts it down another way, this time by looking at its deleterious effects on yourself. It doesn't benefit others and it doesn't benefit you either. You think fulfilling your little erotic desire is going to do you some good, but Paul says ultimately it will master you, it will gain control over you and you will become enslaved to it. See, **All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything**. I will not become a slave to sin. We have been set free from the penalty of sin, why would I become a slave to it? Why would I put myself back under its power?

Now in the doctrine of sanctification we have three phases. Let's review. First of all, phase 1 is the past tense because it occurred in the past at the moment you trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation. At that moment you were set free entirely from the penalty of sin; there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. That's phase 1 of your sanctification, it's the past tense and it defines your position forever as a perfect individual, not in and of yourself,

but perfect in Jesus Christ because it's His righteousness that was credited to your account at the moment of faith and so when God looks at you He sees what? The righteousness of Jesus Christ.

But then we have the very interesting phase 2, this is your experience. This is where you can walk by the Spirit or you can walk by the flesh. So this is the present tense, it deals with your entire Christian life, from the moment of salvation till the moment you die or are raptured, whichever comes first and this is where you can be delivered from the power of sin or you can put yourself under the power of sin and be ruled by it. So this is where commands like yield to God, abide in Christ, walk by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, that kind of language comes in because God wants you to respond to Him. Do you trust Me? And our ability trust Him is a function of our hearing His voice in the word of God. So we study the word, we listen to Him and the more we hear His voice the more we're convinced of the truth of the word of God and our ability to trust Him over greater and greater areas of life increases, we are gradually set free from the power of sin. So that's phase 2, it's experiential, it's present tense, ongoing and it requires a response, we can go either negative or positive to the word of God.

Phase 3 is ultimate and that's the resurrection, so it's clearly future tense, you're not resurrected yet, but you are going to be resurrected, that's when you are set free from the presence of sin altogether, the flesh is destroyed and so we're all looking forward to that day because then we won't sin anymore.

Now Paul is speaking at the end of verse 12 about phase 2, being freed from the power of sin, **but I will not be mastered by anything.** There are a whole lot of things I can do says Paul, but I realize there's a danger in some of those things; they can be taken too far and then I come under the power of these things, they begin to dominate me. And that was where some of the Corinthian's were, they were dominated by sin because they took grace as a license to sin.

For example, verse 13, here's another Corinthian slogan and we want to follow their logic. **Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them.** It should be and **God will do away with them,** it's just a continuative conjunction. They didn't believe in resurrection, so they thought hey, if I'm hungry, that's a bodily signal that I

need to eat. So I go to the fridge and eat. Food is for the stomach and stomach is for food and it doesn't matter how much I eat anyway because there's no resurrection, God is going to do away with the stomach and food! Now Paul is going to shut that down real quick. But I want you to see their logic. These people were Greeks, they had a view of man that came from Plato. And Plato's view was that man is a dualism of body and spirit, the body was intrinsically evil and the spirit was intrinsically good, they believed the spirit was divine and would be absorbed into divinity when the body died. So they didn't hold to any kind of resurrection. If you recall in Acts 17 some of the Greeks laughed at resurrection. They didn't believe in it for a second. And neither did some of the Corinthians. Paul's going to destroy that in 1 Cor 15, but here let's just understand their logic. If the body is really just going to be destroyed as the Corinthians thought, and it was intrinsically evil anyway, when you have a bodily urge, just fulfill the urge. What difference does it make? The body's going to destruction. So they took the logic of food for stomach, stomach for food and applied it over to sex and the body. They'd say, the body is for sex and sex is for the body, God's going to do away with both of them so why not just have sex, sex, sex now like I eat, eat, eat now. What's the difference, it's all just bodily urges, has nothing to do with spirituality.

Wrong Paul says, wrong, wrong, you couldn't be more wrong about man and his constitution. Man, according to Gen 2:7 is a body + a spirit which together constitutes a living soul or person. And as originally created there was nothing wrong with the body or the spirit, there was a spiritual materiality to the whole creation in general and in particular, to man. The body was created just as well as the spirit to glorify God, the whole of man. So then, yes, when man fell in the Garden his human spirit died, that is, it ceased to function properly, it ceased to function in its fullness, it was cut off from spiritual relationship with God, that's what we call spiritual death. God said in the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die. And the day they ate they did die, spiritually, the relationship with God was severed, but the spirit didn't disappear because it was still necessary to animate the body; for James says, the body without the spirit is dead, and Adam and Eve did not keel over in the garden on that day, they died spiritually but not physically. It took 900 more years for them to die physically; physical death is a process, but spiritual death was instantaneous. The point is that the spiritual death caused their human spirits to be separate from God and incapable of functioning in a relationship with God until they believed and this function

was restored. In the meantime, all men have a human spirit as James says in 2:26 because it is necessary to keep the physical body of man alive, keep it breathing. But see, when we come to Christ in faith we are made spiritually alive instantaneously, that's called regeneration and the ultimate result of that is that our bodies will eventually be resurrected. God is interested in saving the entire man, not just man's spirit but man's body and man's spirit. Why? Because man is not man unless man has a body and a spirit. So we have regeneration of the human spirit, that takes place at an instant of time at the moment of faith and then as a result we have resurrection of the human body at a point of time in the future. So that finally the entirety of man is saved. You're not going to just float off into a spirit world some day and be an angel or something, you're going to have a body and a spirit fit for a new creation.

Now this future resurrection has ethical implications for the present use of our bodies. Paul insists in verse 13 and 14 that since our bodies will be resurrected in the future then we ought to use our bodies for His glory in the present. He says, **Yet the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.** He has a vested interest in the body. He created it, He wants to re-create it. Verse 14, **Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.** So then the resurrection has ethical implications. It determines proper use of the body.

And then we have the rebuke for improper use of the body, verse 15, **Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!** A powerful, powerful verse. Alright, so let's start putting on our thinking caps here. Your bodies **are members of Christ.** What does this mean? Let's say here you are, anatomically you have a head and you have a body. Now, when you want to do something, say pick up a tool or wash the dishes, you're head says to your arm, move this way, fingers grasp that object, it's an amazing communication system that goes on between your nervous and muscular system working in conjunction with the skeletal system of your limbs. It's a fantastically complex system that results in fine motor skill abilities. It's an electrical-chemical system. I don't know of anything like it, it's just shocking the complexities of our bodies and how our bodies communicate internally to accomplish things. But imagine you don't

have your limbs, all you have is your head sitting there and your head can think I want to do this, I want to do that, but can you do anything? No, you have to have your limbs or it's all just electrical-chemical impulses in the brain, they're cut off from the rest of the body.

Now let's take this analogy over to verse 15 **Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? members** there is the Greek word for limbs. All he's saying is that your body is a limb of Christ. You're like His arms and legs and feet, your instruments to accomplish what He wants to do here on earth. So He's the head and your body is one of His limbs to do things down here for Him. You're an instrument to carry out His will. Now that's the heart of the point. You are a limb of Christ, He is the head and He wants His limbs to accomplish certain things here on earth for His glory.

Now then the rest of the verse, **Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!** In other words, shall I cut my limbs off from Christ and put them on a prostitute so she can use my body as an instrument for her glory. A very serious thing has happened here when we give our bodies to a prostitute. It may not be obvious right away but something serious has happened. So let's work through it.

In Corinth, the Greek way of thinking was that if you have erotic desire just go up to the Acrocorinth that towered over the city where the Temple of Aphrodite was situated and have sex with a prostitute. They had 1,000 prostitutes that could help men worship. Sex at the temple was an act of worship. That's what you have to understand. You have to get it out of your head that sex with a prostitute was an immoral act; in their mind it was a moral act of religious devotion. It wasn't desecration of the body it was consecration. The prostitutes were there to help you worship. The great thing about it was it just happened to also fulfill sexual desire.

But when you did this something happened. Rather than your body being used as an instrument of Christ for his glory, you severed it from Him, in the sense of being useful, and giving it to the prostitute it became an instrument for Aphrodite. Now Aphrodite wasn't any body, she was just a figment of men's imaginations, a goddess of love and beauty. The Greeks and the Romans were polytheists and they attached deities to various ideals or

nature because they believed these gods ruled those spheres and so you had to be a part of the Roman system of religion because the gods and goddesses are what gave the Roman system stability. But while the gods and goddesses were nothing there was a reality behind the gods and goddesses. There were demons and Paul doesn't want them to be sharers in demons. But by sleeping with these prostitutes they were becoming sharers in demons. So then it is idolatry, they are taking what belongs to Christ alone and they are admitting demons to invade and corrupt and defile the temple of God.

Now a lot of this passage hinges on the temple imagery brought in in v 19 but before we get there we need to understand the background in the doctrine of marriage. Paul obviously condemns sexual fornication with a prostitute in verse 15 with the words, **may it never be!** Needless to say this was quite serious to Paul. The Greek expression is the strongest way to say never, never, never. It was an abhorrent idea to Paul.

Verse 16, **Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her?** Now then we go to Gen 2:24 **For He says,** and then he quotes Gen 2:24, **"THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."** What is this two shall become one flesh bit? Well it's not marriage, there's more to marriage than sex. We're going to look briefly at Divine Institution #2. At Creation there were three divine institutions by which we mean structures built into the created order that when violated has terrible repercussions. The first divine institution was labor, responsible labor. Gen 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth, etc...Man's purpose in the world is to rule over God's creation in a responsible fashion, be a good steward of God's resources, bring glory to Him by managing responsibly His created order. The second divine institution was marriage. Gen 2:18, "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Help with what? Help with his labor. Help with divine institution #1, making God's creation productive. Right here we have a major issue. What is the purpose and meaning of marriage? Producing something for God's glory. Well, what am I supposed to produce? Kids? They come out of marriage but it's more than that. It's what you do with God's creation for His glory as a couple. Having dominion. So then Marriage is not about companionship, as much as I like some of Jay Adam's stuff, when God says it's not good for the man to be

alone it doesn't mean the man was lonely and God gave marriage as a fix to loneliness. What it means is the man left to himself couldn't fulfill his mandate to labor for God's glory, he needed a helper. So then we have the purpose of marriage. The purpose of marriage is not for self-actualization, it's not for romance, it's not for happiness; if you're unhappy too bad, get over yourself, that's not what it's about anyway. God never promised happiness in this life, never. God promised two things: trials and when he said that he said, now, that's what you should be happy about, go count trials as happiness. And two He promised discipline, everyone who is a child of God He disciplines. So there's your lot in life! Now go be thankful. But I don't like my spouse; they don't do this right, they don't make me happy. Big whoopidee doo da. Didn't you say some vows back there somewhere? Now that brings us to verse 20 and the first part of marriage. A marriage is two things. First of all a covenant and secondly consummation. You've got to have both or you don't have a marriage. Sex alone doesn't do it and a covenant alone doesn't do it. Both are required to have a marriage. You say I don't see the covenant in verse 24. It's there. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife. Right there in the Hebrew words "leave" and "join" or we say leave and cleave is the covenant terminology used throughout the rest of the OT of God's covenant relationship with Israel. They were to leave idols and cleave to Him. So then first of all you have to have a covenantal agreement. That's why we have vows, v 24 is the basis of marriage vows. And in those vows you are agreeing to be loyal to this person all the days of your life. And God is the witness. So you better do it or He's not going to be very happy about that. Now the end of the verse deals with the second thing required for marriage, consummation, "and they shall become one flesh." Now this is the sexual act and that's required for marriage, you can get up and say the vows but if it's never consummated then marriage ever took place. So when the marriage is consummated something unique happens, the two become one flesh. Now what this refers to is a union. In God's eyes there is a sense in which God looks upon two people as one people and that is because they are now related, they are kin. Every one you have sex with is your kin. It's a permanent kinship and there's nothing you can do about it. In God's eyes you are kin with this person forever.

Now come back to 1 Cor 6. That's what it means to take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute. You're not married to her but

you are now one flesh with her; but the problem with that is that you are one with Christ, you are related to Him. So you've committed spiritual fornication. And yet verse 17 says you are one spirit with the Lord. How then can you cause this disruption between the essential unity you have with Christ? May it never be!

Now some Christians say all sin is the same, there's no sin any worse than any other sin. Nonsense! Utter nonsense. In one sense it's true; all sin is contrary to the holiness of God. But in almost every other sense it's not true. I'll show you two things. First of all, take the argument people usually make - usually these people just committed adultery or something and so they'll turn to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. This is how they trot it out. Well, Jesus said, "everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery." So then you can't judge me because we all know that every man has looked on a woman with lust. Alright, fine, I agree with what Jesus said, but there's a little difference because you didn't finish the verse, Jesus said if you look on a woman with lust for her you've already committed adultery *in your heart*. Whereas you over there, you did it in the flesh. And that's a little bit different. Go ask your wife! Go ask your kids! The thing is that the repercussions are far more reaching when we do it in the flesh than do it in the heart. It doesn't make it any less sinful in the heart, it's still contrary to God's holiness. But the point is that there is a difference in the effects.

Second, if you look at verse 18 Paul emphatically says that not all sins are the same. **Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral man sins against his own body.** So then he singles out **sexual immorality**. It is the only sin that is not outside the body, it's the only sin that is inside his own body. That word **against** is the preposition into and it contrasts with outside. And this may be in the top ten most difficult verses of the NT. How is it that other sins like drunkenness, gluttony or suicide are not also sins inside your own body? Alcohol goes into your body, gluttony is the sin of over eating or drinking. Suicide, of all sins isn't that against your own body? No, Paul says. There is only one sin that is against your body and this is strictly true as we'll find out.

So what does this mean? A sin, unique, committed inside the body that is detestable? Well, that's the big question. I think verse 19 sheds the light we need to answer that question. Verse 19 brings up the temple. And here we're speaking of the individual believer's body as a temple. Paul says, **Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?** along with the temple of Aphrodite at Corinth. There was only one temple of God at Corinth and it was the believers at Corinth. We already learned from chapter 3:16-17 that the local church at Corinth was a temple of the Holy Spirit. And the imagery of the temple comes from the OT temple. What was the most holy place on earth during the OT? The most holy place. It was an external temple. If you wanted to meet God you had to go to the physical temple. But now things have changed. Israel is off the table, temporarily, external temples are out, internal temples are in, the Church is on the table. What does this mean? It means something very significant. It means that you are the most holy place on the planet, you are the most holy place, not the Taj Mahal, not the White House, not the Mosque of Omar, not even the present Temple Mount. The most Holy Place on earth is your body. So you cannot let a foreign body invade your body sexually! Young people often say, where does it say in the Bible you can't have sex before marriage? Well, here's one place! Prov 5 would be another place. The point is this is a unique sin because you are permitting a foreign body to invade a space already indwelt by the Holy Spirit. No other sin does that. So Paul's command is to **Flee sexual immorality**. Run like you've never run before.

Now to get a visual of this turn to Gen 39. Here's your role model. This is the guy you're going to follow in this department. Joseph. We don't have time to go into the whole story except to say Joseph was sold by his brothers into Egypt and he rose in power by the grace of God and at this time he was in Potiphar's house. Potiphar was an Egyptian military officer under Pharaoh. In verse 5, "It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD'S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. ⁶So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him *there* he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance." Uh oh, you can sense there's going to be a problem. Verse 7, "It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she

said, "Lie with me." ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me *here*, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. ⁹"There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" ¹⁰As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her *or* be with her." So we have tremendous sexual pressure here. This woman obviously can't control herself. Verse 11, "Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. ¹²She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside." That right there is the model men, and women, in these days it goes both ways, right there the exact same Greek word is used in the Greek OT that is used in 1 Cor 6:18 for flee, *pheugo*. He fled, in the face of sexual temptation he fled. Verse r13, "When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed." Now the rest of this turns sour for Joseph but the point is the same, this man came under tremendous sexual pressure, he was the head of the football team or something and yet he not only resisted over and over and over but finally he had to run for his spiritual life. And that's what we have to do. Run for our lives. Because this sexual immorality thing is not like any other sin, it's committed into the body, every other sin is outside the body.

ⁱ Coppes, L. J. (1999). 498 קָלַךְ. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (216). Chicago: Moody Press.

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