

"Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly"

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 Title: The Cross and Moral Purity - B
 An Overview of 1 Corinthians 1-10: Part IV – Chapters 5-7
 Text: 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5
 Theme:

Introduction: Our big idea in our last study was that biblical revelation calls us to abstain from all immorality. The problem is real and we must face it daily. There are two areas that I must address in our study on moral purity. First, "Why are we to flee immorality" and second, "What are the biblical safeguards in protecting us from immorality?" Perhaps the question is better asked by stating it this way, "How do we fight against this sin or all sin?"

I do ask that you stay with me on this. This study is all connected and to take a piece without the whole leaves you will an incomplete picture.

Remember the historical context in which the admonition is made. In the city of Corinth the prostituting of the body was a part of worshipping false gods. Sexual defilement was seen as holiness and ministry. Some within the Corinthian church had not yet disengaged themselves from this sinful behavior. In light of this Paul gives us the following instruction. They were continuing to participate in this vile activity. They sought to justify their present activity by their past participation.

So our passage opens with the admonition to "Flee immorality or sexual impurity." It then goes on to explain "Why we are to flee immorality."

From the preceding thought I am to "flee immorality" for the following two reasons, because "The body is not for immorality (porneia), but for the Lord (v. 13)," and because I have been positionally and will be practically raised with Christ (v. 14). He continues to provide a theology for moral purity in verses 19 and 20.

I. Why are we to flee immorality (6:19, 20)?

Flee (v. 18) is our English word "fugitive." It is a present imperative. Grammatically it **"indicates it is to be a continual and habitual fleeing"** (Rogers & Rogers). A.T. Robertson notes how we are to "have the habit of fleeing without delay or [debate]."

ILLUSTRATION:

There is perhaps no greater illustration of this principle than what we see in Genesis 39:7-11 [READ]. Joseph was bombarded by the invites of evil to partake of that which was forbidden. Potiphar's wife was relentless. He refused then fled. Friend, we must refuse then flee.

Fornication violates Christ's rights in our bodies (verses 1Cor. 6:13-17) and also ruins the body itself."

It is crucial for us to understand this initial idea about fleeing from immorality. **Our focus cannot be on the immorality, our focus must be on Christ. In our flight from immorality we are fleeing to Christ.**

ILLUSTRATION:

I would invite you to place your hand in the line of sight toward me. You will notice that either I or your hand will be blurred. You cannot focus on both at the same time. If you slide your hand to the side and you track with it, you will no longer be looking at me.

The same is true concerning your sin. You cannot look at your sin and Jesus Christ at the same time. The battle for moral purity is not an end in itself. In fact the battle for moral purity is a consequence or result. It is not a means to any relational end with Christ. It is because of Christ that you will be morally pure. Moral purity is a result of your pursuit of Him. He is the One who produces moral purity in and through His people.

Thus the command to flee from immorality is the consequence of having fled to Christ. Everything that I teach assumes this non-negotiable truth. But I must constantly remind myself and us of this glorious truth. In light of this let us look at the passage before us and note how they answer the question, "Why we are to flee immorality?"

I believe Paul's use of body can address two ideas: first, the individual and then the fellowship. Both are significant. I will address both areas in the course of the study.

A. Immorality sins against your own body (vv. 18b, 19)

The statement in verses 18 and following is built on the previous argument. Beginning in verses 15 and following Paul argues how the individual is a part of one body and when I sin as an individual I am sinning against the entire body.

ILLUSTRATION:

Moral impurity is not me hitting you with a hammer. Moral impurity is me hitting myself with a hammer.

There is always a tendency to individualize Christianity. To be sure we come to Him as individuals, but Christianity is enormously corporate, family, community, and a body. My immorality hurts me, but I am not the only one hurt by it. It affects everyone who is a believer.

It is because of my union with Christ that sexual immorality is not only illogical but abominable.

“Immorality arises within the body and has as its sole purpose its gratification (Rogers & Rogers).”

It is only as we pursue Him that the addictive nature of this sin can be broken.

B. Immorality sins against the corporate body (v. 19)

“The church through the Spirit is God’s temple in Corinth, in contrast to all the pagan temples and shrines.” (Fee, 1 Corinthians, 264).

“To commit sexual sin in a church auditorium, disgusting as that would be, would be no worse than committing the sin anywhere else.” (MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, 152). In fact, there is nothing sacred about the building in which we meet. To abuse our bodies with moral impurity is to desecrate the sanctuary of God.

C. Immorality sins against ownership (v. 20a).

God’s redemptive purpose saves the whole man: body, soul, and spirit. Our bodies are not secondary to God’s saving activity. God saves all of us. We are not at liberty to use our bodies in ways that are in conflict with God’s purpose.

There is to be a holistic approach to our outreach activity. We are not simply trying to “save souls.” We are trying to save the individual in their entirety.

How we use our bodies and how we manage our bodies is a real part of the Christian life. Our present study is focusing only on moral purity, but there is much that could be discussed should time permit (i.e. the moderation of neutral items). We are stewards of this flesh and body and our handling of it is an expression of our worship before God.

“Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells within each of us, and we are, as a result, no longer free to sue our bodies apart from a recognition of the presence of the Spirit within us.” (Baker Commentary on the Bible, “1 Corinthians,” James A. Davis, 970).

The language used is that of buying something at the market place. As believers we are debtors to obey God, not to appease the appetites of our flesh.

John Calvin states it in this way, “The sum is this, that redemption must hold us bound, and with a bridle of obedience restrain the lasciviousness of our flesh.” (Calvin, 1 Corinthians, 20:221).

D. Immorality sins against the principle of glorify God in every area of one’s life (v. 20b)

“Christians’ bodies are God’s temple, and a temple is for worship. Our bodies, therefore, have one supreme purpose: to glorify God.” (MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, 152).

“The physical body is man’s means of concrete service for God (Rogers & Rogers).”

It is because of all that has preceded that we are to be committed to a very fundamental principle and that principle is to glorify God in every area of our lives including moral purity and the celebration of it in the context of the marriage covenant.

APPLICATION:

1. Everything we have noted is rooted in who Christ is and what He has done. Moral purity is a consequence of our union with Christ.
2. Moral purity does not establish our union with Christ. It does not make you more right or holy in your standing before God.
3. Do not focus on the battle, but on Christ the author and finisher of our faith.
4. Victory over porneia addiction is only possible when we pursue Christ.
5. **Our focus cannot be on the immorality, our focus must be on Christ. In our flight from immorality we are fleeing to Christ. Are you fleeing to Christ today?**