

Jason Upchurch - 1 Cor. 6:12-20 - Just the Facts on Christian Sexual Ethics - Part 2

I mentioned last week that the last half of **1 Cor. 6** and all of **1 Cor. 7** is a theology of Christian sexual ethics. It's a detailed understanding of what the Bible has to say about how Christians are to view sex. It doesn't cover every single issue, but it does cover a lot of ground. The good and the bad and even liberties. We're keeping this PG as always, of course, but we are working through these issues.

The specific situation at the end of chapter 6 here was that apparently some of the Corinthians were visiting prostitutes. They were saying that since Christians are no longer under the Law of Moses, that we have all this freedom in Christ and that freedom allows us to commit sexual immorality. Not only that, sexual desire is just another appetite like hunger or thirst and so we need to satisfy it. And our bodies are going to die anyway, so why not?

That was all nonsense, by the way. The Corinthians knew better - they were just making excuses for their sin. And so Paul sets out to give them facts about sexual ethics. We're going to continue with that this morning.

We saw last week 4 facts and we'll see 5 more this morning.

- 1) There are liberties in all areas of ethics
- 2) there are principles that guide those liberties
- 3) Christians often justify sin
- 4) every molecule of your body and soul belong to God.

5th Fact) Sexual Intimacy is a one flesh union. Read 15-16

So sexual intimacy creates a one flesh union. Very literally, a man and a woman become one. Now this one flesh union is reserved for a husband and wife - it's not to be shared or enjoyed by anyone else. This citation is from Genesis 2 and it is really foundational in all our understanding of sexual ethics.

Turn back to **Genesis 2** for a minute. When I do pre-marital counseling we spend a lot of time in **Genesis 1-3** because it lays the foundation for God's design in marriage, sexual intimacy included. **Read 20-25**

So we see a lot of things here. First, the man and woman are both made in the image of God - they are equal in value. Second, God created Eve as a helper for Adam. God then brings the 2 together in marriage - marriage is a sacred union that God solidifies. This union severs the union between child and parent. One of the biggest problems in many marriages is that parents have an undue influence on the marriage. It's okay to have a relationship with parents, of course, but the primary relationship is with your spouse.

And all of that culminates in the one flesh union of intimacy. And this intimacy is a good thing because Adam and Eve are naked and there is no shame. There's no shame because there is no sin, they can come together without any guilt because they are doing what God designed them to do.

Now the Bible indicates that there's 2 ways in which a husband and wife are one flesh. The first is simply physically. That's the definition of sex - there's a oneness of bodies. This oneness is designed to be enjoyed by the married couple and is the way children are brought about.

The second way marriage makes a man and a woman one flesh is spiritually. **Look** over at **Malachi 2** for a moment. When a man and a woman come together in marriage it's not just a physical union. There's a spiritual union that goes on. That spiritual union happens because a covenant is made between the man and woman before God and before witnesses. And God binds them together.

Here, God is chastising Israel for being faithless to their spouses. **Read 2:13-16**

The Israelites were being faithless to their wives. They were divorcing them and putting them away. Did you notice **Vs. 15**? There is a spiritual element when a marriage happens. God puts a portion of his Spirit to bind man and wife together.

Which is why Jesus says: What God has put together, let not what? Man separate. The issue there isn't a physical one flesh union. He's referring to the oneness that is created in the covenant of marriage that is spiritual.

So back in **1 Corinthians** the Corinthians were violating the design of God in the one flesh union. **Look** back there. And he's going to make an argument based on these two principles of physical union and spiritual union. Here's the physical side. **Read 15-16**

So when someone goes to a prostitute, or has sexual relations with anyone not their spouse, they are becoming one flesh with them. Jesus would never do this and therefore believers should never do this.

The physical one flesh union is designed to be enjoyed only by a husband and a wife. That's the physical reality. Here's the spiritual reality. **Read 17**

So when someone becomes a Christian, they are united with Jesus through the Spirit. We call this union with Christ. At salvation the Spirit raises us from spiritual death and indwells us. We don't have a physical union with Jesus. We have this spiritual union. And because we have a spiritual union with Jesus, we no longer can accept physical union with anyone other than our spouse.

You ever try to put 2 refrigerator magnets together? If you do it one way, they click together naturally. They click because internally and externally they can come together.

But if you do it the other way, if you try to smash the same poles together, there's an internal resistance. Physically, you **can** smash them together, but that's not the natural design.

That's how it is with intimacy. Within marriage, intimacy works physically and spiritually because this is how God designed it. Outside of marriage, intimacy is a one flesh union without any spiritual validation. It goes against everything God has designed.

So sexual intimacy is a one flesh union.

6th Fact) We are commanded to flee sexual immorality. **Read 18**

So this is the command. It's a command we are all familiar with. It is to flee - it's a specific word that means to find safety by running away. As Christians that is what we're commanded to do. Run away from sexual immorality.

It's the Joseph principle from Genesis. Whatever the temptation is, get away from it. It will destroy you.

Prov. 6:27: Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he who goes into his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished."

Run away. Do whatever you need to do to get this thing out of your life. And it's not just the physical act. It's also who you look at.

Matt 5:27-30: You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Even viewing a woman - or, ladies, viewing a man - in a sexual way is sin. Jesus says cut off your hand, gouge out your eye if viewing you're viewing people in a sexual way. He's not being literal there. But I think he is saying sometimes this means doing extreme things.

Get rid of your smart phone. Get rid of your streaming service. Quit your job where some guy keeps coming on to you. Don't go to the pool or the beach if you're going to be tempted. Put the computer in the family room and get Covenant Eyes. Stop flirting with ladies who are not your wife. Run away from all of it.

And here, the wording in the Greek makes it clear that this is a continual running. Something you need to understand about the Christian life is that obedience is hard. Very, very hard. There are some people who have this idea that the minute they follow Jesus somehow all their desires should change. They won't have to battle sin any more and life is easy. Or maybe they will battle sin but it'll get easier quickly.

That could not be further from the truth. When you come to faith in Jesus, that's when the true battle begins. Because now your life is going upstream. It's working against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Jesus said if you want to follow him you have to take up your cross how often? Every single day. What he means by that is you have to crucify your flesh, your sin, your ungodly desires on a daily basis. **Col. 3** says we are to mortify the flesh - put it to death - all the time, all our lives.

This is the long haul battle which is why the book of Hebrews says don't grow weary in doing good. Flee all sexual immorality.

Fact 7) Sexual sin uniquely impacts the body. Read 18

This is an odd phrase and there are many many pages written about what this might mean. I think the straightforward explanation is the most convincing: sexual sin simply has a direct impact on our body that other sins do not.

Lying is not primarily a violation of our physical body. Stealing is not primarily a violation of our physical body. Being greedy, being a reviler, so on. Those sins are not committed primarily with our physical bodies nor against our bodies.

But what about drug use, what about suicide, what about even drunkenness? Aren't those sins that affect our bodies? Yes, of course.

But there is something about sexual sin that is unique. First of all it's a sin against our body and the other person's body as well. And sexual sin is often justified because "I love this person." The reality is that can't actually love a person by sinning with them. You might have a mutual lust. But true sexual love is only expressed in the context of one man one woman marriage.

There's also an aspect where Genesis 2 comes into play in that this union is designed to be a **shameless** union where nakedness is celebrated between husband and wife. Read **Proverbs 5** or **Song of Solomon** some time.

There are literally songs in the Bible about a spouse's anatomy. "Her belly is a heap of wheat. Her teeth are like sheep and her hair is like a flock of goats. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon." Those are like the original rap songs. You guys, that's cool stuff. Inside marriage.

Prov. 30:18-19: Three things are too wonderful for me, four I do not understand, the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin.

There is just something amazing and special about a physical union that is legitimized by spiritual union from God in marriage.

But if that spiritual union is not there, the physical union should not be there either. The body is affected in a way that it shouldn't be. And I don't think this is talking primarily about STDs - though that's a possibility. I don't think it's talking about some sort of weird harm. I think it's just talking about using the body that God designed for holiness in a way outside of his design.

8th Fact) Your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit. Read 19

So this is the glorious truth that God the Holy Spirit - the third person of the Trinity dwells in every believer. This is the glorious promise of the New Covenant. That through faith in Jesus the Spirit isn't just poured out on a few people like in the OT, but rather every single believer is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Look over at **Rom. 8:9-11** for a minute. We see this glorious truth in **Romans 8**. Romans 8 is the Holy Spirit chapter of Romans. And Paul explains this truth in amazing ways. **Read 9-11**

Salvation hinges on whether or not the Spirit lives in a person. **If** the Spirit is in you, **if** Christ is in you, **if** the Spirit lives in you.

See the issue of eternal life and forgiveness of sins is whether or not the Spirit lives in you. A lot of people call themselves Christians but it's just in name only because the Spirit is not in them. How do you know if the Spirit is in you?

You have 2 people standing side by side, both claim to be Christian, both say they love Jesus. One is a believer with the Spirit, the other is not a believer and doesn't have the Spirit. How do you know which one is truly a believer? It's not rocket science. You look at their life. Does their life have the fruit of the Spirit?

Do they delight in obedience to God? Do they repent continually from sin? Are they workers of righteousness or workers of lawlessness? We're not talking about perfection. No true believer ever reaches perfection. But we are talking about people who long to love Jesus because Jesus loved them first.

Are they growing in the fruit of the Spirit? Are they becoming more loving, more joyful, more peaceable, more patient, more faithful, so on?

That's how you know they have the Spirit inside of them. If the Spirit is in them their lives will be working toward holiness and joy in the Lord. And here's the practical reality - it's something of a no brainer - but bear with me. If you knew God was inside of you, living in you, you'd act like God was living inside of you living in you.

Most people, when they have company come over for a visit or dinner or whatever usually tidy up the house a little bit. What if you knew Jesus was coming over for a visit? God the Son, in the flesh coming over for a bite to eat. You'd probably clean it up a little bit, wouldn't you? Not to earn righteousness, but because you want to please him and present yourself well to him.

You guys, God is literally in your house. He's in your body. This is where he resides. God dwells in his people. You are the Temple of the Holy Spirit - and by proxy, the Son and the Father as well. Jesus said he and the Father will make a home inside of us. They do that by virtue of the Holy Spirit.

And this is the ethical implication. If God's in you then your body - every last inch of your body - including sexual organs - are his. And we are to use all of our body for all of his glory. **Look back at 1 Cor. 6. Read 19**

When you came to faith in Jesus your body became sacred space. You became a temple for God. He saved your soul but - and this is important - he save your body. You know what gets cast into the Lake of Fire in **Rev. 21**? The deteriorated, resurrected bodies of unbelievers. Jesus did save your soul, but he saved your body as well. You know what is glorified in heaven? Bodies.

God cares about your body. He cares about what you do with it. He cares about who you show it to and who enjoys it. It's not meant for everyone. God wants his home - your body - to be a beacon of modesty and filled with good works. He wants purity.

By the way, kind of an interesting thing. You know where the Corinthians would go to get their sexual fulfillment? The pagan temple.

And here's the thing we need to remember: God is not against sexual fulfillment. His temple is designed for sexual fulfillment - inside of the marriage covenant.

Through Jesus God saved your soul and came into your body and started a fire upper project. And by his grace your Temple will look more glorious, more holy, more pure day by day and year by year.

9th Fact) Your body is actually not even your body. Who's body is it? God's. **Read 19-20**

So it turns out your body is actually not even your body. It's God's body. He lives there but he's not a guest. He owns you. He owns all of you - body and soul. That's not in a mean way. It's that the Creator God of the universe knew you and loved you and redeemed you and gave you an inheritance and one day you will stand before him and experience perfect unhindered joy because you will see him face to face. He blessed you with that.

And he did all that by purchasing you. He bought you - body and soul - with the precious blood of his own Son, Jesus.

When you were in the depths of sin and had no knowledge of God or cared about God or even knew who God was, he made the ultimate sacrifice for you. You were his enemy - we all were. And through faith in the gospel he bought you back from the dead.

"That sounds like slave/master talk" - it is. Our Heavenly Father is also our loving master and our sacrificial redeemer who purchased our salvation and purchased our bodies.

And I want you to get this. Your soul is precious to God, but your body is precious to God, too. Every part of your body - even the parts you don't like and even the parts you've misused or maybe the parts you're not proud of. Those are infinitely precious to God because they are his blood bought home.

We've lived in our house now for 6 years. And, listen, been in a constant state repair for 6 years. There's all kinds of stuff that could be better or nicer or finished. But you know what? It's my home. I bought it. It's precious to me. It's sacred space to me.

Our imperfect bodies are the same way to God. They precious to God - he bought them. He could have just decided to buy our souls and ditch the bodies. But he created our bodies for his home. They are his.

So...glorify God with your body. Worship God with your body. Not just with your voice, or telling people the gospel, or giving or singing or praying. Those are all good. But make sure your body - especially as it relates to sexual purity and modesty - is the home you'd want God to have.

"But I've failed at that" - he hasn't left your body so the remodel isn't over, is it? Maybe you've made a mess. Repent, ask forgiveness, and do what needs to be done to bring your redeemer glory.

Pray