

# Glorifying God in Our Bodies

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 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. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 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. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

—1 Corinthians 6:12–20

Our text is from 1 Corinthians 6:12–20, and we will consider those verses in detail. In addition to that we want to consider Lord's Day 41 of the Heidelberg Catechism. There we read in question 108, "What doth the seventh commandment teach us? Answer: That all uncleanness is accursed of God; and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock or in single life." And then question 109 reads, "Doth God forbid in this commandment only adultery and such like

gross sins? Answer: Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy; therefore He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto.” This confessional understanding of the seventh commandment should not be relegated to the sixteenth century, but is highly relevant in our day and culture as well, and is really a summary of what the Bible teaches about human sexuality.

And that raises the question, “How does a believer live in thankfulness to God in respect of the seventh commandment?” Sometimes we think that if we arm ourselves with enough information, we can then live out this seventh commandment before God. Indeed, it is important to know the underpinnings of the philosophies that bombard us day by day in the secular media. It is helpful to look back in history and take stock of how we have gotten to where we are today. If there is one issue that has defined our culture in the last sixty years, it would be the issue of human sexuality. Since the 1960s and the so-called liberation of that generation from a biblical, sexual ethic, our culture has seen a precipitous decline in the ethics of the seventh commandment. A decade after the sexual revolution of the 60s, sexual license gave way to the issue of abortion and its legalization after *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 and the loosening of the biblical underpinnings of society. This further opened up the floodgates of sexual permissiveness, encouraging no-fault divorce, and cohabitation by young couples—sadly, even Christian young couples; the denigration of marriage; the onslaught of pornography and explicit material on the web; the legalization of same-sex union; and the mainstreaming of the transgender ideology. It is important to understand the arguments

behind the sexual revolution. But I would argue that it is not enough just to know enough about these issues. Some would add that we need to engage in Christian activism on these issues, confronting our leaders to pass legislation to protect human life, biblical marriage, and biblical sexual ethics. Those are good things, and we need to be engaged in them, especially in our day.

But activism or being well-informed on cultural happenings alone is not enough. The Apostle Paul did not tell the believers at Corinth to arm themselves with knowledge of the pagan culture surrounding them. He didn't tell them to become Christian activists and confront the political leaders of the day. No, he wanted them to understand how the gospel intersected with the question of human sexuality—because the church at Corinth had a problem. They wanted to live according to their own rules, so Paul came to them and taught them, at times very pointedly, about the seventh commandment.

It is my burden to help you understand the same teachings. It is not only Paul's teaching; this is God's teaching and burden for us, so that we might know what God wants for believers and unbelievers alike. Our theme is "Glorifying God in Our Bodies": (1) by recognizing Christ's authority over our body; (2) by countering our ignorance of our bodies; and (3) by caring for our body as Christ's purchase.

How does the church counter this deluge of filth and immorality, even when those sins have crept into the church? In our prayers we can rail on the sins of the culture as the sins "out there," but that does not deal honestly with those sins. Or we can pretend that those sins are not in the church, but that denies the reality of sin. Or we can engage in political action and rhetoric or

enforce morality through legislation, which can be a helpful way of approaching some of the issues and do a world of good.

But these solutions do not go far enough in addressing humanity's deepest need—the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of that gospel to change lives. That is what the Apostle Paul reminds the Corinthians of as he writes to them to glorify God in their bodies, flee sexual immorality, and live out their identity in Jesus Christ. He reminds them and us of the power there is in the gospel to change our lives and the lives of those caught up in sexual sin.

### **1. Glorify God by Recognizing Christ's Authority over Our Bodies.**

The Corinthian church was a unique church that lived by its own rules. Time and again, Paul had to rebuke them and bring them into line with the Word of God and the teaching of the gospel. This is no less true when it came to the problem of sexual sin in their midst. In 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, he reminds them of what many of them once were in their former lives—sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunks, slanderers and swindlers—not a pretty picture. But then he goes on to show how the gospel has changed their lives in verse 11: “But such *were* some of you.” You see, the gospel operates in three tenses. Children, you learn verb tenses in school; in third or fourth grade, you learn about past, present, and future tense. Paul is speaking about who the Corinthians *were*—such *were* some of you. This is the past tense of gospel life. For a believer, there came a point where God made a change in your life through regeneration, through justification. He constituted you a new creation. There was a point where

you stopped being what you once were. The reality is that the gospel changes us into those who are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. We receive a new identity in Christ. This is the present tense of the gospel. Believer, you are no longer who you once were. You have a new identity in Christ. This is what Paul is trying to get us to understand. Such *were* some of you in the past. This *is* who you are now in the present. But the gospel also has a future tense, doesn't it? We are heading somewhere. Yes, we have a new identity and we are becoming something that we were not—progressively growing more and more into our identity in Christ. God is working in you, bringing to fruition what He has intended for you.

But this is not how the Corinthians were living. Some of them were using their new life to justify old patterns of sin. I pray this does not describe some of us today. But maybe it does. Maybe you confess a new life in Christ, but you use that to justify old patterns of sin. You say and think that God has forgiven you anyway, so it doesn't matter. Either you are not living out of the identity that God has made in you, or you have not yet received that new identity. That is the reality that faces you: you are either confessing a new life in Christ and yet using that new life to justify old ways of living, or perhaps you are even showing that the life you thought you had, you still don't have. Either way, Paul challenges this mindset and wants the Corinthians to understand and recognize the authority of Christ over their bodies.

He does so by addressing several expressions that were common in the Corinthian church. The first expression is found in verse 12, "All things are lawful unto me...." Paul repeats this expression that was commonly circulating in their culture back to the

Corinthians. He repeats it twice. The Corinthians were saying that because of their newfound freedom in Christ, all things were now permissible for them. They had “Christian freedom” and could do whatever they wanted. But Paul is clear that this is not the case. Yes, there is such a thing as Christian liberty and freedom, that we are called to exercise, but that freedom is not found in the ability to sin whenever you feel like it. It is rather found in the ability and freedom not to sin, and the ability to keep the moral law of God and the seventh commandment because of your new identity in Christ, because of the power of Christ that dwells in you. So Paul qualifies this statement “all things are permissible” for the Corinthians. On the one hand, he affirms their freedom in Christ, but then says that even though all things might be permissible to them, not all things are expedient or advantageous. Some practices are even dangerous as he goes on to show in the following verses.

He also qualifies this freedom by showing how that a license to do whatever you want can actually bring you back into bondage to the very sin that you were delivered from! The Corinthians used this saying to claim that they were now free to commit fornication and sexual immorality because of their freedom in Christ. But Paul says “I will not be brought under the power of any,” even though everything was permissible for him (1 Cor. 6:12). He is reminding them and us that we are indeed free in Christ, but that this freedom does not give us permission to do whatever we want and sin against God. The Christian freedom that Paul is describing is hedged about by the law of God. Christian freedom does not mean that we can throw off the law of God as antinomians. The bottom line is that Christian freedom is not an opportunity for antinomianism or throwing off the law of

God, but it is an opportunity to exercise that freedom within the gracious boundaries of God's law. We are now free to obey the law and so we need to heed Paul's exhortation from Galatians 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Let us not use our Christian freedom to excuse sexual sin.

There is another expression that Paul tackles that was common in the culture surrounding the Corinthian church. The second expression that the Corinthians were throwing around in their desire to live free is found in 1 Corinthians 6:13, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats." In other words, they were saying that one bodily function was just like another. They applied this argument to the area of human sexuality, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food; well then, sex for the body and the body for sex." But Paul makes it clear that these two functions are not the same thing. Paul says that the function of eating and drinking will perish. This function of the body will somehow be destroyed by God, rendering it null and void. We don't know how that will look in the resurrection of the body, but we have enough to tell us that God is going to change something about the way we eat and drink in the resurrection. The Corinthians used this saying to reduce every bodily function to its lowest common denominator. Paul counters this expression by saying, as it were, "Yes, human sexuality incorporates bodily functions, but there is more to the body than just that"—because at the end of verse 13 Paul says, "That the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Here we begin to see that Christ is the authority over a believer's body, and so our bodies are for the Lord and the Lord is for the body, as He takes up

residence in our body, which Paul teaches in the verses that follow.

In qualifying these two popular expressions in the Corinthian church to justify sexual sin, Paul clearly wants the Corinthians to understand that they were not the authorities over their bodies, nor are we the authorities over our own bodies. It is clear that Christ is the authority over our bodies. Sex outside of God's boundaries is not advantageous. Sex outside of God's law brings believers back into the bondage they were delivered from. Sex, and the desire for it, are not merely bodily appetites that need to find expression in whichever way we want. They need to be hemmed in by the seventh commandment, to live chastely and temperately in this world. This raises an important question: "Who is your authority, beloved, when it comes to the area of human sexuality?" Is it Christ? I pray it is. There are many "authorities" that speak on this issue today. Are you guided by your feelings? Do you allow your feelings to dictate who and what you are and what you should do? Do you tell yourself, "I will bring my body into conformity with my feelings"? Are you guided by the philosophies present today that give license to every sexual expression under the sun? Are you guided by your fear at the anger and vitriol of the leaders of the sexual revolution who try to intimidate you if you don't fall into line with their radical ideas to overturn God's law? Do you fear being called a "bigot" or "hateful" if you don't fall in line? Or is Christ the authority over your body through His gracious law? We need to come back to and refresh our minds with the truth that Christ is the authority over our bodies. It comes down to this equation for each one of us today: Will I choose what is popular, convenient, and what seems liberating, but ends in unspeakable pain and guilt and

bondage and ultimately death if it is not repented of? Or will I choose what is unpopular, inconvenient, and what seems restrictive today, but ultimately ends in glory with Christ?

Paul brings us to the consequences of that latter choice when he says in 1 Corinthians 6:13–14, “Now the body is not for fornication [sexual immorality], but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.” You see, we often operate with three different views of the body. The first view is that the body is something evil; it is just a shell that houses the soul, and one day I will put off this shell and my soul will be complete in glory before the Lord. But that is not what Paul is teaching here, is it? The body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body. There is something elevated about the biblical view of the body that destroys this gnostic view of the body which says that the body is bad and only the soul is good.

The second view is the one that most of us know because of the cultural information that saturates our lives—that the body is something to be worshiped and that I need to do everything I can to satisfy the urgings, cravings, and appetites of my body. The body is everything. That too is inaccurate because if the body is for the Lord then our bodies need to be brought under the authority of the Lord. Christ is the object of our worship, not our bodies.

The third view is the biblical view: the body is destined for resurrection. There is something inherently valuable about our bodies that we need to understand in relation to sexual sin. The body is not for sexual immorality, but the gospel tells us today that the body is destined for something far more glorious! During the testimony of the President's former legal counsel, Michael

Cohen, before the House Oversight Committee in early 2019, an expression kept recurring because of all the underhandedness and schemes that were unearthed: “We are better than this.”<sup>1</sup> But when it comes to the body, “believers are better than this”—better than giving ourselves up to sexual immorality—because a believer is in union with Christ, both his soul *and* his body will be raised again on the last day. Union with Christ and the doctrine of the resurrection serve to transform our view of the body and human sexuality in general. The body is not simply a shell which serves bodily functions, nor will we be disembodied spirits in the resurrection. Yes, we commit our bodies to the grave. The soul is in heaven in the intermediate state. When Christ appears, however, He will unite our souls with our glorified bodies. The Bible places inestimable value on the body and how believers live in the body between the now and the not-yet of the resurrection. Believer, because you are in union with Christ, you are called to glorify God in your body now because of the glory that awaits your body in the resurrection. Indeed, the prospect of the resurrection ought to spark in us a thrill of joy and longing in anticipation of what is to come. When Christ appears He “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:20–21). In the meantime we are called to live in anticipation and in view of the glorious transformation that is going to take place. And so a believer has no business engaging in sexual immorality. Christ says today that you are better than that. You are to live in light of the resurrection.

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<sup>1</sup>. Michael Cohen was interviewed on February 27, 2019 before the House Oversight Committee. The Republican leader on this committee, Jim Jordan, as well as the Democratic chairman of the committee, Elijah Cummings, used this phrase.

Some of you might say, “That’s well and good for believers, but what if I am not a believer and not in union with Christ? What does this passage say to me?” My friend, let me say this—you need to repent; you cannot use this passage to excuse yourself because Paul is addressing believers in this passage; don’t think you can give yourself license to continue living as you are. The fact that this standard is being set calls you to repent of your sin and come under the loving authority of Christ. He reminds you of what you are to be in Christ and what you can become through repentance and faith. He still bears that authority over your body whether you believe in Him or not. By virtue of creating you, He owns you and calls you to repentance and faith, lest your body and soul be cast into hell. That is the sobering reality that confronts you from this passage today. If you are not Christ’s today, then you are mastered by sin. Sin is a harsh taskmaster. Don’t see it as a burden or as giving up pleasure; that pleasure is only momentary and fleeting. Christ calls you to follow Him, “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28). Come under His gracious rule. Christ calls you to a radical amputation of sexual sin in your life: “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matt. 5:29). Count the cost of the lifestyle you are living without Christ, and compare that to the resurrection of the body and everlasting glory with Christ. The latter is far better and so Christ beckons each one of us to come under His gracious authority and to recognize that our bodies are His and not our own. You and I do not have license to do what we want with our bodies.

## **2. Glorify God by Countering Our Ignorance of Our Bodies.**

Believers, we glorify God in our bodies when we recognize and live under Christ's authority, but we also glorify God in our bodies when we counter our own ignorance regarding sexual sin. The following verses of our text help us to better understand what is at stake, and Paul addresses our ignorance through three important "Do you not know?" questions. These questions are rhetorical: they are asked to make an important point, not to get a "yes" or "no" answer. As Paul asks these questions, he elevates the biblical view of the body through union with Christ by addressing the power and nature of sexual sin, thus again highlighting the value that the triune God places on the body by purchasing and dwelling in our bodies.

The first question comes to us in 1 Corinthians 6:15: "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?" What is Paul's answer? "God forbid." What is Paul doing here? He is saying that you, believer, are in a whole-person union with Christ as a result of the transforming power of the gospel. It is not just your soul, but also your body, that is in this intimate union with Christ. You are a member of Christ—not just your soul, but also your body. This has implications for the resurrection. It has implications for how you live in regard to keeping the seventh commandment and living out the ethics of biblical human sexuality. A redeemed sinner in a whole-person union with Christ has no business making a new union with a harlot or defiling his or her body with sexual immorality. Union with Christ is a sacred union, sealed and purchased by the blood of Christ, and whenever sexual sin of any kind is

committed, that union is defiled and another union is established. Shall we then bring this body into union with a prostitute and with other sexual sins? God forbid! May it never be so! Are you beginning to see how we are called to live narrowly—how we must not give any quarter to any hint of sexual immorality? The next time you are tempted with sexual sin, ask yourself this question, “How can I, who am in union with Christ, devote this body to something so grossly immoral? Am I willing to pay the price for defiling this sacred, holy, and precious union with Christ?” I pray your answer will be, “God forbid!”

The second question comes from 1 Corinthians 6:16: “What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” In other words, Paul is saying, as it were, “Why would you trade a whole-person spiritual union with your Savior for an illicit, one-flesh union with a prostitute? This is mind-boggling!” He wants us to understand that when we enter into that union with a prostitute or engage in sexual sin we are not only grievously defying union with Christ, but we are entering into a new union involving the whole person. In verse 16 Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 to reinforce the fact that sexual sin with a prostitute involves a bodily union: “for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.” This is the one-flesh union of God’s institution of marriage in the Garden and beyond the Garden for life in the here-and-now. A one-flesh union with a prostitute, or engaging in sexual sin, does double-damage. It destroys spiritual communion with Christ. It also destroys the design that God made from the beginning of the world for union between a husband and wife in sexual intimacy, which itself is ultimately a reflection of that spiritual union with Christ. Alistair Begg concludes, “Sexual immorality is intimacy

without intention. Communion without commitment.” A believer’s life is controlled by union with Christ. We are under His authority and are called to live with intention and commitment to Christ. We are called to live with intention and commitment to our spouses. Young people, you are called to live with intention and commitment to your future spouses. Will you take that which is joined to Christ and join it to a prostitute?

But Paul continues answering this question. In 1 Corinthians 6:18, he gives the command to flee fornication. The word “fornication” is not often used today. It is a broad word, highlighting sexual sin in its varied expressions, not just the commission of adultery. The Heidelberg Catechism picks up on this word when it speaks of “all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto” (Question 109). We shouldn’t just think of “fornication” in relation to a prostitute or physical adultery; it is a broad term. Then Paul highlights the fact that sexual sin is different from other sins because it arises from within. He says in verse 18, “Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” Paul already knew enough in his day to know that sexual sin is devastating and self-destructive. Fornication is not satisfied until it finds expression on the outside. Its desires come from within and exert their forces in control of the body, and when it has finished, it affects the human psyche like no other sin does.

This is not just true of an illicit relationship with a prostitute. It is true of pornography and self-gratification. I wish I didn’t have to mention these things. But these are the things that we face as believers, as pastors, as elders. Considerable pastoral work is expended on these particular sins. These sins are actually more addictive

than drugs; they carve new neural pathways in the brain—it should not surprise us that Paul calls this a sin against one's own body. This is true of sexual abuse, where the perpetrator sins against the victim as well as his own body. He severely damages the body and psyche of the victim, but also his own mind and body. The way you live in your body impacts others around you. This is a reality that we need to face. Beloved, Christ says that we are better than this. He calls us to a higher standard to possess our bodies in sanctification. Sexual immorality is a sin that wields incredible power and destruction no matter how it finds expression in a person's life—not to mention the diseases that are spread as a result of promiscuity. Do you realize that sexual immorality is a sin against one's own body and is incongruous with union with Christ? And since you are in a one-flesh union with your spouse, if you sin in this way you also sin against your spouse because you are one flesh. Sexual sin is incompatible with union with Christ and the one-flesh union with your spouse.

The final question comes from 1 Corinthians 6:19, "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? For ye are bought with a price." Paul again highlights the high view of the body that God has and that we ought to have as well. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. This body is where God delights to dwell. Have you ever thought about that? Let's meditate on the fact that the Holy Spirit, God, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, takes up residence in believers! God, who is infinitely holy, comes and takes up residence in people like you and me. He makes us His temple. And if this is His temple, then this is where He needs to be worshiped, not a place given over to all kinds of sinful

desires. Let's get that into our understandings and then be wary of ever sinning again. God lives within me! How can I do this wickedness against God?

But then Paul emphasizes that not only are our souls bought by Christ on the cross, but also our *bodies* have been purchased. He calls you to a higher standard of living—away from engaging in sexual immorality. He calls you to purity of mind, thought, gesture; how you live with your spouse, with your children and in broader society. They have been purchased with an infinitely valuable price—the blood of Christ! He bled and died to redeem you, beloved, from the ravages of sexual sin. Let this settle into your heart and mind. He has come to redeem you, soul and body—the whole person—to redeem and take you to Himself that you may glorify Him. Shall I commit this body, which the Father created, the Spirit indwells, and the Son purchased and redeems, to uncleanness and sexual immorality? Let's destroy the fog-hazed ignorance that the world wants us to imbibe and follow. We need to saturate ourselves with the truth of Scripture and do violence to this sin that has so defined our culture and some of our lives! This not only means that God elevates our understanding of the value of the human body and how we are to glorify God in our bodies, but He grants us grace and power to glorify Him in that body. The gospel transforms our view of the body, but also grants us the power to glorify God in our bodies. He calls us by that grace and power to care for Christ's purchase.

### **3. Glorify God by Caring for Our Body as Christ's Purchase.**

We glorify God in our bodies by bringing them under the loving authority of Christ, and by destroying the ignorance that surrounds the biblical teaching and

understanding of the body. But we also glorify God in our bodies by caring for the body that Christ has purchased. And He calls us to do this in two primary ways from 1 Corinthians 16 today. We've already seen how our minds and understandings need to be transformed through biblical truth—a very practical directive. But then Paul gives two more practical commands to help believers keep the seventh commandment.

The first command to care for Christ's purchase is "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18). Flee sexual immorality in all its shapes, forms, and varieties of expression, no matter what the world tells you. Flee it in your mind, in your words, and in your actions. We have already seen how broadly the word "fornication" includes every form and expression of sexual immorality. Notice that Paul doesn't say, "Fight." No, he says, "Flee." Paul has a realistic view of life in a fallen world. Proverbs 7 tells us that even strong men have fallen prey to the power of Lady Folly, the personification of sexual sin. He doesn't allow anyone to stand and fight against sexual immorality. We are simply too weak. Flee then! Turn around and run from sexual immorality! Because of the power and grip of sexual sin, and our own weakness, you and I are counseled to flee sexual sin and leave it far behind. We are not to spread a feast for this sin and allow it to grow fat and flourish, as if we were allowed to do anything we want. We are not to treat this sin as some form of bodily appetite that can be satisfied at every whim. We are not to let our emotions and feelings dictate what we do with our bodies and what we do to our bodies. God forbid! We must flee! We are to arm ourselves with the truth of how God views this sin against our own bodies and run away from it as far and fast as we can.

There should be no justification, no rationalization, and no lingering when it comes to sexual immorality.

There are two examples from Scripture that help illustrate the necessity of this command. Children, you will know these examples. One is negative, from the life of David in 2 Samuel 11. David lingered over and rationalized his sin with Bathsheba, and he ended up paying the bitter consequences of that sin. What happened to David when he was standing on that rooftop? In the moments of temptation, he was an identity amnesiac—he forgot his identity in Christ and his union with Christ. He turned back to the old man, he listened to the lie, and he sinned. He stayed and flirted with sin and fell hard and fast. He fell and paid the price for his sin. The child born of that union died. His family was marked by conflict. Anguish of soul and mind followed as he tried to cover up his sin. There is a heavy price for failing to flee.

The other example is positive, from the life of Joseph in Genesis 39. Joseph was also confronted with temptation from Potiphar's wife. And in those moments of temptation, he remembered his identity in and union with Christ, and said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). In temptation, Joseph did not linger, but he ran! He knew his own proclivity to sin. He knew his own weakness and that, if he stayed, he would fall. He ran, and he too paid a price. David stayed and paid the price for his faithlessness. Joseph fled and paid the price for his faithfulness. Who paid the price that really mattered? What price will you pay? Will it be one of regret? Or will it be the price of faithfulness—committed to prison, but then exalted, perhaps like Joseph? Flee then! Don't make any excuses for sin, but let today mark the beginning of a

habit of flight from sexual immorality, running to Christ the Savior who embraces returning prodigals. This is the glorious good news of the gospel! He receives sinners, no matter what you've struggled with, no matter what you've done, no matter what the struggle is right now.

Therefore flee sexual sin to Christ and make an appeal for His cleansing blood. Flee sexual sin by confessing your sin. Flee sexual sin by guarding yourself against it and avoiding those areas that tempt you. Flee sexual sin by finding accountability. Flee sexual immorality by cultivating a heart of love for God and passion for His holiness. Flee sexual immorality by arming yourself against the lies of the devil as they meet you on the university campus, young people; as you read it in the news, and as it bombards you day-by-day in a wicked and debased culture's philosophies about sexual "freedoms" and expression. On that point, flee sexual immorality by being careful what you read and what you watch. Maybe you've heard the expression, "Garbage in, garbage out." That's true here as well, isn't it? Fill your mind with what is true, and pure, and honest and of good report (Phil. 4:8).

Flee sexual immorality! You are better than this!

The second command is very similar and stated positively in 1 Corinthians 16:20: "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." God's ownership is underscored again in this command. You are not your own but belong to God in your entire person, and you are called to worship Him in your entire person; thus, He is worthy of your body. He calls you to live out your identity in and union with Christ, believer. The only way to receive the strength to put sin to death and break the patterns and well-worn paths of sin is to live out of Christ. He gives you the grace to change those neural pathways

that have been carved through sin; He gives you the power to glorify Him with a renewed mind. That is what union with Christ does. This is so important to understand. You cannot live the Christian life apart from Christ. It's convicting, but it's also encouraging because those of us who are in union with Christ have everything we need, don't we? It not only elevates our understanding of the worth of our bodies, but it also strengthens us to glorify God and to live within the gracious confines of the seventh commandment.

In addition to these things, how do you glorify God in your bodies? Here are some practical, down-to-earth ways with which you can glorify God in your bodies. First of all, eat healthy. Get the sleep you need so that you are not physically and mentally vulnerable to temptation. Get the exercise you need so that you stay alert and refreshed and are ready to do battle and flee when the temptations come. Why are these practical directions about sleep and exercise important? Because these are God's basic frontline defenses to sin. When we binge eat, it affects the way we think. When we lack sleep, it affects our judgment. I'm not doing this to whip you into shape. These are simple exercises, designed to get you out of bed in the morning and combat laziness, both physical and spiritual laziness. These are basic things so that you stay alert and refreshed for when those temptations come. Let me paraphrase what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:25–27: Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable prize, but we, an imperishable prize. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. Self-control is what Paul is after. We are called to exercise self-control, to bring our bodies

into subjection to Christ, through eating and sleeping and exercising. I realize that we all might not have the same capacity for these things. But the point is that we need to be alert. We need to be equipped to glorify God in our bodies, lest we be disqualified. I'm not speaking to the elderly necessarily, but I'm addressing the young people, particularly the young men. It is a particular temptation for you to stay up late, gaming and binge eating and doing all these things. I'm calling you to the standard God wants for you in glorifying God with your bodies.

These are basic things, but in addition, read your Bible and pray in a principled way. On this point, Rosaria Butterfield writes, "If we rush through Bible reading and prayer time, we miss the blessing and the power. Often because of misplaced priorities, we unwittingly limp along on a starvation diet of Scripture, forgetting that we have an appointment with Satan, our deceiver and accuser, the minute we rise from our reading chair. Our time in the Word and in prayer should change us. Through it, we should be transformed, equipped, encouraged, and prepared."<sup>2</sup>

Use the weekly means of grace in weekly worship—the preaching of the Word, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and fellowship. They are means of grace by which God ministers grace to His people so that we can glorify God in our bodies throughout the week and so that we have the spiritual spine to stand and flee sexual immorality. Glorify God in your bodies by using the fellowship of the saints to provide accountability, confession of sins, and prayer together. Sanctification in the area of the seventh commandment rarely happens

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<sup>2</sup>. Rosaria Butterfield, *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2015), 57.

only on the individual level—we need each other for this one. It takes a community to become sanctified. Community life militates against the secrecy-loving nature of this sin that thrives in isolation and loves the cover of darkness. Lone rangers will become dead rangers!

Parents, speak to your children and teens about this important subject. It's challenging. Hold before them the glorious purpose as to why God created them—to glorify Him and to live in light of the Second Coming of Christ. You can do that from a very young age already. Speak to them in a way that does not suggest the topic of biblical human sexuality is a dirty thing or something to be abhorred, but something with which God may be glorified, a reflection of our relationship with Christ. Are you setting parameters for your children—even for your teenagers? Maybe you feel unqualified to do this. You say, "I have no idea as to how technology works. My children are far ahead of me." We are here to help. Come and ask for help. We'd be delighted to listen and give suggestions. You don't let your teenagers go out on a Saturday night without knowing where they are, do you? You say, "Call me when you get there, or when you go somewhere else." You want to know where they are. And so too, in the virtual world, we need to know where our children and young people are, don't we? Do you have accountability software? Are you challenging your children and young people when they are trying to hide something? Teach them the principles of purity and self-control, and equip them to live life in this world. Teach them about modesty in dress, which is increasingly becoming challenging. Are fathers and mothers talking with their children about what it means to dress modestly so as not to provoke others, even unintentionally, to sin? Let's engage our

young people, let's know where they are and let's help them. It's only going to get more difficult for the next generation. Let's help them to glorify God in their bodies.

Beloved, you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:20). Paul says it another way in Romans 12:1–2 "Present your bodies as a whole burnt-offering to God." Let's come to God and lay ourselves on the altar of worship unto God, leaving nothing behind. He calls for nothing less, and we should offer Him nothing less. In the gospel He says to you, because of your union with Christ, and because of the resurrection that awaits your body, "You are better than this." Amen.