

GLORIFY THE LORD

1 Corinthians 6:9-20

I was around 4-years-old when I first remembered my parents telling me not to run in church. "It was God's house." I was to respect the sanctuary. "It was a special place where people came to worship and to meet with God." Church gatherings then looked something like the picture to your right.

While at church I could not yell or fool around. I was encouraged to sit still and listen to the lessons or suffer the pains of corporal punishment administered by my ever vigilant parents. Slouching in the pews was not allowed.

Just think of the term used when speaking of the assembly place for worship. We call it "The Sanctuary." The word comes from the Greek term "*hagion*" (hag-ee-on). It translates as the holy, sacred or dedicated place. Therefore, we entered "the sanctuary" quietly, sat quietly, and only whispered if we had to talk. It was the place for singing hymns and listening reverently to His Holy Word. It was here the saints met with God.

Therefore, I had to put on my best clothes when attending church. My parents would never dream of sending me to church barefoot or in my play clothes. Saturday night was bath night because Sunday we were going to God's house.



In those days no one in his or her right mind would dare deface the place. No one would ever think about drinking coffee, dancing, chewing gum or fooling around in the "sanctuary." It was dedicated to God . . . so we'd put on our best behavior.

I remember hearing a story of a few people hanging around after church for fellowship. They were standing in the sanctuary, by the communion table. As time passed, one of the men grew tired. So he leaned against the communion table, using it to support his weight. One of the older saints saw it and immediately rebuked him. She said, "It's the LORD's table, used only for the dispensing of the sacred elements. It was not to be leaned on."

Now don't take me wrong in what I'm going to say. The place where we assemble for corporate worship is to be cared for. It is

special. It is the place we dedicated for worship. However, the church building is not what the Bible calls "The Sanctuary."

Scripture makes it clear that God's people are His Sanctuary. That is, the moment we placed our trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, God's Spirit resides in us. He goes everywhere we go. When we enter the assembly place, the Holy Spirit comes with us. When we leave the building, He goes with us.

First Corinthians 6:19-20 says,

"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? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The reality is this: we are God's house. The respect I was told to have in the 50's for a building made of brick and wood should be how we respect our bodies. We are no longer our own. We belong to God. Our bodies are the real temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells, not the church building.

Therefore, we ought not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). We should not engage in

anything forbidden or displeasing to God (1 Cor. 3:16; 5:20). We ought to seek to bring honor to our LORD in all that we do and say.

The Corinthians were not doing this. They had convinced themselves that they could do anything with their bodies and it would not affect their souls. They felt they were free to indulge in anything they wanted. They held onto their pagan past. Some were even engaging in adultery, incest, and other forms of fornication. Apparently, some were still frequenting the prostitutes from the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

What mattered to them was their soul, not what they did with their body. What the Old Testament called immoral was now a liberty. They could indulge under grace. They

concluded that God would accept them as they are. They were under no obligation to live holy lives.

This lesson will examine Paul's response to a dysfunctional church — a church erring in doctrine and in practice. It should challenge us to learn from the Corinthian errors and examine our own actions. Finally, it should encourage us to keep pure for the LORD's use.



Pastor Scott attending church in 1956 with his parents and sister.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19. The term Paul used for “temple” in this passage describes the inner portions of the Old Testament temple where only the priests were allowed to go, the holy place or the holy of holies. **What implications does this passage have for the New Testament believer?** (also see 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 4:30).

ANSWER:

Two different Greek terms are used in the New Testament for temple, *hagion* and *naos*. The first term, *Hagion* (Hag-ee-on) is not used in this passage. It refers only to the physical building — the temple.

The second term, the one found in the 1 Corinthians 6:19 passage, is “naos,” — temple. It is used to describe the inner portions of the temple. The place where only the priests were allowed — the holy place or the holy of holies. Paul uses this term almost exclusively to describe Christians, both collectively and individually. The bodies of true believers are made holy in Christ and His Spirit dwells within them. They are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, Christians ought not to grieve the Spirit of God. “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). Christians should only go where God would have them go. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).

Christians should not engage in anything that would displease God. They ought to bring only honor to God in all that they do.

2. The Corinthians had two common slogans, “All things are lawful” (1 Cor. 6:12a) and “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats” (1 Cor. 6:13a).

Discuss the first slogan. What does this slogan mean and how did Paul respond to it?

Discuss how 21st Century Christians might abuse their liberty in Christ?

ANSWER:

The Corinthians had convinced themselves that they could do anything with their bodies and it would not affect their soul. For example, they had two common slogans in their church, “All things are lawful” (1 Cor. 6:12), and “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats” (1 Cor. 6:13).

When they said, “All things are lawful” they felt they were free to indulge in anything they wanted to. “I am not under the law but under grace.” To them grace meant license to do whatever they pleased.

Unfortunately, this is becoming a common thought within the church today. I am not under the law, but under grace, therefore I am free to do as I please. If Christians can now eat unclean foods such as pork, and shell fish, then they must be able to indulge in all sorts of things that were once forbidden under the Mosaic Law.

But Paul wrote “For ye are not under the law, but under grace. ¹⁵ What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid” (Romans 6:14-15).

We may be at liberty to do many things that are not mentioned in Scripture, not all of these things will be expedient (1 Cor. 6:12). For example, **Debt**. I may be at liberty to buy and spend as I please but if I am not careful, I might become enslaved again. **Additionally**, I may be at liberty to indulge in any number of bad habits not mentioned in Scripture, but if I am not careful it may bring me into another kind of enslavement.

3. Discuss the meaning of the second slogan, “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats” (1 Cor. 6:13a).

Answer:

Meats are made to nourish men. It is a biological norm. It is natural for man to satisfy himself when hungry. It is a basic and natural instinct of nature. So, the Corinthians reasoned that all basic instincts of man were to be indulged in — such as sex. The drive for sexual pleasure is as natural as eating. Therefore, the Corinthians incorporated a pagan worldview into their Christian faith. All bodily activities were amoral. For some it included adultery, incest, and fornication. Some apparently were still frequenting pagan temple prostitutes.

This false concept on Christian liberty later fed into the heretical teachings of Gnosticism. What mattered to them was the soul, not what they did in their bodies. What the Bible called immoral was now considered liberty.

4. How did Paul refute this false concept of liberty? (1 Corinthians 6:14-18).

Answer:

So Paul argues: The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord (1 Cor. 6:13). They did not have the right to do whatever they wanted to do with their bodies. It belonged to God. Paul says, it matters what we do with our bodies. Our bodies and souls are connected. God expects both a clean soul and body.

As the Lord was bodily raised so will our bodies be raised. “And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power” (1 Cor. 6:14). Therefore, we must not engage in immoral conduct with our bodies (it belongs to Christ).

“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 (1 Cor. 6:15).

There is a spiritual connection between Christ and us. Our bodies are members of Christ.

“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. ¹⁷ But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ¹⁸ Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body.”

We may not understand all aspects of this fact, but it is nonetheless true. So, we should flee fornication. It is a sin against our own body. It violates the very intimate relationship we have with Christ.

5. Discuss the phrases listed below.

- a. "Ye are not your own" (I Cor. 6:19).
- b. "Ye are brought with a price" (I Cor. 6:20a).
- c. "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20c)

How should these facts impact us? How do we practically work out these truths in our lives? As single adults? At work? In our marriages?

ANSWER:

We are to be living sacrifices unto God – Rom. 12:1-2. In I Cor. 6:19 "*we are not our own*" we belong to God. "*We were bought with a price*" (I Cor. 6:20). We are "to glorify God in *our* body and in *our* spirit, which are God's."

So, I am to ask myself. Is the thing that I am about to do expedient? In that I mean, is the thing I am about to do going to bring glory to God? I am to ask myself. Is the thing I am about to do going to enslave me in one-way or another? Will it hinder my ability to glorify God?

6. We know gossip, fornication, stealing, lying and many other things are wrong. They are clearly spelled out in the Bible as sin, but gray areas are different. They are issues that are not readily apparent in Scripture.

Therefore, I have listed ten questions we should ask ourselves when facing grey areas. Test them out on some of the questions asked by Christians in our day. Like, should Christians smoke? gamble? drink? watch explicit movies? List your own questions . . .

1. **Will _____ be spiritually be beneficial?** – 1 Cor. 6:12a

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient:

2. **Will _____ build others or me up?** – 1 Cor. 10:23

All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

3. **Will _____ slow me down?** – Heb. 12:1

Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

4. **Will _____ bring me into bondage?** – 1 Cor. 6:12b

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

5. Will _____ **hypocritically cover my sin?** – Gal. 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16

Gal. 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.

1Pet. 2:16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

6. Will _____ **violate my conscience?** – James 4:17

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

7. Will _____ **help others by my example?** – 1 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 3:17

1Cor. 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

Phil. 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

8. Will _____ **lead others to Christ?** – 1 Cor. 10:33

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

9. Will _____ **be consistent with Christ's likeness?** – 1 John 2:6

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

10. Will _____ **glorify God?** – 1 Cor. 10:31

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.