

My Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Introduction: People today speak of living in a "free world". As in, "I'm free to think, feel and do as I please to myself as long as it doesn't affect others. "I have the right to do anything." Eat, drink, be merry, live for my own entertainment and pleasure. Take what I want, drive as I please and if I smoke or do drugs then that's for me. In stark contrast we also live in a body conscious world where image is everything. There is great concern about physical shape and look. Diets abound: low fat this, low fat that. Diet pills. Exercise classes, Boot Camps and Gyms with exercise machines in abundance. There is great concern about physical health. Watch that cholesterol, reduce that salt, no sugary drinks, eat more roughage. However, do you know the Bible adds another dimension to concern for the body? The day you became a believer, a follower of Christ, something happened to your body. Another dimension was added to your being.

The point I desire to make in this message, for you to personalise and take away today is the scriptural truth of this added dimension from God's Word written by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians:

My Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit - Who is in me -Whom I have received from God. I am not my own - I was bought at a price – Therefore I honour God with my Body Vv19-20

I want to expand on this proclamation making five points.

1. My Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit

Have a look at yourself now, your own body. Now have look at the people around you... and finally check me out. Take a look... my body just like yours, and the person sitting beside you, is a temple. Yes, I know it is hard to believe when you look at me. But nonetheless, it is true. My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Here's some of the history....

Construction on my precious Temple began just over 5 decades ago. How do I know about these planning and construction details for life? I have a birth certificate with certain details. Nine months before this is covered in a Psalm I read this the other day Psalm 139:13-16. So Yes, God made me, overseeing the construction of my temple. And over the decades, especially in the last one, I have attempted to make a few improvements, extensions you might call them,

like installing some additional storage in the area of my stomach for extra insulation in the cold winter and bouncy protection from my children or anyone's for that matter. Even with the growth of my own frontal extension on the temple, as far as I'm concerned, my body although modified is still not my own, but belongs to God.

God knows me and God knows you thoroughly because God created you- God made you too. Your Body is a temple of God's Holy Spirit, therefore, with David you and I can praise God because *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*. V14. *God knit me together in my mother's womb* v13. Overseeing the fabrication of my temple's frame in that *secret place, in the depths of the earth* v15. Now David associated the womb, the secret place that conceals a baby's creation with the "depths of the earth", like a dark place separated from the visible realm of life. The connection is that humans came from the dust of the earth and will return to the dust of the ground (Genesis 3:19).

With the first human 'Adam', it was God who created and made him as a potter fashions a vessel from clay, making that first bodily temple in God's own image, which was then roused to become a living being when God breathed into Adams nostrils the breath of life which was the breath of his Spirit or 'Ruach' (Gen 2:7).

It is the same spirit breath of God that enlivens our faith and fills our own human, made in the image of God, temple. Whether you consider yourself short or tall, old and wrinkly or young and freckly, or anything in between, no matter what type of body you were blessed with or have lived in through many a decade, the truth is your body is a temple, and a holy one at that!

Body came from the Greek word "soma" which means *bodily, slave*. *Temple* came from the Greek word "naos" which means *to dwell, shrine, temple*. When we say our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we mean therefore, that the Holy Spirit dwells inside our body and our body is His slave. Your body is sacred and therefore is to be treated as sacred or holy. Irrespective of its age, shape, or current state of its covering. It is not merely the spirit that is a member of Christ's body v15; it is the whole person, body, soul and spirit.

It is this fact that gives dignity to our human body.

It should also help us to understand that our bodies are what we could consider as the 'overcoat' to our soul and spirit.

If we are 'in Christ' and accept that, then we must each realise for ourselves that I am the steward of my body, in all ways. And as such I must see to it that I look after and protect my body, even seek to limit its extensions, by feeding it a moderate balanced daily diet, having sufficient sleep and rest as required along with some exercise, not to mention in the age of Health & Safety updated risk assessment policies and protective coverings in hazardous environments [Had to make sure this sermon would receive the OSH tick of approval]. Living the opposite way can lead to harm, obesity, sickness, stress and exhaustion when we don't listen to the needs of our body, even to the point of reducing the quality and length of your temple's existence on earth. So, it makes good sense and benefits the mental health of your soul too, when you care for your body, the 'overcoat' to your spirit, your very right to live on earth. Just as you needed a ticket to attend last night's British Lions versus Crusaders game. Your body is your ticket to the game of Life living in your temple of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Holy Spirit is in me – My Union with Christ

The marriage bond is the highest union of any human relationship in our world. But there is one higher union in existence and that is the Christian believer's union with Christ, which is the perfect model for the kind of unity that should mark every marriage relationship.

Whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. v17

Each one of us should realise that by the Spirit's presence and power they can be helped against any sin, in particular the sins against the body such as sexual immorality, including pornography as we men were discussing during our Study on temptation last Tuesday night. When we sin against the body, God's Temple, we sin against Christ and we grieve the Holy Spirit just as we would grieve any person when we sin against them, **Ephesians 5:30**

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with who you were sealed for the day of redemption.

And with regards to your temple **V13**.

The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the LORD and the LORD for the body.

What is then that so special about sexual sin?

In v18, Paul is putting sexual sin in a category all its own. All the sins in the world are put in one column and sexual sin is put in another.

All sins are outside the body except sexual infidelity,

which alone is a sin against one's own body. While immorality is not necessarily the worst sin, sexual sin is unique in its character. Like a malignant cancer to the body, immorality internally destroys the soul like no other sin. Therefore, we must flee from it. If we allow ourselves to succumb to immorality, we will be guilty of destroying our own body and the bodies of other partners. We must purge ourselves from the sins that do bodily damage.

You might say, "but we are all free and I have the right to do anything" but then we should realise as Paul writes, *says you but not everything is good for us* v.12. Early Christians who were not Jews did not feel bound by the Jewish law, but they were forbidden to engage in fornication which was understood as being like idolatry, an act of disloyalty and therefore a disruption to their union with Christ. [Acts 15:27-29]. Control of sexual behaviour was not something that was limited to a particular people or nation or to a culture of a certain time or place, as people are sometimes inclined to imagine.

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth it was a small Christian community in the midst of a large immoral city where 'to Corinthianise' meant 'to practice sexual immorality'. With the temple of Aphrodite fostering prostitution. With at one time 1000 sacred prostitutes serving at the temple, Paul was addressing the males in Corinth. He was asking them to renounce their visits to prostitutes, challenging their status as so called free men exercising the right to do anything. Paul was inviting them to embody another type of identity, the one of slave of Christ, which was less about the morality and more about the type of identity a Christian believer embraces- A spiritual identity through your union with Christ.

3. I have received the Holy Spirit - A gift from God.

We have received Him, and He lives inside of us, ready to help us in our battle against sin. One of the words for Holy Spirit in the New Testament is *parakaleo*, which means "counselor" or "helper." We have been given a divine resource in the battle against the flesh and against sexual sin. We don't have to be in bondage, because we have the power of the Spirit of God within us to supernaturally help us resist temptation. It is possible to live a life of sexual purity, especially as we rely on the Holy Spirit who gives us strength to abstain from our fleshly lusts.

With having received the gift of the Holy Spirit now indwelling you, every word, every thought, and every deed is in His view. The Holy Spirit knows you. He knows your strengths... and your weaknesses. He knows your sinful acts... and your holy deeds. He knows you better than you do. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to build you up in the body of Christ to the glory of God.

4. We have been bought with a price - We're not our own.

Paul's image does not picture a slave being sold to a god and being set free, but being transferred by sale from one owner to another. Formerly, we were slaves of sin, now we are slaves to God to righteousness (Rom 6:16-23; 7). *Your body is God's body.* So we have no right to pervert or misuse our bodies sexually, because they don't belong to us to do with what we will. We're not the masters of our bodies anymore. *Your body is God's body.* Verse 20 teaches that we have been purchased by God at tremendous cost, the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross for us. And that blood has cleansed us from sin. In light of this great purchase price, Paul commands us to glorify God through sexual purity, out of gratitude for what Jesus did. This means to show God off, to make Him look good. So we have the privilege of living lives that honour God physically, emotionally, relationally—in every possible way.

5. There's one final issue we must touch upon.

It comes in the form of a question:

What should I do if I am sinning in my body or have sinned?

A message like this can bring conviction and even memories to the surface and perhaps a great deal of guilt along with it, if you've sinned sexually in the body. Including men, if you are in bondage to pornography; and women, if you are living a fantasy sex life through TV programs, movies, soap operas or novels [e.g. of the 50 shades variety] let me suggest two things you can do:

1. Confess the sin; God is willing and able to forgive you.

1 John 1:9; Acts 4:12

2. Purpose in your heart to quit, to stop right now.

Some people are tempted to say, "I'm already guilty. I've blown it. What difference does it make now? What's one more such act, book, program or image. It won't make me any worse."

All I can say to that is [Paul- Says You] ***Don't kid yourself!***

Sexual sin is cumulative in its damaging effects, including the dehumanising of others, much like carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide stays in a person's system for a long time, with the result that a non-lethal dose can sometimes kill because of the accumulation of poison in the system.

The only way to deal with such sin is immediately, radically, permanently, and in complete dependence upon God. Right now:

- Covenant with God that you will never let it happen again.
- Ask Him to give you strength [and to resist temptation]
- Become accountable to someone [Strong wise mature Christian]

Confess your sins one to another and you will be healed said James.

- Get specialist Counseling if you need it.
- Establish a new marker and commit to abstinence from now.

Sexual allurements are extremely enticing and powerful. It promises nothing but pleasure and satisfaction. But it rarely delivers what it promises. It claims to be real living but is actually the way to death.

Conclusion:

When you accept God's love His Spirit becomes a part of who you are adding another dimension to your being. Your body becomes like a temple where God's Spirit lives and cries out from within...

I am not my own - I was bought at a price –

Therefore I honour God with my Body

Let us respond by declaring aloud as the redeemed Derek Prince's prayer for Overcomers...

My body is a temple for the Holy Spirit, [who is in me] redeemed, cleansed, and sanctified by the blood of Jesus.

My members, the parts of my body, are instruments of righteousness, yielded to God for His service and for His glory.

The devil has no place in me, no power over me, no unsettled claims against me.

All has been settled by the blood of Jesus.

I overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb

and by the word of my testimony

and I do not love my life to the death.

My body is for the Lord and the Lord is for my body. Amen