

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

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Introduction: Having dealt with the issue of divisions within the Corinthian Church in chapters 1-4, he now turns his attention to issues within that church that are not being handled correctly by them. In 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 Paul turned to the matter of lawsuits between Christians. Apparently, members of the Corinthian Church were taking each other to court over some matters which are undisclosed in the text. The principle is simple. Christians should not need to, nor should they ever, take another Christian to court for any reason. In this passage (verses 9-20), he returns to the discussion of sexual immorality which he began in chapter 5:1-13.

1 Corinthians 6:9-20

Verses 9-11

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- Paul says that “wrong doers” will not inherit the kingdom of God. Wrong doers are those who think like the world and follow the sinful practices of the world. He gives a list of the practices of wrong doers. They are sexually immoral, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, greedy for unjust gain, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers. In Paul’s letters, his lists, like this one, are not all inclusive. They do not contain every type which could be included in the list. They are suggestive of the kind of thing which are in the group. This list tells us the types of things that wrong doers do, but there are other behaviors that could be added to it. It is important to note that the examples in Paul’s list are all still practiced in this age. Some of them have even gained the condoning of the Church.

- Paul explains to the Corinthians, that before coming to Christ, many of them thought like the world and practiced wrongdoing. But when they came to Christ and began to think with the mind of Christ, they were forgiven of their sins and washed clean by the Holy Spirit of God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Verses 12-13

¹² “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

- They argue that no one has the right to tell them what to do. They say that they can do whatever they please. Paul says that in the eyes of the world this thinking is correct. They can do whatever they please. But not everything is good for the one who does what he pleases, and being mastered by sinful behaviors is not beneficial for anyone.
- Some in the Corinthian church were apparently saying that as food is to the stomach so immoral sexual behavior is to the body. They are made for each other and go hand in hand. They argued that one had no reason for being except for the other.
- Paul says that this reasoning is entirely wrong. The body was made to glorify God not to participate in immoral behaviors.

Verses 14-17

¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

- Paul says that this principle, that body is made for the glory of God, is evidenced in the resurrection of Christ and in the resurrection of the saints. When our bodies fall into the corruption of death because of sin, God raises us up and gives us new bodies which are freed from sin’s corruption. He does this by His power to show His glory in us and through us just as He did Jesus.

- Paul says that whoever unites his body with immoral behavior unites his body with sin, just as men and women are physically united in sexual intercourse. The two become one.
- Those who belong to Jesus are united with Him!

Verses 18-20

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

- Paul's plea for the Corinthians, and for all Christians in every age, is that they FLEE from sexual immorality. It means to run away from it in all its forms. Thus, the man sleeping with his stepmother (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-13) must be expelled from the church.
- Christians must remember that their bodies belong to God and are the temple of the Holy Spirit, for He dwells in them.
- Christians are those who have been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ. They are not, therefore, free to decide for themselves (see verses 14-17) as some of them are arguing. They belong to God.
- Christians are to honor God in everything, including what they do or do not do with their bodies.

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