

I Corinthians 6:12-20

Sexual immorality

- Are Sexual Sins more serious than other sins?
- Studies suggest that the moral behavior of professing Christians is not dramatically different than the population in general. Why is this?
- What is the basis of Biblical sexual ethics?
- See apptoteach.org theology file #408

A. Believers are free.

“¹² All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

- I am free from the condemnation of the Law.
- This does not mean that I should do as I please.
- There is something worse than being bound to the Law. It is being bound to the flesh.

B. Immorality is unnatural.

“¹³ Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”

- Freedom in eating and drinking does not carry over to sexual conduct.
- Sexuality is more than a natural appetite.

C. Our union with Christ is key.

“¹⁴ Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body {with her}? For He says, "*The two will become one flesh.*" ¹⁷ But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit {with Him.}”

D. Sexual sin is unique.

“¹⁸ Flee immorality. Every {other} sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

- Sexuality is a celebration of a spiritual union between Christ and the church.
- Understanding sexual sin
 - **A relationship with God requires a covenant commitment in Christ.**
 - **Marriage is a picture of the secure loving covenant relationship between Christ and the church.**
 - **Sexual acts outside the security of a covenant commitment are sinful.**

E. An important observation.

1. The security of the believer “in Christ” is reinforced by Paul’s argument in this text.

- a. Paul does not use fear of exclusion from the kingdom in his exhortation to sexual morality.
 - b. The only sin that excluded a person from inheriting eternal life is disbelief.
 - c. "Who would have the nerve to pray in confidence, "come Lord Jesus," if they were clothed only in their own righteousness when He appeared?"
2. **In what sense are we free from the Law? See apptoteach.org theology file #107**
- a. As a covenant of works condemning those who sin IT HAS BEEN SET ASIDE by the cross.
 - b. As a moral coach showing us God's nature it remains active. Gal.3:12-14 "12 However the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us. 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.""
 - c. Eph.2 provides a helpful balance.
 "5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, (God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly {places}, in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

F. Three approaches to sexual ethics

1. **Sex is Casual.** This is the position of the pagan rationalist. "Do what is right in your own eyes."
2. **Sex is Carnal.** This is the position of some of the church fathers (Augustine) and was the dominant view in much of church history. "Avoid all worldly pleasure."
3. **Sex is Sacred.** This is the view of the Reformers (Luther and Calvin). "Moderation in all things"

G. The rationalist's arguments.

1. We have moved from a moralistic society to a naturalistic society.
2. Sex is dictated by natural appetite and attraction more than spiritual covenant.
3. Gender equality is basic to social justice.
4. Science not Scripture sets the boundaries.
5. The rationalist's response to the Biblical teaching on sexual ethics.
 - The texts are unclear or not applicable to modern life.
 - The real word of God is from "within" the heart of those who love.

- Modern Christianity is governed by love not law.
- The texts reflect a primitive pre-scientific culture.

H. The point - Sexual morality is at the core of Christian discipleship because it is a picture of Christ's relationship with the church.