

February 21, 2021

12. Physical Holiness— 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. (vv. 19-20 NIV)

The human body is a wonderful piece of art created by God. God gave us authority to administer it in an adequate way. In the process of taking control of our bodies, we have deviated and moved away from the purpose that God established for them. In the creation story, God gave us the ability to think, reason, and reflect. These capacities are what make us different and superior to other living beings. However, we have misinterpreted this differentiation and used it in selfish ways, hurting others, ourselves, and the planet.

Paul compares our bodies to a temple that is a place of worship—a sacred place; a space for reflection, communion, healing, liberation; a holy place. This is the image Paul wants us to perceive from this expression.

The apostle also makes mention of one of the realities in many countries and a subject that many times we ignore in the churches—the scourge of prostitution. Our bodies, when set apart for the Lord, become holy. Therefore, we must flee from the sins of prostitution and fornication. In the United States, as in many third-world or developing countries and first-world nations, prostitution has become a dead-end road for many of our youth and for immigrants who leave their homes in search of a better future. As thousands of immigrants march to cross the border into the United States in search of economic survival for their families, they become easy prey for abusers who extort, abuse, exploit, sell, and take over their bodies.

Many people facing this situation are sold to the highest bidder, as if they were articles of clothing. We tend to overlook those who, with their resources and economic power, pay to satisfy their lust by taking advantage of those who have become victims of prostitution. They are still mired in sin, and they are also referred to by Paul (v. 16). With this reality, we must ask: If someone is forced into prostitution, how is it considered? What is your definition of prostitution?

Paul calls our attention in a very particular way to sexual sins and urges us to flee from sexual immorality. He strongly warns us that every sin a person commits is outside the body, but sexual immorality¹ is a sin against one's own body (v. 18).

**But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, God's special possession,
that you may declare the praises of him
who called you out of darkness
into his wonderful light.**

—1 Peter 2:9 NIV

Paul reminds us that we are not our own—someone has already paid a high price for us, and we belong to God. Our individual bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit resides permanently in our bodies as they have been bought with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ through

¹. The term *sexual immorality* has different meanings depending on your context or region of origin (Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe, US, Canada).

his death on Calvary. In this way, our bodies become a sacred place for God. Paul also reminds us that we are called to exalt God with our bodies and should not become slaves of the flesh.

As human beings, we are created in body, soul, and spirit. God the Father is the creator; his Son, Jesus Christ, is the one who redeemed us; and the Holy Spirit inhabits us. So, let's get away from all kinds of sin that can desecrate the holy premises of God!

I close with the words of one of my teachers:

As Christians we realize that God's plan is that we live our sexuality as an opportunity to give and receive love in a relationship as a couple and family where mutual commitment makes it possible for us to grow as persons, and thus, we are better able to support others. We must manage our sexuality as something provided by God for the benefit of ourselves and others.²

Blessings!

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Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.

Resources for this session

- ***These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. Marnie Klassen, a fifth-year Bible student at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is the presenter for unit 3, Our Holy God. The videos are free and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).***

². Irene Foulkes, *Problemas Pastorales en Corinto*, Comentario Exegético-Pastoral a 1 Corintios (DEI, SBL), 182.