



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N36 September 5, 2021

NOT OF THIS WORLD

“Body and Soul”

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Self-Control

I have the power
through Christ to
control myself.

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Titus 2:11-13



Has Christian
freedom no
limits?

Although the dictionary defines self-control as “*restraint over one’s own impulses, emotions, or desires,*” it seems to me that self-control is a two-sided coin. While we do *generally* think of it in ethical contexts as *exercising restraint* when it comes to doing what is wrong, it works the other way around, too. It entails *acting decisively* when it comes to doing what is right. A good working definition of this Core Practice might be “doing what is right especially when the opportunity to do what is wrong presents itself.”

Given that definition, Joseph is a prime example of self-control. On the one hand, he exercised restraint in rejecting the advances of Potiphar’s wife. Genesis 39:6-12 tells the story:

“Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, ‘Come to bed with me!’

But he refused. ‘With me in charge,’ he told her, ‘my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?’ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.”

Paul’s words to the Corinthians regarding the right response to sexual sin, “Flee sexual immorality” (1Co 6:18), remind readers of the Joseph story.

On the other hand, he did what was right when the opportunity to do what was wrong presented itself. Although they had sold him into slavery, when his brothers showed up in Egypt looking to buy food, instead of avenging himself, he gave them grain for their starving households (42:19). And when they returned for more, he treated them with kindness and filled their sacks with as much food as they could carry (43:24-44:2). Then when Joseph finally revealed himself to them, instead of avenging himself, he promised to provide food for his entire family in Egypt during the five years of famine still to come (45:9-11). He told them: “Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you . . . It was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me – you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds and all you have. I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute’” (45:5, 8-11). Finally, at the end of the story, following Jacob’s death, when his brothers were certain that Joseph would pay them back for the wrong they had done him, Joseph told them: “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them” (50:19-21).



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Describe what prompted Paul to command his Corinthians readers, “Flee from sexual immorality.”
 2. Verses 12-13 contain three statements in quotation marks. Why?
 3. According to Paul, Christian freedom isn’t *absolute* (v. 12). Explain.
 4. The statement in verse 13 was used by some to excuse their sexual immorality. How so?
 5. “The body” is meant “for the Lord and the Lord for the body” (v. 13). Put what that means in your own words.
 6. Our bodies “are members of Christ himself” (v. 15). What has that got to do with sexual immorality?
 7. Sexual immorality involves a *physical* union (v. 16). What has a *spiritual* union Christ (v. 17) got to do with it?
 8. In what sense is sexual immorality a sin *against* one’s own body?
 9. According to verse 19, what should the Corinthians have known that they acted like they didn’t know?
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about how Paul’s criticism of sex with prostitutes applies to other expressions of sexual immorality, e.g., marital affairs, sex outside of marriage, etc.
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EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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.* 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.*

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.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline the statements in quotation marks in vv. 12-13.
- Circle "mastered" in v. 12.
- Double underline "Do you not know" in vv. 15, 16, 19.
- Box "however" indicating *contrast* in v. 13.
- Bracket "members of Christ" in v. 15.
- Bracket "one with him in spirit" v. 17.
- Circle "Flee" in v. 18.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 18.
- Box "against" indicating *opposition to* in v. 18.
- Highlight vv. 19-20.
- Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 20.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."

Commentary On The Text

Apparently, some men within the Christian community were going to prostitutes, arguing for the right to do so because the physical body doesn't really matter. Such behavior would be scandalous in the church here and now, but clearly it wasn't then and there—perhaps because *porneia* was accepted in Greek Corinth, even as sex before and outside of marriage widely is today. One commentator writes: “One Greek proverb went thus: ‘The body is a tomb.’ Epictetus had said: ‘I am a poor soul shackled to a corpse.’ If the human body is thus denigrated and trivialized, it is logically possible to let the body have its full scope and satisfy every whim and fancy, because it is of no moral significance anyway, and certainly does not affect soul or spirit” (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, TBST, 96). Simply put, Greeks thought the body was perishable, and therefore, its acts were insignificant. So much so that a Greek in that day could matter-of-factly say, “Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, but wives to bear us legitimate children” (Demosthenes cited by Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 196)—suggesting that moral restrictions on sexual behavior would not be easy for Greek converts to swallow, leading another commentator to write: “Although they were the Christian church in Corinth, an inordinate amount of Corinth was yet in them, emerging in a number of attitudes and behaviors that required radical surgery without killing the patient” (Fee, 4).

In 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Paul addresses the problem of sexual immorality in *general* by addressing the problem of Christian men visiting prostitutes in *particular*. Of course, what he says about sexual immorality in general applies to women as well as to men; Paul only uses “he/himself” and “prostitute/her” (v. 16) because he’s addressing the particular problem. He begins by debunking two of the Corinthians’ assumptions contained in quotation marks: 1) Christian freedom is absolute, that is, “I have the right to do anything” (2x v. 12) and 2) the physical body intended for sex is destined for destruction, that is, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both” (v. 13). He debunks the first using *contrast*: “but not everything is beneficial” and “but I will not be mastered by anything.” One commentator explains: “Paul qualified liberty with the principle of love applied to both neighbor and self (cf. Mark 12:31). Liberty which was not **beneficial** but detrimental to someone else was not loving (1 Cor. 8:1; 10:23) and was to be avoided. So too, liberty which became slavery (**I will not be mastered by anything**) was not love but hatred of self” (David K. Lowery, “1 Corinthians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 516). He debunks the second by pointing out that the body intended for the Lord is destined for resurrection. Using the word “however,” he *contrasts* his view with theirs; he says, “the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” and “by his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also” (v. 14). In a nut-

shell, “The body is *for Christ*, to belong to Him and to serve Him, and Christ is *for the body*, to inhabit and to glorify it” (F. L. Godet, *Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, CCL, 1: 307)—as the rest of the chapter carefully explains.

Paul continues to argue against the Corinthians’ wrong-headed morality by unpacking the implications of three *rhetorical* questions, which begin with the words “Do you not know” (vv. 15, 16, 19), implying his readers ought to know something, but behave as if they do not. They should know that their “bodies are members of Christ himself” (v. 15), which makes uniting them with a prostitute unthinkable. “If each individual believer’s bodily members are actually limbs of Christ, it is inconceivable (as well as immoral) for him to abuse that body by resorting to sexual intercourse with prostitutes” (Prior, 101-102).

They should know, too, that “he who unites himself to a prostitute is one with her in body” since in their sexual union “the two will become one flesh” (v. 16). And their sexual union *in body* flies in the face of the believer’s union with the Lord *in spirit*. “It is impossible for that ‘one flesh’ relationship to be integrated with the ‘one spirit’ relationship between that believer and his Lord (17). [It’s an anomalous relationship.] Such a believer is from that point onwards living a disintegrated life” (Prior, 102). So believers must continuously “flee from sexual immorality,” which is uniquely a sin *against* their own bodies.

Finally, they should know that their “bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit” (v. 19). “My body, my choice” is a catch phrase that doesn’t apply to them, for Paul tells them, “You are not your own; you were bought at a price” (v. 19). Their whole being, body and soul, belongs to him. As a result of all he’s written, Paul concludes: “honor God with your bodies” (v. 20).

Contemporary sexual mores continue to change and continue to influence Christian sexual mores, younger generations being more accepting of sex before and outside of marriage. Barna Research reports: “About four in 10 Gen Z [born after 1996] feel a strong conviction that marriage ought to be a lifelong commitment between a man and woman (38%, on par with Millennials at 37% [born after 1980]). Despite having firm feelings about fidelity, Gen Z is more lenient than older adults on this topic, evidenced by the gap between them and Boomers (47%) [born after 1945] and Elders (66%) [born before 1945]. There are similar divergences when it comes to issues of sexuality, on which Gen Z tends to be least conservative. For instance, only one-fifth (21%) believes sex before marriage is wrong—though they are mostly on par with other generations, with Gen X being the most conservative (26%). They are least likely to take issue with same-sex sexual activity; only one-fifth (20%) is strongly opposed to it. The opinions on this among all age groups are somewhat mixed, but disapproval of homosexuality generally increases by generation” (“Gen Z and Morality,” barna.com/research/gen-z-morality/).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 12 *I have the right* Cf., “All things are lawful for me” (NET); “Everything is permissible for me” (NIV©1984). “Paul is quoting some in the congregation who boasted that they had a right to do anything they pleased (see v. 13; 7:1; 10:23 and notes)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 6:12). “Possibly the Corinthians had turned a Pauline position into a slogan for their own purposes. If so, their error would lie in making absolute what for Paul would always have been qualified” (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 252). “The statement was true but required qualification. Paul qualified liberty with the principle of love applied to both neighbor and self (cf. Mark 12:31). Liberty which was not **beneficial** but detrimental to someone else was not loving (1 Cor. 8:1; 10:23) and was to be avoided. So too, liberty which became slavery (**I will not be mastered by anything**) was not love but hatred of self” (David K. Lowery, “1 Corinthians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 516).

v. 12 *mastered* Paul’s play on words is evident in the following translations: “All things are allowed me, but I will not allow anything to get control of me” (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, TBST, 96) and “All things are in my power, but I will not put myself in the power of any of them” (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary of The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC, 146).

v. 13 *Food for . . . them both* “Another slogan by which some Corinthians sought to justify their immorality” (Lowery, 516). “Their reasoning went like this: ‘Since everything is permitted, and since food is for the stomach and the stomach for food (after all, God will destroy them both in the end), and since all bodily appetites are pretty much alike, that means that the body is for sex and sex for the body—because God will destroy them both in the end as well.’ But their conclusions are dead wrong—on both counts: The body is not for *porneia* but for the Lord; and it is not destined for destruction but for resurrection, the proof of which is Christ’s resurrection” (Fee, 255).

v. 15 *members of Christ* See 12:27; cf., Jn 17:20-21. “As we are members of Christ’s body, so our ‘bodies are members’ of Him. This is not just clever wordplay. Our physical bodies are just as much a part of Christ—united with Him in a genuine spiritual union—as we are part of the mystical body of Christ, the church” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Corinthians,” 2021 ed., 114, plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1corinthians.pdf). “The extent to which the human body of Christians and the Lord himself are intertwined is eloquently described in the phrase in verse 15: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? This is extraordinarily bold language: our physical bodies are limbs of Christ, and Paul’s rhetorical question (‘Do you not know this?’) reveals how funda-

mental is this union with the risen Lord” (Prior, 101). “Here the concern is with one’s relationship to the Lord himself. The body of the believer is for the Lord because through Christ’s resurrection God has set in motion the reality of our own resurrection. This means that the believer’s physical body is to be understood as ‘joined’ to Christ’s own ‘body’ that was raised from the dead” (Fee, 258).

v. 15 *one with him* “This is the measure of our oneness with Christ: he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him (17). The two personalities become one, so merged that Paul uses the same phrases (*kollōmenos* = ‘glued together’) to describe the Christian’s integration with Christ as to describe a person’s action in joining himself to a prostitute (16)” (Prior, 101). “Thus joined to Christ himself through the resurrection, it is unthinkable (‘God forbid!’ KJV; NIV, ‘Never!’) that one should ‘take away’ a part of the body of Christ and make it part of the body of a prostitute” (Fee, 258-59).

v. 18 *flee* Cf., Ge 39:6-15. “The Greek for this imperative may suggest that one must continually run away from sexual sinning (advice particularly needed in Corinth)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 6:18).

v. 18 *against* “In fornicating with a prostitute a man removes his body (which is a temple of the Spirit, purchased by God and destined for resurrection) from union with Christ and makes it a member of her body, thereby putting it under her ‘mastery’ (v. 12b; cf. 7:4). Every other sin is apart from (i.e., not ‘in’) the body in this singular sense” (Fee, 262). “Fornication is a sin not only against God, and not only against the other person involved, but against the fornicator’s own body, which is designed to belong not to a harlot, but to the Lord (verse 13), and is wronged if devoted to any other end” (Barrett, 151).

v. 19 *temples* Cf., Ac 17:24; 1Co 3:16. “Previously Paul taught his readers that the Corinthian church was a temple (*naos*; 3:16). The believer’s body is also ‘a temple.’ The ‘Holy Spirit’ is actually indwelling each of these temples (Rom. 8:9; cf. Matt. 12:6; 18:15-20; 28:16-20; Mark 13:11; John 14:17, 23). He is a gift to us (‘whom you have’) ‘from God’ (cf. 1 Thess. 4:8) . . . Furthermore, God has purchased (Gr. *agorazo*) every Christian ‘with a [great] price,’ the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; et al.). So we belong to Him for a second reason. In view of this, we should ‘glorify God’ in our bodies, rather than degrading Him through fornication (cf. Rom. 12:1-2)” (Constable, 117, 118).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Because you have been bought at a high price and wholly belong to God,
honor him with your body by fleeing sexual immorality.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I'm a person who loves to ponder the things of God. There are many things about God's character that I appreciate, one being how orderly He is. Take creation, for example. I mean creation is pretty incredible in and of itself. Not only is everything that God created amazing (just go outside and look around, or better yet, take a moment to look at the intricacies of your child's face), but the way He created the world and everything in it is truly spectacular. He set up everything perfectly and in perfect order to be life-sustaining. Through creation God set up His design for intimacy, marriage and a proper Biblical sexual ethic. Keep this in mind as you begin to approach conversations with your children regarding sexuality. Many of our parents came to us with a list of do's and don'ts, if they came to us at all. Consider your conversations with your child as a launching pad to approach all things with a heart of honoring God. Our bodies are created by the Lord and are good. Intimacy within the confines of marriage is honoring to the Lord and a blessing to us. What we do and say should be an act of reverence and worship of a Holy God who made us. If you're concerned with what to say to your kids about a proper Biblical sexual ethic, start there. We are praying God will provide you with wisdom as you lead your kids closer to Him each day.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

1. Who is our body a temple of?
2. How were you bought by God?
3. How can you honor God with your body?

What Do You Think?

A believer's body is the home of the Holy Spirit. What kind of home do you think the Holy Spirit wants?

What Do You Do?

This week practice some temple maintenance: feed your body well, exercise, and honor God with your thoughts and actions. What did you notice about your body at the end of the week?

CORE COMPETENCY: Self-Control

I take charge of myself with Jesus' help.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Corinthians 6:19

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, who you have received from God? You are not your own."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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