

## LESSON 9 (6:12-20)

### GOD'S TEMPLE

*12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything 13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" – and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Continuing the general teaching about moral living, this section of text picks up the point in Ch. 5, and amplifies the reason why immorality is wrong. The basic principle of living is brought up in 6:12-14, and a specific application is made in 6:15-20.

6:12 – **All things are lawful** – Most take this to mean “all things but what God has forbidden.” In our text, the act of eating is lawful, the act of fornication not lawful. For other uses of the expression, read Mt. 12:2, 4; Mk. 3:4; Lk. 6:9; Jn. 18:31; Acts 2:29; 22:25.

This idea involves the area of freedom or liberty, which is the thrust of chs. 8:1-11:1, with 10:23 repeating. A parallel in some ways is in Rom. 14:1-15:13 where Paul dealt with Christians who were in disagreement about certain issues. There Paul lays down the principle that if God has received anyone in Christ, so must all other Christians, 15:7. Our text here in ch. 6 is about freedoms a Christian has, but outlines directions or restrictions on that freedom. The text is dealing with a Christian and someone not Christian.

**helpful** – While there are many areas of freedom for the Christian, one cardinal rule is this: one does not live to oneself, Rom. 14:7; others must then be considered in any circumstance. In this sense, chs. 8-10 and Rom. 14-15 are parallel. Whatever one does as a Christian is to be done in Jesus' name, Col. 3:17, and for the glory of God, 6:20. Under these general guidelines, the good of the whole body must be the guiding principle. Building up the body of Christ would be the natural result of living in the light of Col. 3:17, and for the glory of God, 6:20. Under these general guidelines, the good of the whole body must be the guiding principle. Building up the body of Christ would be the natural result of living in the light of Col. 3:17. Working together with God as His co-workers could only result in the same, and would also eliminate corrupting the body, 3:9-17. (For the Greek term, see on 10:33.)

**enslaved** – From *eksousiadz*, which has the idea of power or authority. Jesus claimed all authority was His in Mt. 28:18. The term inherently means the freedom to act, then the right to act. Scriptures of interest would be Mt. 9:8; 21:23, 24, 27; Mk. 1:22; 2:10; Lk. 7:8; 10:19; Jn. 1:12; 10:18; Acts 5:4; 26:12; Rom. 9:21; 13:1, 2, 3; I Cor. 7:4; 9:4, 12; 11:10; 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 2:2; Col. 1:13; 2:15; II Thess. 3:9; Heb. 13:10; Rev. 13:5; 22:14.

As we consider this text, Paul will help us all see that freedom in Christ has these guidelines:

- 1) it excludes anything prohibited;
- 2) the act being considered or done must be worthwhile in respect to the

body of Christ; and

3) nothing must be done that will become a master.

Jesus is the Christian's one lord and master; nothing and/or no one must be allowed to usurp His place. Liberty was purchased for the Christian at great cost; sin is deceptive; constant vigilance is the price of continued freedom.

V. 13 – **Food . . . stomach** – As Paul warned in v. 9, they were being deceived in some areas. Here evidently was one of those areas. It is a fact that the physical body needs food to grow and to maintain a healthy state. However, both body and food are temporal in nature because God designed them in that way.

**body . . . immorality** – God had laid down regulations concerning use of the physical body. He had formed the body of man and woman to compliment each other. He had instituted the marriage relationship for many reasons, one of which was to satisfy the sexual drive He himself had created (which is one of the points Paul develops in Ch. 7). However, there was no necessary parallel between good for the body and sexual relationships for the body. It wasn't correct to draw the conclusion that as food was necessary for survival, so also were sexual relationships. It seems likely, though, that some in Corinth were arguing in this fashion: As we must have "material" good, so we must have "sexual food, too.

**Lord . . . body** – Here is the eternal desire of God expressed for all men: He wants all men to serve Him; that was His great purpose in man's creation, and thus should be the ideal for which all men strive. Having such a consuming purpose in life, the day to day activity will be determined by the overall purpose for life, as it was for Jesus (e.g. "Don't you know that I must be about the things of My Father?") even at the age of twelve years.

V. 14 – This verse states an important fact about the body: it is, in one sense temporal and will cease to exist as will all things mortal; it is in another sense not temporal in that God will resurrect it and make immortal in nature, I Cor. 15:50ff. Hence, there is a direct relationship to Jesus, whom God raised never to die again, Rom. 6:9, and Christians, whom God will raise in like manner. Since this is so, then eternity should be in view by every person, whatever is done while in the flesh. Further, if analogies such as food for body/intercourse for body are presented as valid, such should not be accepted without determining if God has spoken about such matters. In this case, God had spoken clearly. Illicit intercourse is forbidden, since it is sin and it doesn't reflect submission to God nor bring glory to Him.

Summed up: God had spoken about immorality. Freedom could only be exercised if it profited and didn't bring a Christian into bondage to sin (which, in some ways, reflects an exercise of the freedom of the will, and specifically in opposition to God's will. God has created all things, some of which are eternal in nature while others are temporal. The Christian's total submission to Christ includes the use of the body, which is destined for immortality. All then must be done to glorify God.

V. 15 – **bodies . . . members** – As ch. 12 and Eph. 5 teach. Consequently, purity in life is a must at all times.

**Christ . . . prostitute** – Two positions are presented, each the opposite of the other. The hypothetical question Paul posed was to help them straighten out their thinking and eradicate the deceitful ideas they had been presented about food, etc.

**never!** – K.J.V. translates "God forbid." While that might express the general sentiment, the Greek text has no word for "God" in it, nor for "forbid." The text is *m\_ genoito* which is an expression reflecting an emphatic "no" to some possible act. "Never" is one good way to translate it, though several others are possible.

The expression can be found in Lk. 20:16; Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14.

V. 16 – The point now before them is this: since the Christian is, by choice, a member of Christ's body, would it be fitting to take that member and join it to what does not belong to Christ? Since the answer is negative, then Paul adds clarification to the issue by showing what happens when a person such as in ch. 5 makes immorality a part of his life style.

**joins** – Since an act of the whole person is involved in joining the body of Christ, and taking Christ as both Lord and Master, then no individual member should unite with another body unless according to God's will. A Christian may marry and enjoy all the blessings God provides in marriage. What can not be tolerated is for a Christian to defy Jesus' lordship and unite with a prostitute, who symbolized the sinful life opposed to God.

The word "join" translates the term commonly used to designate the marriage union, or the concept of oneness, association and harmony. The Greek Old testament used the term in translating the Hebrew text

of Gen. 2:24. In the N.T., it is found in Mt. 19:5; Lk. 10:11; 15:15; Acts 5:13, 8:29, 9:26; 10:28; 17:34; Rom. 12:9; Rev. 18:5.

**the two shall become one** – Picking up the idea of a union such as is marriage, Paul argued that a Christian can not be for Christ and against Christ in life. One state or the other must be chosen, for two masters can't be served at the same time. The man in ch. 5, claiming to be Christian, by his life style was denying his profession. His choice had made him a member of another body than the body of Christ. Perhaps it had taken place even without full understanding of the matter. Whatever may have been the case, the rest needed to be advised of the actual state of affairs for anyone in like circumstances.

V. 17 – Union with Christ was a privilege, bringing with it freedom from sin and opportunity to be part of God's family. A descriptive term was that of oneness. Companionship with harlots (remember that in Corinth the religious of Isis, Aphrodite and Serapis all involved religious prostitution, and were readily available) was one way to sever the union. Paul is not going to agree that freedom in Christ gives the right to be immoral in life, or even condone others who are so. The man in 5:1 was "living" with the woman, not just having an occasional fling. Neither is right to do, but the essence of the difference is life style, something habitual.

V. 18 – **Shun** – Flee from all such temptations, whether for a "fling" or otherwise. Joseph set the good example in Potiphar's household; David set the bad example with Bathsheba.

**against his own body** – Just how this is so is not explained at all. It may have to do with the possibility of procreation. It may just be because God says so. It might reflect the philosophy of some that what was done in the body was of no consequence, and so any sin could be done with impunity. Such was wrong, and Paul clarified it in this way. What essential difference this sin had over any other sin is not stated. Many answers have been posed, but all are simply guesses. Jesus taught that sin was actually an expression of the inner man, Mt. 15:19-20. In actual fact, the physical body is simply an instrument of what "we" wish to do. If "we" lose our identity in Christ and become one spirit with Him, v. 17, then the effect of that should be a Christ-like life, shouldn't it? A habit of life such as is in question would hardly reflect the spirit of Christ (the Greek text has *ho porneuon* = the one who habitually is immoral).

V. 19 – **Do you not know** – For the sixth time, Paul queries the brethren.

**a temple** – Not only is the Christian a member of the total body which is the temple of God, 3:16-17, the Christian is also a member of Christ, v. 16, one spirit with Christ, v. 17, and individually the temple of God in the Spirit, v. 19. All these descriptive terms exclude the possibility of also being in union with a prostitute in the same way as with Christ. Again, two masters and two life styles are in focus.

**Your are not your own** – Since God has purchased us as if slaves on an auction block, redeemed us from the just penalty of our own sinful choices, by His grace having made salvation a gift to be freely received, and through His mercy saving us by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is God's by every right.

V. 20 – **price** – It is all too easy to forget how great the purchase price of Jesus' life. Satan will help us minimize what God did in love. This is one of the reasons why every Sunday observance of the Lord's table is good to do.

**glorify** – The religious background of all the people in Corinth would teach and require the same glorification of the god or gods being worshiped. The silversmiths in Ephesus reacted as they did because Paul's efforts were causing some to cease glorifying Diana (Aphrodite). The often violent acts of the Jews against the Christians or the Romans against both Jews and Christians were because of the same reasons. Christianity demanded no less than the others. If the choice had been made to serve God, then as Elijah, in ringing tones declared, "If God be God, then serve Him, if Baal be god, then serve him," I Kings 18. (For texts with the idea of glory, see on 10:7.)

In passing, it is recognized that many questions of importance could have been treated in discussion of this text. Questions such as the following:

1. Does any sexual sin place the sinner in union with the other person in such a way that the two become one as in marriage?
2. Does the sexual union of two people constitute marriage even if the legal requirements are not in force?
3. Is there a marriage if the legal requirements are followed by no sexual union ever takes place?
4. If the first sexual union constitutes marriage, then would all subsequent relations with others constitute adultery, marriage or what?
5. Since Christians are not united with Christ's body in a sexual way, in what aspects is the analogy true: union of purpose, will, goal, etc.?

6. What part does the possibility of forgiveness play? Can one sin and yet be a Christian, and subsequently repent and ask for forgiveness?
7. How often does the same sin committed again constitute a habit of life? (The fact is, most sins any of us commit are “repeats” rather than “new” sins never done before.)

As can be seen, the position taken in the comments above reflects the fact that the Christian who deliberately chooses to leave Christ and unite with the world (whatever may represent the world) is in view. the thrust of Paul’s letter is to make every effort to avoid any entanglement with the world and habitually reflect a Christian life style. Freedom in Christ is good and can be helpful, but freedom misused can become enslaving. Let us determine to stand fast in the freedom of Christ, Gal. 5:1.

## **LESSON 9 QUESTIONS**

1. Make a short summarization of chapters 5 and 6.
2. Name some problems and blessings with freedom.
3. Why does another person restrict our freedom?
4. How free was Christ in relationship to God’s will? (Check Heb. 5:8-9; 10:7.)
5. Does Paul clearly define how immorality is a sin against one’s own body? (Wouldn’t use of eyes, ears, mouth, hands or mind in the wrong way involve one’s own body?)
6. How did God provide (make a way out, I Cor. 10:13) for immorality to be avoided?
7. What are the instructions Paul gives about glorifying the temple of God?
8. Can you state some things that have been suggested, but are not in the text, which have been said were acts that did not glorify the temple (i.e., do people “read into” the text some actions they believe dishonor God’s temple, but which Paul does not state)?
9. List as clearly as you can the restrictions on freedom.