

Lesson 4

Wednesday

July 22

Antidote Against Sexual Immorality

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. What does this passage say about the connection between sanctification and abstinence from sexual immorality?

1 THESS. 4:1-8:

"Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual

immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you."

Though Paul was writing to someone else in the above texts, the principle can be applied across the board, to all Christians.

Which still, though, leads to the question: What was going on in Corinth? Why all these problems?

Some in Corinth apparently believed that since the gospel set them free, they were

allowed to do anything. They argued that just as the stomach was made for food, the body was made for sex, and sex for the body (1 Cor. 6:13).

Paul responds that this is a misrepresentation of Christian freedom. The lack of integrity in sexual matters is inconsistent with Christian identity and is a misuse of the freedom granted to man through the gospel (Rom. 8:2, Gal. 5:13).

We were set free from sin, not set "free" to commit it (Rom. 8:2; Rom. 6:18, 22). In fact, "the body is . . . for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor. 6:13). We belong to Christ (1 Cor. 6:15), and who we are must impact what we do. One thing is inextricably linked to the other. This is portrayed in 1 Corinthians 6 in three different ways.

First, we are identified as **washed,** **sanctified,** and **justified** "in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11, NKJV). The sins listed in

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, as well as the sexual immorality denounced in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, have no place in the life of those who were washed, sanctified, and justified.

Second, we are **members of Christ** (1 Cor. 6:15). This means that we must be united with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). Sexual immorality is a violation of that union (1 Cor. 6:13, 15). Whoever joins with a person in extramarital sexual intercourse becomes "one body" with him or her (1 Cor. 6:16). Union with Christ through the Spirit must determine Christian ethics in sexual matters.

Third, our bodies are "**temples of the Holy Spirit**" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20, NIV). The only way to live a holy life with integrity in sexual matters is by having an intimate relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere, Paul refers

to the experience of being a temple of the Spirit in terms of presenting the body "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1, ESV).

Think about the wreckage that sexual sins have brought upon humanity. What should this tell us about how serious this issue should be for the Christian?