

Fact Sheet for **“Immorality”**  
**1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

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This is the fifth of six sermons on the LGBTQ movement in our own culture. We are building the theological bedrock from which we need to respond to our culture. The first four sermons were from classical systematic theology. This fifth sermon is from practical theology.

- 1 – The character of God – absolutely and totally righteous
- 2 – The character of people – thoroughly polluted by sin
- 3 – The Holy Spirit – indwelling believers, helping them to know God's thoughts and obey him
- 4 – The Bible – an inerrant and infallible guide
- 5 – Sexual immorality – darkness, not light

We will be looking at 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. The root word for “immorality” appears in several verses of this passage. It is the word from which we get our word “porn”. This word referred to all sorts of sexually immoral behavior. We first need to set 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 in the context of both Paul's thinking and the behavior of some at Corinth. Christians are clearly saved by grace, through faith (Romans 1:16-17; Ephesians 2:8-9). In addition Paul would often state that our salvation is not based on obedience to the Old Testament Law (Romans 6:14). But some used the Christian's freedom from the demands of the Mosaic Law as a pale excuse to be engaged in sinful behavior. Look at the next verse (Romans 6:15). 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 is set within a portion of this letter that deals with this same idea of Christian liberty. And the context is very clearly sexual in orientation.

ESV 12 **“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.**

Notice the quotation marks in the ESV. The words, **“All things are lawful for me”** had apparently become a slogan that some professing Christians in Corinth used to cloak their sexual immorality. The idea of some professing Christians at Corinth was that they could participate in sexually immoral acts under the guise of Christian liberty. Corinth was totally immersed in the Greek and Roman cultures. Immorality was rampant and accepted. And some who professed Christ were actively involved. Some in the church at Corinth welcomed the Christian's liberty from the Mosaic Law, but did not want to give up their sinful behavior. Hence we have their slogan, **“All things are lawful for me”**. Paul would counter this slogan by saying, **“but not all things are helpful”**. The word **“helpful”** has the sense of being suitable, appropriate, and good. And to oppose what is helpful smacked of belligerence. Paul then repeated that slogan, **“All things are lawful for me”**, and added **“but I will not be dominated by anything”**. Unchecked sexual sin does dominate people's lives.

13a **“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”-- and God will destroy both one and the other.**

Again, notice the quotation marks in the ESV. The opening words of this verse are another one of the slogans used by these professing Christians to justify their immorality. The idea was that when we get hungry we eat. So their implication was that when we feel sexual desire it needs to be satisfied, even through immoral sex. Paul grants that food and the stomach are transitory, but denies that what we do with our bodies is unimportant.

**<sup>13b</sup> The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."<sup>1</sup> <sup>17</sup> But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18a</sup> Flee from sexual immorality.**

Is this possible? Paul would not have stated it as a command if it weren't.

**<sup>18b</sup> Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,**

This verse does speak of the Holy Spirit that indwells believers. This is a bit of theology that we often hear from this passage. It is the context that we don't often hear about.

**<sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

Sexual immorality has been part of the sinful human condition from before the days of Sodom and Gomorrah until the present day. Think about this for a moment. Every one of the letters LGBTQ stands for something that the Bible clearly calls sexually immoral! Is such behavior genetic? Are people born that way? No!. Genetics do not determine a person's choices! Can people decide to change their behavior to be righteous? Yes... particularly when they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit! Where's my biblical support for that? Look at the three verses that precede today's passage, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

**<sup>9a</sup> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.**

Remember that we are saved by grace through faith, and not as a result of works. These are behaviors that characterize a non-Christian lifestyle. But look at the next verse.

**<sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

Is it possible to abandon a sexually immoral lifestyle and choose to be righteous? Yes, absolutely! But it is more than choosing to avoid what is wrong. It is choosing to thoroughly embrace what is right.

Remember that we are called to share the Gospel with the world, not condemn the world. The five sermons I have preached thus far in this series form the foundational bedrock for our beliefs in this area. If you are asked about what we believe and say, "I don't know" you are denying what is true. You do know. If you are asked about what you believe and say something like "It's not OK for me, but it's OK for you" then you are actually eroding the bedrock of your beliefs. How should we live as Christians in a non-Christian world? Stay tuned for the last sermon in this series.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:24.