



SEXUAL TEMPTATION

THE CHRISTIAN AND SEXUAL SINS

FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18, NKJV).

Like the citizens of Corinth when the apostle Paul visited their city, many people today believe sexual activity outside of marriage is normal and natural, causing no violation of social norms or divine truth. Yet, the Bible is clear. Fornication ("sexual immorality") is sin against God; (fornication, translated from the Greek word *porneia*, a general, inclusive term for all classifications of immoral sexual conduct, whether premarital or extramarital intercourse, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, etc.) God intends our bodies to be used for holiness, not to fulfill sinful passions (1 Thess. 4:3-7; Col. 3:5-7). To commit fornication is a sin against God, and against the

purpose He has given our bodies (2 Sam. 12:13; Psa. 51:4).

Every sin we commit begins in the mind ("outside the body"), as Jesus taught in Mark 7:20-23 (Matt. 5:27-28). Therefore, control the mind; control the body. Sexual immorality is antagonistic to the purpose God gave our bodies - to give glory to God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). When sexual activity occurs outside of God-endorsed marriage, it is not love; it is dishonorable in His sight. This is God's judgment, since He said, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Christians are "joined to the Lord," therefore, we must not join ourselves to a harlot (1 Cor. 6:16-18). Christ calls us to keep our minds and our bodies pure, so that we may serve the Lord in holiness, not defilement.

"Or do you not know that your body

is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NKJV)

We have been reared to consider ourselves as autonomous, in control of ourselves and unfettered by the authority of others. It is true that we are free moral agents - each one is morally responsible and accountable to God (and to others) for his own actions. Yet, while we may choose to act without regard for others, such choices are sinful and foolish. We must regard God and man in all our actions, including the sexual activity of our bodies (1 Pet. 2:11-12).

Not only were our bodies given to us by God, we have been "bought at a price" through the offering of the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:28; 10:10-12; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Instead of using our bodies to fulfill sinful lusts through sexual immorality, we are to offer our bodies to service the will of the Lord (Rom 12:1-2). Only by coming out of the sinful defilement of the world, will God dwell with us and we with Him (2

Cor. 6:16-7:1). Both our redemption and our subsequent relation with God demands that we "flee fornication" and "pursue righteousness" (1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:22).

"Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." (1 Corinthians 7:1-2, NKJV)

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The "present distress" of persecution facing the Corinthian Christians made it advisable for them not to marry (1 Cor. 7:25-33). But, the temptation of sexual sin was strong, just as it is today. The apostle had just warned Christians to "flee fornication" (1

Cor. 6:18). Now, he reminds them that God gave marriage as the only moral means of fulfilling their sexual appetite. The bed is "undefiled" in marriage; not outside it (Heb. 13:4). This one flesh uniting of husband and wife meets one of the Lord's purposes for marriage; the prevention of sexual sin and the maintenance of moral purity. Thus, both husband and wife are obliged

to serve their mate in this matter (1 Cor. 7:3-4). The marriage bed is not an exercise in selfish pleasure. Nor is it a bargaining chip to hold power over one's spouse. Such selfish treatment of the marriage bed shows shameful disrespect for what God deems to be a holy safeguard against sin.

"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4, NKJV)

We reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7-8). Sexual sin disrespects God, and the pure and exclusive marriage bed He arranged. Marriage is not a "Christian ordinance" for which only Christians will be judged. God gave marriage to humanity "from the beginning of the creation" (Mk. 10:6). On Judgment Day, all "fornicators" (whether Christians or alien sinners) will be given "their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Those who practice fornication "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19, 21).

God has given clear reasons why we must choose sexually purity. First, we have a positive incentive to be sexually pure. We must keep our bodies holy so that we can be living sacrifices that glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 12:1). Fornication

defiles the body, making it impossible for us to walk with God while it remains. Second, we have a negative incentive to guard against fornication. It brings eternal death, and we must not think otherwise (Eph. 5:3-7).

Adultery is a love affair with the flesh and with self; it is not true love at all (Prov. 6:25-29). Fornication is the selfish indulgence of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren" (Jas. 1:16). No one is exempt from sin's temptations. Guard yourself. Be sober and watchful. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor.10:12).

By Joe R. Price