



Okay so we are in 1 Corinthians 6 where Paul is addressing humility in the form of submitted desires. Humility in it's most basic form says, "I don't trust that what I want is what is best for me. I realize that my desires need to align according to the design."

A Christian is able to confess that his desires are warped, imbalanced, improperly ordered and that they need guided, restored and redeemed. We concluded from last week that.

## KEY PRINCIPLE

- Submitting our desires shapes our souls to receive God's gift

By saying that, we are admitting that God has gifts for us that our souls are not in the right shape to receive. We used the analogy of an upside down dinner plate. Our souls need to be reshaped and molded into a different form to receive that gift. And the formation tool that God uses is the submission of our desires. As we submit our desires, our very nature is changed such that we are able to receive his good gifts. Now that is going to be a huge principle to help us understand and apply the remainder of chapter 6. Because here's the deal. This statement is true as it stands in the positive form but so is it's also true in its inverse.

And so what we need to learn from this passage is that shaping is always taking place. We are always being shaped in some way, either as a more suitable vessel for the gift of a less suitable vessel.

So all of last week was to establish that line of reasoning. Now there is a second line of reasoning we will establish today and then midway through the sermon those two lines of reasoning will merge. So that's where we are going today.

And the second line of reasoning comes straight out of where we left off last week. So let's pick up the last few verses from last week and read our text for today.

So Paul, speaking about God's design for sexuality says this.

1 Corinthians 6:13-20, "The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 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! 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." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 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, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

The key to understanding this passage is to understand the first sentence. Once you understand the first sentence, everything opens up and the whole passage makes sense. But nothing about our natural instincts is prepared to understand this first sentence.

The first sentence is not structured at all like you would expect. Pretend you are sitting down for your SAT test. Okay, fill in the blank. "The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for \_\_\_." The way that sentence is setup, it is asking us to find the opposite of sexual immorality. What's the opposite? Sexual morality. So that's what you would expect, "The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for sexual morality."

But that's not what Paul says, "The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord and the Lord for the body." This is truly fascinating.

What Paul is doing here is trying to point us outside of the rule to designer of the rule. He's trying to give us the big picture.

As a teacher you could say, "We shouldn't talk in class, but instead \_\_\_\_\_" not talk.

"We shouldn't talk in class, but instead we should be curious."

Do you see the point? If curiosity is driving the student, they won't talk. Paul is saying, if the glory of God is driving you, then you will not be sexually immoral. Since sex is something you do with your physical body, Paul says, step back.

- What is the point of your physical body?
- What is the point of long hair and colorful eyes?
- What is the point of beautiful teeth and the shape of your body?
- What is the point of muscles and fingers and smiles?
- What is the point of your flesh and bones and your sexuality?

If you were designed, then these things have a point and purpose. We use our physical bodies all the time thinking of course I know why I have fingers. It's feels like the dumbest question ever. Why? So I can type and swing hammers and work. But that's the wrong answer. You actually got the most simple question wrong.

Everywhere we look, we are programmed with wrong answers. Look into a text book on biology. Why does a bird have wings? So he can fly. Incorrect. Why does a human have legs. So he can walk. Incorrect. We are getting the most basic questions wrong.

Of course those are things that wings and legs do, but that's not the reason they were designed. That's like saying, "The reason BMW makes wheels on their cars is so that they can spin." No, the reason BMW makes wheels on their car is so people can drive those ultimate driving machines and be effortlessly transported from one

point to another in style.

You see in a God-centered world view nothing on earth can be seen as an end in itself. Nothing is to be understood as existing for its own sake. Wheels don't exist to spin. They spin according to a very precise design and for the designers precise purpose. And so of course this applies to everything we do with our bodies. We don't exist to have pleasure. Pleasure is something we experience in our body. But pleasure is to be experienced for the glory of God. The body is not meant for sexual immorality meaning, the body is not meant (not designed) to try and find sexual enjoyment anywhere there is sexual enjoyment to be found. That's going outside the design.

Just because a wheel can in any direction doesn't mean it should. In fact, if it did, it would have catastrophic results.

Sexual desire for its own sake is sexual desire stripped of the Creator's glory and stolen from its moral context.

So what is the design? The answer on the grandest possible level is given in the second part of verse 13. The body is meant (designed) for the Lord. Which means that

- everything you do in the body,
- how you eat,
- how you do your nails,
- how you dress your body,
- how you do your hair,
- how you have sex,
- how you exercise,
- how you garden,
- how you go to school is for the Lord.

This whole section is going to end in a command, glorify God in your body. So let's get the answer right. Why do I have legs? To glorify God. Why do I have arms? To glorify God. If you post a picture of yourself on facebook, it should be to glorify God not glorify self. If you open your mouth? It should be to glorify God not self. As you clothe your body, it should be to glorify God not self. We are not just wheels that spin on axles for no reason. We spin, but we spin for a purpose according to a design.

1 Corinthians 10:31, So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Of course if you are a Christian, you've heard this verse, but I doubt very highly if you've applied it this week in a very meaningful way. It was my job this week to think about this passage and I still feel like I got a D minus. The second I sopped typing, it was like this tractor beam just sucked me back into my default modes of doing what I do. Why do I eat ice cream. Cause it tastes good. Wrong. So I doubt whether you applied this verse to your driving or your eating or your working. And I doubt very, very highly if you've applied that verse to sex. But that's what Paul is doing here. And it's not just a side point. It's his only point.

So with that setup we can summarize this into a second line of reasoning. And we will lay it along side our first line of reasoning so you can see how they merge.

Our first line of reasoning went like this

## **Key Principles**

- Submitting our desires shapes our souls to receive God's gift

But here's our second line of reasoning

## **KEY PRINCIPLES**

- Submitting our desires shapes our souls to receive God's gift
- Receiving God's gift fills our souls to give him glory

Do you see how these are related? We desire to be happy. But we are not in the right shape to receive it. And the primary problem with the shape of our souls is we want our happiness provided to us in such a way that it excludes the creator. In other words, we want to be happy without God. We want to take the gifts God gives and enjoy them while ignoring him. But God wont let you be happy that



way.

So we have to lay down our desire to be fulfilled by the gift. And in that laying down, God shapes our soul to be fulfilled by the giver of the gift not the gift itself. And when we then receive the gift, wanting to be filled by God instead of the gift, all of the sudden our souls are filled and bursting with joy because we trace the satisfaction provided by the gift back to the giver. And that ends up magnifying the enjoyment of the gift.

Do you see how cool that is? Of course we are talking about sex here but it applies to any gift God gives us. Food, sports, recreation, money. Anything. This by the way, is how you do everything to the glory of God. If you want a one paragraph summary of how to do all things to the glory of God, that's it.

Now, here's how this specifically applies to sex. People want to be satisfied by sex, that's why they do it. But they want to do it without acknowledging the giver of the gift. And of course because God is factored out, they don't know how to use the gift and even if they did, the biggest piece enjoyment could never be experienced because for that you need God and he's not there.

The sexual revolution was all about trying to promise increased pleasure by freeing you from the shackles and restrictions of bygone eras. And really what we mean by that is let's enjoy sex without God's dumb rules. If spinning the wheel makes you happy then spin in any way that allows you to feel happy. However, whenever you want.

Here's the problem. Since pleasure is not the ultimate purpose of sex, by acting as if it was, we decouple ourselves from that design

and hence from the ability to really receive the gift the way it was intended. Taking sex out of the context of marriage is like getting a degree without earning it. How rewarding is that going to be for you? Same piece of paper, totally different sense of soul fulfillment.

The entire end of chapter 6 here is Paul trying his absolute hardest to show the catastrophic danger of trying to decouple the gift from the giver, to use the gift in a way it wasn't designed, to try an extract satisfaction out of the gift while ignoring the giver.

He's pleading. Think about what you are doing! It's like someone whose about to take drugs arguing, but I really like the way I feel when I take drugs. Well yeah, but think bigger than that. That's going to destroy your body. You are literally putting poison in your body. Your pouring hydrochloric acid on your liver. That can't be good. Your body wasn't designed to handle that.

I want to talk to the youth for just a moment, or those of you who are single who have never experienced sex. This, I know, sounds fascinating. What is this big secret. What is this pleasure that I'm missing out on? Please, please believe God, believe me, believe your parents - you will regret it if you try and enjoy sex apart from his design. You will regret it for the rest of your life. And I promise you if you obey him, you will be thankful and joyful and happy the rest of your life.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 is pleading, in that exact way. Of course there are some short term payouts but think about the ways in which you are poisoning your soul. Think about the deadly long term consequences. Think about the damage. Think about what you are actually doing.

Now if we look at the text here, there are two major consequences for going against God's design for sexuality.

## **THE DAMAGE OF BEING SEXUALLY IMMORAL**

1. Sexual Immorality Dishonors the Body.

Now let's talk about where this point comes from in the text itself. Look for as second at verse 18. There are a couple of ways to read this verse, both of which are possible and both of which are very different and both of which make the same point. And so rather than even pick a reading that is best, let's just explain them both, because they go in the same direction and they are both good readings.

1 Corinthians 6:18, Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

So Paul gives this command to flee! Flee sexual immorality. Be like Joseph. And then we get a reason. Why? Because every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Now in this just plain reading, Paul is saying there is something very unique about sexual sin. He's trying to differentiate the consequences of sexual sin and every other sin. And while you of course can be forgiven for sexual sin, there are special kinds of consequences that you will have to carry with you as a forgiven person. You could perhaps compare it to a spool of kite string. Once you unroll it, sure you can wind it back up, but it will never be the same.

So in what sense is every other sin outside the body and is what sense a sexual sin a sin against your own body.

Sex is unique. Sex is God's invented way for you to give yourself to someone else so deeply that it results in personal transformation and completion. It's very unique that way. There's nothing else we do as humans that so shapes and transforms us.

What you do in the body has transformative power on your soul, and I think sex is one of the most powerful in this regard. Paul says, "The two will become one flesh," which is another way to say personal transformation is going on.

What he is saying here, therefore, is pretty amazing. He is saying sex in any circumstance has this power, and it's designed to seal two people together for life. But if you try to experience it and then rip apart the relationship it destroys you because you are trying to peel apart something that was never meant to be separated. The best analogy I've heard is gluing together two boards. You can peel them apart, but they will never be the same again.

Paul is saying you must never have physical oneness without whole-life oneness. God meant physical oneness to be a conduit and a vehicle and a confirmation of whole-life oneness. God is saying, "You must never get physically naked and vulnerable with someone without becoming vulnerable in your whole life. You must not become physically vulnerable and hold onto your independence. You must become legally one, economically one, socially one, emotionally one, in every way committed. You must give up your independence."

If you do that, if whole-body giving is done in a context of whole-life commitment, it will result in deep soul nurture, in deep personal transformation, and completion.

Essentially what he is saying is, if you use this gift according to its design it will build your soul like nothing else can build you. If you don't it will destroy your soul like nothing else can destroy you. It's like nuclear power. If you use it according to its design you get

megawatts of clean energy. And if you don't you get nuclear meltdown and Chernobyl and billions of dollars of repair efforts over centuries.

Essentially that's what Paul is saying. Sex is beautifully dangerously powerful so make sure you read the instructions.

## **Sex Dishonors the Body.**

So that's the first reading of the text. Sexual is unique in it's effect on the body and soul, so be careful. But here is another way to read this text and I think it's just as good, maybe even better. Remember we said last week that the way this text is structured is we have a slogan of the day that Paul quotes and then he responds to that slogan. But the problem is because the Greek doesn't have punctuation we need to find out where the quotes are so we can figure out the slogan that was being circulated.

"All things are lawful" "Food is for the Stomach and Stomach for the Food"

Well according to this reading some see here a third slogan that was circulating. And here's how you have to read it.

Paul - "Flee from sexual immorality."

Corinthians - Why? *"Every other sin a person commits is outside the body"*

Paul - but the sexually immoral person sins against his  
own body.

Paul: "Flee fornication" Corinthians: Why? "Every sin a person  
commits is outside the body" Paul: But the sexually immoral person  
sins against his own body.

There's actually another reason why this is a good reading. The  
ESV reads every OTHER sin that a person commits is outside the  
body.



Corinthians - Why? *"Every other sin a person commits is outside the body"*

That word other is not in the Greek. It's supplied to make sense of it. So a better translation and one that would fit the slogan well would be, "Every sin a person commits is outside the body." In other words, "Paul, why are you so worked up here. It's not like what we do with our body really all that big of deal. Sin is something that happens in the heart, not the body. So if we do things that are bodily, how is that sin?"

Sin in your heart is connected to sin in the body. So if this is the correct reading Paul is not saying that there is a special sort of danger to sexual sin, but he's saying all sin is connected to body. He's emphasizing the real connectedness of the spirit to the body. Sin in the body damages your soul. Don't bifurcate body and soul. It's the same point he makes in verse 14. In verse 13 Paul says, the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:14, And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

Why does Paul mention the future resurrection? in verse 14 What does that have to do with anything? Because the Corinthians were saying that the body didn't matter. It's just this old husk to be discarded. There's no connection. And Paul says, no absolutely there is a connection, why else would God raise the body?

Why would God raise Jesus in the body if the body wasn't important? And why would God promise to raise our bodies if our bodies are not important.

God cares about the body because he cares about you. You are body and you are soul. Let me just prove to you that you also care about your body. Do you want to be resurrected without eyes and nose? No you like seeing and smelling. That's body. Your body is important to you now! Where did this idea come from that a body will not be important in heaven? Why do you think that somehow your body and soul are disconnected?

So that's the second reading. Sexual immorality dishonors the body

because as connected beings all sin is destructive to body/soul. But either reading the argument is the same. Sexual immorality dishonors the body.

Now this fact that what we do in the body matters is super important for our next point. You'll see that obviously in just a second.

## **THE DAMAGE OF BEING SEXUALLY IMMORAL**

1. Sexual Immorality Dishonors the Body.
2. Sexual Immorality Dishonors Christ.

So here's why this whole issue of body is so important. We don't separate body and soul the same way the Greeks do, but listen, this is totally still happening today in a different way. When you talk about sexual desire in the body, it's easy to think about that as simply biological desire. It's just lust. So, it's not like I want to do this. It's kind of something that is just outside of my control. I'd love to actually get rid of this bodily desire.

Or when someone is depressed or anxious or stressed, it's easy to say, "Well, it's not like I want this. My body is just out of wack as if there is no connection between body and soul." But there is always

a connection. You see we segregate body and soul just like the Greeks.

Simon Blackburn who is a moral philosopher and not even remotely a Christian wrote a book called the seven deadly sins in which he tries to identify the problems of society by looking at these traditional values. And he agrees with the biblical ethic that lust is a big problem in our society. In fact, he sees lust as one of the greatest problems of our society. And the reason he says it's a problem is because lust does not reason, it doesn't know how to control itself, it doesn't care about others. And it causes people to do very damaging things in relationships. He says "Living with lust is like living shackled to a lunatic." That's pretty good description. It's actually kind of humorous. That's definitely at times what it feels like. And I think the reason we like that word picture is because it makes it sound like there is this part of us we can't control. This idiot over here keeps dragging me away to do things that I don't want to do and makes no sense. This guy I'm shackled to is an idiot.

But Paul kind of turns that on its head right here doesn't he? He says, "That might be what it feels like, but do you know what is actually going on?" There is a crazy person in the equation and it's you and there is a person you are shackled to in the equation and it's Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:15, 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!

And so if you haul off and go sleep with a prostitute or you look at pornography or you have an affair you are dragging Christ right into that. Paul is just taking the doctrine of union with Christ and bringing it to it's logical conclusion. Christ is right there looking at all the things your looking at. Your united with him. That's a pretty powerful image.

Paul is calling us to be consistent with our doctrine of union with Christ. Think about this line of reasoning. He's says in verse 20, "You were bought with a price." Meaning what? That the life of Christ was given to you. You are now in Christ. It's the entire book of Ephesians. You are in Christ. The fact that we are not our own is one of the most glorious realities in the world. Don't hear that as slavery. Hear that as redemption. If you were your own, then you'd be judged on your own unrighteousness. You'd be judged based on the deeds you did in the flesh. You are not your own. Instead you are now in Christ. Do you believe that? Do you love that doctrine? That when Christ looks at your actual body and the actual things you do in the flesh that your actual flesh and blood deeds have been

forgiven because his actual flesh and blood was nailed to a cross? Do you love that? YES! Of course. Well, you can't have it both ways. You can't be joined with Christ in sanctification and not be joined with Christ when you enter into the chamber of a prostitute or look at pornography or have an affair with another person.

So do you see the important of this connection between body and soul? When you lust sexually is that body or is that soul? It's both. In Greek there isn't a word for lust. They just have a word for desire. And desire turns into lust when what? When it's unsubmitted. "To Lust is to want what you don't have and weren't meant to have." Most Americans flat out reject the very notion that there are pleasures that we are not meant to have. But God is saying, take your desires and submit them and I promise you, your whole spirit and your whole body will be restored.

## **The Critical Order Creates Hope**

Now I want to end with hope. Because it's possible to hear this as, well that is great, but what do I do when I have messed up. Is there hope? I am experiencing the carnage of a torn apart marriage destroyed by sexual infidelity. I'm experiencing the brokenness of trust destroyed by pornography. I'm experiencing the consequences of experimenting with homosexuality.

There's a critical order here you need to observe. It's so critical. Paul gets done talking about all this brokenness that comes as a result of using this gift of sex in the wrong way. And it's easy to look at that and go, man, I got to get my act together. Man, in order to get the favor of God, I've got to really get my game on.

But notice so closely how Paul ends this section. You can see it a

thousand times in Scripture. It's everywhere.

Paul does not say, "Glorify God with your body." and then you will be suitable to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. No. It's actually the opposite. He says, because you are already a temple of the Holy Spirit, glorify God with your body.

Because the Spirit indwells you. Because you have already been forgiven. Because you have already been bought with a price, because verse 11 you have been washed, because you have already been sanctified, because you have already been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God, because all of that is already the case, glorify God with your body.

Do you hear that? Be who you are.

## KEY TO GLORIFYING GOD AND HAPPINESS

- Submitting our desires shapes our souls to receive God's gift
- Receiving God's gift fills our souls to give him glory

The Appeal here is the receive God's good gift. Receive it. Love it. Enjoy it. Now, I know many of the men here went to the men's retreat this year where sexual integrity was the theme. And we have

some follow up to that we want to talk about it and Nate is going to walk us through that specifically.