

Flee Sexual Immorality – 1 Cor 6:12-20

Last January we began a series called **Issues** from the book of 1 Corinthians, and after taking a break for almost 2 months, we're finally getting back to it this weekend

And as a brief review, 1 Corinthians is a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, upon hearing that they were having some issues
And given the striking similarities between our culture and theirs – it's instruction that we'd do well to heed in order to avoid those *same* issues in *our* church
That's why we're studying it – so that we'd live as the church in the world without the world in the church

And having covered everything from church fights to church leadership thus far, we left off in the middle of chapter 6 (**1 Cor 6:12-20; The Command**)
“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 sexual 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 then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 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.” 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 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. 19 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, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- Paul mentions **sexual immorality** or *sexually immoral* people 11 times in 1 Cor, most of them right here in chapters 5 and 6
Indicating that it was a big issue then just like it is now

And in using the phrase SI, he's referring to (**def.**) *any type of sexual intercourse outside of marriage*

- And Paul leaves no wiggle room here in 1 Cor as to our course of action when we face it
Flee it he says; Flee sexual immorality (18)
As in run from it; Get away from it; Avoid it

Not only that, but it's a present tense form of the verb in Greek, that calls for constant vigilance – as in (**def.**), *be always fleeing*
Don't try to manage it, minimize it, rationalize it, or dabble in it . . .
Get *out* of the room and don't look back; Leave the building if necessary and go somewhere else
Exit the car and don't return; Turn off the TV/computer, and don't turn it back on without some safeguards

Whatever it is that's conducive to your indulgence – get away, stay away, and put hedges in place to keep it that way
That's the idea of *be always fleeing*

One of the best examples of which comes from Joseph in Gen 39, where it says that Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him

*And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. 11 But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, 12 she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. He literally *ran* fr her, and *left* the premises; Even leaving some of his clothing behind*

That's what it means to flee sexual immorality
Do whatever it takes to get away from *it*, or get *it* away from you *****

- That's the command; That's the point of this entire passage here in 1 Cor 6
And for some of you, that's enough; That's all you need to hear
Just a simple, straightforward reminder of what's right and what's wrong
Kind of like when you were a kid and your mom told you not to touch the stove
That's all it took; Mom said it and that settled it

But others of you needed to know *why* you couldn't touch the stove, didn't you?
Was there something really good about touching the stove that she didn't want you to have or experience? Was she hiding something?
And were the reasons sufficient to warrant not even trying it? And if so, what were they?
Some of you needed a legal brief in order to leave the stove alone, didn't you?

And the same is true when it comes to the stove of SI – the straightforward prohibition from God to flee it, isn't enough; You need reasons
And Paul gives them; 10 of them in fact (**The Reasons**)

The first of which is that . . .

1. **It's not helpful (v12a)**

Flee SI b/c it's not helpful

Now, in order to understand these first few verses, you have to read them in light of the latter verses, especially v18
Otherwise, you end up with a bunch of disjointed, pithy sayings, without any real significance

Like v12 where Paul says – *“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful.*
If you don't read that in light of the point he's moving toward, you're left with a kind of “so what?” feeling

But if you read it in the context of fleeing SI . . .

It becomes clear that Paul is responding to those who would argue, that in light of God's grace and forgiveness *all* things are lawful for them, even sex outside of marriage
To which Paul responds by essentially saying, “You can say that if you want, but even if it were true, it's not *helpful*”

SI is not helpful for life and godliness

For living the full life that we've been given by virtue of our salvation, or for living it in a godly manner; It's not helpful

That's the first reason to flee SI if you're one of those people who *needs* reasons

2. It's addicting (v12b)

Flee SI b/c it's addicting

That's the implication here of Paul's second response to the argument for license
"All things are lawful for me" [he quotes them again], *but I will not be enslaved by anything.* (12b)

I won't be consumed by any earthly desire

Which is exactly what SI does – the more you indulge, the more it consumes u, doesn't it?

The more it overpowers your will; The more it overwhelms your self-control

The more it clouds your rationale

The more it sucks you in to an addictive lifestyle, where you're always looking for more, and you're not satisfied until you get it

3. It's devastating (v13a)

That's from v13a where he says – "*Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food*" [again, quoting something they were evidently saying] . . .

To which he responds by saying – *God will destroy both one and the other.*

Again, in the context of SI, I think he's drawing the analogy between food and fornication, to say that . . .

Treating sex and your body like food and your stomach, does not end well – God judges it; And the consequences are devastating

You can't treat sex like a consumable, and expect God to look the other way – it doesn't work that way

SI may satisfy in the short run, but in the long run, it's devastating

4. It's contrary to God's design (v13b)

This comes from v13b where Paul gives us the first clue as to what he's talking about
The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

I was watching a tow truck operator trying to change a tire recently . . .

And when he couldn't get the tire off the axle, he went back to his truck and brought out a great big hook with a chain connected to it

And I thought, "Wow, he's going to somehow put that hook on the frame, and the chain around the tire, and somehow winch that tire off there"

And about that time, he laid down, and started *beating* on the inside of the wheel with it

At which point I said, "Um, you probably don't want to do that very much, do ya?"

And thankfully he stopped

But had he not, he would have ruined the wheel – b/c he was using a tool designed for one thing, to accomplish another

Which is exactly the case with sex outside of marriage

When you use your body contrary to God's design for sex, you risk ruin

We were created and designed to serve the Lord, to accomplish *his* purposes

Or as Paul says it – *the body is not meant for SI, but for the Lord*

It's not meant for selfish indulgence, but godly service

And the *Lord* is meant for *us*; We're meant for him, and he's meant for us

Meaning that *his* life from the dead is meant to give *us* life from the dead
IOW the reason God sent him, was to redeem us and *indwell* us for all eternity
In that sense, he's meant for us, for our bodies; That's God's design

Subject him to something like SI, or indulge in things he doesn't intend, and you risk hardship at best, or ruin at worst

5. It's profane (v14)

That is, it treats our bodies as common, when God considers us special

So special that v14 says he's going to raise us up just like Christ

And to act otherwise, to act as if that's nothing, or that it doesn't matter to u – is profane

It's treating your body as common when God considers it special – when God has something special in mind for you

I think that's what Paul is getting at when he says in v14 – *God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.*

That's some pretty special consideration he gives us

So with a future like that, and a status like that, and a privilege like that – how can you possibly thumb your nose at the One who promises that?

How can you possibly disregard such a glorious future, by indulging in such a sinful present? It's profane, and it's the 5th reason to flee SI

6. It's spiritual adultery (v15-17)

That's from v15-17, where Paul now gets explicit

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? [he uses the extreme to make the pt.] Never! 16 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." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

In relationship with Christ, joined as one spirit with him, as a part of his body . . .

Indulging in SI is spiritual adultery – it's cheating on the one to whom you're already committed; the one to whom you gave your life

It's joining physically or mentally with someone you shouldn't (16), when you're already joined spiritually with the One you should – the Lord

7. It's self-defeating (v18b)

After saying – *Flee SI* in v18, he says . . .

Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

That's not to say that sexual immorality doesn't hurt or affect other people – it does, terribly so; just look at the broken *families* of those who indulge

Or the marriages that *continue* to suffer b/c of past baggage in this respect – even baggage that was accumulated before the marriage

SI does hurt and affect other people

But contrary to most sin that violates only others, SI also violates yourself

You do harm to yourself, directly, when you indulge in SI – as opposed to just suffering the consequences of your sin, or only doing harm to someone else

- Think about it in terms of stealing

If you steal someone’s money, you don’t violate yourself, you violate them, you take something that’s theirs

For which, you might suffer the *consequences* if you get caught, but the act of your sin in and of itself, resulted in no loss of your own

Whereas with SI, you not only take something that’s not yours, but you also give up something that is, something that touches your soul and cuts to the core of your being
It’s like stealing someone’s billfold, and giving them your bank account
You not only violate them, but you violate yourself – therefore sinning against your own body; Which is self-defeating no matter *what* you gain

8. It’s **defiling** (v19a)

That’s v19a where he says – *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?*

Do you realize that as a follower of Jesus Christ, your body is sacred ground?

The actual dwelling place of the HS? And your primary place of worship?

That’s what a temple was – the primary place of worship for God’s people; And it still is
Only now, it’s not a fixed location in Jerusalem, but a fixed location in you (Jn 4:23-24)
The place within which the HS dwells and is worshipped
And to the extent you indulge in SI, you defile the very dwelling place of God

9. It’s **stealing** (v19b-20a)

19b – *You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.*

Having been *obtained* with the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28), you are not your own

You’ve been bought

So who are you to take back what’s not yours, and give it to another?

Or take what’s not yours and indulge it for yourself?

It’s stealing; The worst part of which, is that it’s stealing from *God*

And then last, the tenth reason to not “touch the stove” of SI, is that . . .

10. It’s **not God-glorifying** (20b)

In v20b, Paul concludes all this by simply saying – *So glorify God in your body.*

That is, make him look good in what you do

Make sure your actions and behavior reflect his goodness and greatness

Something SI can never do

It doesn’t make him look good; It doesn’t bring fame to his name

It doesn’t elevate him in the eyes of those with whom you indulge

And it doesn’t honor all that he’s done for you, even if nobody else knows

So for your good and God’s glory – be always fleeing SI *****

For the love of God, literally, do whatever it takes to get away from *it*, or get *it* away from you

Pray (no amen)

A thousand times I’ve failed, still your mercy remains

And should I stumble again, still I’m caught in your grace

The cry of our heart is to bring you praise

So we give you control; Consume us from the inside out