

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Christians, Their Bodies and Sex

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

1. Paul is addressing the problem in the Corinthian church of Christians visiting prostitutes-- Corinth had both ‘temple prostitutes’ as well as what we would call ‘sex workers’. What arguments might the Corinthian Christians who used prostitutes advance to defend their actions?
2. Paul quotes two Corinthian slogans or ‘truisms’ in the passage. In verse 12, what is Paul’s corrective to the saying, “Everything is permissible for me”?
3. Looking at the second half of verse 13, how do the Corinthians like to apply their slogan “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”? How does Paul correct their thinking in this matter?
4. [Optional] What is the significance of verse 14 in Paul’s discussion of the Christian and their bodies? [For some background to Paul’s thinking about bodies, you might like to read 1 Cor 15:35-54.]
5. Verses 15-20 are the crux of Paul’s argument explaining why the Corinthians ought not to be using prostitutes. How would you summarise his reasoning?
6. Paul’s argument in v15-20 is not ethically based but based on spiritual reality-- it is a theological argument. What other sexual relationships and practices might therefore be covered by the same reasoning?
7. When facing sexual temptation, what should a Christian do?
8. Paul concludes this passage with the command that Christians should honour God with their bodies (v20). How might this be applied in our lives today?
9. Let’s see if we can apply 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 to some scenarios that might take place in a church like ours. What ought to be done in the following situations:
 - (i) A young couple in your church have been dating for a year and wonder whether they might be suitable marriage partners. They decide to start sleeping together to find out if they are sexually compatible.
 - (ii) A Christian man decides to spice up his sex-life by visiting Sexpo¹, hoping that this experience will bring a little extra something to his marriage.
 - (iii) A Christian person joins a gym in order to get fit-- they think that this will be part of honouring God with their body. They love it! They are soon going to the gym four times a week. Each day they weigh themselves, look in the mirror, and praise God for their beautiful body.

Prayer

What matters for prayer arise for you out of this study? Pray about them as a group.

¹ ‘Sexpo’ is like the Royal Easter Show for the Sex Industry and held in Sydney each year.