

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food, but God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

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 harlot?

OR,

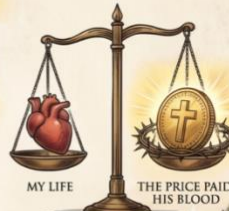
Do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her?

BUT,

He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee from sexual immorality.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.



GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY

## 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

### “All Things Are Lawful”, But...

It is incredibly easy to mistake our freedom in Christ for the “do-whatever-I-want” attitude of the world. In the salty-aired markets of ancient Corinth, popular Stoic philosophers taught that a truly wise person was their own king, answerable to no one. As a Christian who grew up in this culture, you might have expressed that secular pride in religious language, using their favorite catchphrase—“**All things are lawful for me**”—to justify your physical desires as if they were as harmless as satisfying a growling stomach. Paul needed to destroy this dangerous logic, showing that this supposed “freedom” is actually a trap of enslavement, before he can reveal the truth: your body isn’t a machine for pleasure, but a sanctuary belonging to the Lord.

***All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will***

It is widely accepted, based on Paul’s rhetorical style and the popular Stoic philosophy of the Corinthian culture, that the phrase “*All things are lawful for me*” was a local slogan. The apostle accepted this slogan but anchored it with two caveats, using each ensuing “but” to dismantle their logic. First, he argued that not all things that

***destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. (12-14)***

are lawful in Christ are actually helpful to the individual or the community. Second, in a brilliant bit of wordplay on law and power—both coming from the same Greek root for “authority”—Paul declared that he would not let what was otherwise lawful actually gain “power” over him.

We moderns can relate when we say something like, “I can’t function without coffee...” While it is lawful for you to drink it, it may not be helpful as you are now enslaved to the very thing you have the freedom to enjoy. Your supposed liberty is actually a sophisticated form of enslavement. Paul was shifting the focus from mere legality to the question of mastery, preparing to argue that while food is temporary, the body is eternal and destined for resurrection. This sets the essential groundwork for his real discussion: because the body belongs to the Lord, it cannot be treated as a disposable machine for sexual immorality.

To finish, Paul makes the general claim that the (human) body is “*not for sexual immorality but for the Lord*”. And, because it is for the Lord, He (the Lord) will raise those who belong to Him by His power.

# Your Bodies Are Members of Christ

Add to the “*all things are lawful*” mindset was **the culture of the “free man”** in total contrast to the woman or slave who were treated as commodities. Such “free” men were expected to exercise their freedom in every aspect of their lives, including married men having sex outside of their marriage (with slaves, prostitutes, or concubines). Jarringly to us today, it was no different than eating food.

***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 harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (15-17)***

The apostle transitioned into a Christian maxim: “*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?*” and expounded upon its vital significance. Using the Greek word *mele* (literal limbs), he shattered the idea that their (and *our*) union with Jesus was merely a spiritual or organizational affiliation. To Paul, the physical body was not a disposable container; it was a “limb” (*mele*) of the resurrected Christ.

By quoting **Genesis 2:24**, the apostle argued that sexual union created a “one flesh” fusion—a spiritual superglue. Therefore, visiting a harlot was not a personal matter, having nothing to do with Jesus; it was dragging a member of Christ into a union with the harlot. He concluded that while a harlot offered a destructive physical fusion, the believer joined to the Lord was “one spirit with Him.” This was a total integration where the Holy Spirit occupies every fiber of our physical being as His own territory.

## Therefore, Flee Sexual Immorality

Having established the believer's intimate union with Jesus Christ, the apostle transitioned from logical argument to an urgent command: "**Flee sexual immorality.**" He utilized the final verses of this section to declare how and why a practice initially defended by the slogan "*all things are lawful*" is, through the lens of Christ, exposed as a violation of one's own identity. By shifting the focus from their so-called *liberty* to the reality of the body as a purchased sanctuary, Paul demonstrated that what the world viewed as a "natural right" was actually a desecration of the Lord's property.

***Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 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 Gods. (18-20)***

Many have wrestled with what it means to sin "against the body," but the answer lies in how the ancient world viewed the human person. The Corinthians saw the body as a mere shell—a disposable wrapper that had no impact on their "real" internal self. Paul completely flips this logic. He argues that while other sins might be committed "outwardly" using the body as a tool, sexual immorality strikes "inwardly" at our very foundation.

Paul's point is that you cannot separate your "spiritual self" from your "physical self." Since you were bought at a high price, your skin, bones, and breath are no longer yours to use as you please. You aren't a "shell" that contains a soul; you are a temple that hosts the Living God.