

1 Corinthians Study 8

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

KEY VERSE—

“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?” (6:19)

SUMMARY—

The great emphasis of this section is that we are the Lord’s—both body and soul. Evidently, the Corinthians had placed ceremonial fornication with temple harlots in the same class as eating meats offered to idols—if they were at liberty to do one, then they were at liberty to do the other. Paul begins by showing them that not even every liberty is advisable (6:12). Then he insists that foods and fornication are not even in the same class (6:13). Paul next addresses the fallacy of their conclusion (6:13). He uses four basic arguments: (a) Fornication is a misuse of our God-given bodies (6:13); (b) Fornication is an immoral union which violates and compromises one’s union with Christ (6:15-17); (c) Fornication is a sin against one’s own body (6:18); (d) Fornication desecrates the temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19-20).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) Paul is speaking of those things that are lawful, not those things that are unlawful, when he says “All things are lawful for me...” (6:12). He then limits their argument that since “all things are lawful” we can do all things, by two exceptions—what are they (6:12)?
- 2) Is it possible for lawful things to be bad things? Can we accurately say “It is never right to do unlawful things and sometimes wrong to do lawful things” (8:9-12; cf. Romans 14:15)?
- 3) Is the question “How should I act” always answered by what is lawful? Or are there other considerations too—What is wise? What is edifying? What is loving?

4) How do the following four words in this context—‘meats,’ ‘fornication,’ ‘harlot,’ ‘temple’—relate to what we know about daily life in the city of Corinth? What common problem do these words accent which the Corinthian brethren had to overcome? How does this give us a clue to the context of this passage? Does the discussion in chapters 8,9, & 10 have any bearing on this subject?

5) Would the freedom to eat meats offered to idols also influence their ideas about the others things associated with idol worship—specifically fornication with the temple harlots? Since meat eating was really a liberty, and it was a function of the body, what were some brethren concluding about fornication?

6) Do you think that Paul is dealing with fornication in general or that which relates to idolatry, heathen worship, and the harlots who were attendant to it? Is either one right? Are they the same sin?

7) Why does food not have an eternal effect on the body (6:13a)? Why does fornication have an eternal effect on the body (6:13b-14)? 1 Corinthians 23 Lessons by Rob Harbison

8) Do the Corinthians appear to think that fornication with temple harlots is a moral issue or a neutral one? What does Paul explain to them?

9) If we are part of Christ’s body, then what are we doing when we unite with a harlot (6:15)?

10) How is fornication a misuse of our body—which is Christ's?

⇒ Whose body is the fullness of all of our parts (6:15; 12:12,27)?

⇒ Whose possession are we (6:19; cf. Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25)?

⇒ What should we be doing in our bodies (6:20; cf. Romans 12:1-2)?

11) How does the sexual act express the unity of two persons (6:16; cf. Genesis 2:24)? In what way is the man lying with a harlot the same as a man lying with his wife? In what way is it different?

12) Does honorable sexual fulfillment in marriage violate the body's obligation to God (Hebrews 13:4)? What kind of action, in contrast, can actually violate the body's obligation to God and one's spouse (7:3-5)?

13) Just as being joined together in the flesh makes two people "one body" (6:16), what does being joined together with the Lord in the spirit make that man and the Lord (6:17)? How then could one consider lying with a temple harlot to be the same thing as eating meats?

14) How are Christ and the Christian united (6:17; cf. Galatians 2:20)?

15) Does Paul say that fornication is the most serious of sins or that its relation to our body is unique among the catalog of sins (6:18)? How can fornication be considered a sin against one's body like none other (6:18)? How does fornication harm the body physically? spiritually? emotionally? mentally? consequentially?

16) How does Paul describe the body of a child of God (6:19)? How much choice does a Christian have about the way he uses his body (6:19b-20)?

17) If their bodies were a temple of the Holy Spirit from God, then what were they doing when they joined their bodies with the bodies of those priestesses in an idol's temple? What place did a priest of God's temple (1 Peter 2:5,9) have being joined to a priestess of a demon's temple (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)?