



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2017-18 Leader Commentary

Unit 3: Dare to Be Different
Session 4: Straighten Up Your Life (see pp. 156-159)

The Question: Does my life glorify God?

The Point: Only a sanctified life glorifies God.

Background Passage: 1 Corinthians 6

Focal Passage: 1 Corinthians 6:9,11-13,18-20

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “Does my life glorify God?” and drive home this one truth: Only a sanctified life glorifies God.

Focus on These Points

Sanctified from Sin
(1 Cor. 6:9,11)

The church at Corinth had some significant spiritual maturing to do. Paul’s letters revealed how much work was required to get the church at Corinth in order. Rivalry and divisions were common (1:11; 11:18). Some church members had doubts about the resurrection of the dead (15:12). Plus, sexually immoral acts had taken place—including one involving a man who had sexual relations with his stepmother (5:1-8).

Because the church did not rebuke this incestuous relationship—an obvious abuse of grace—Paul knew he had to step in. He admonished both the man and the church; they both had sinned. Paul instructed the church not to associate with believers who led a sexually immoral lifestyle (5:9-13). Instead, church members were to vocalize their displeasure with this behavior and encourage the offender to change.

The church had a responsibility to live morally. However, once again they fell short when they filed lawsuits against one another and took their cases before pagan Roman courts. Paul implied the Corinthian Christians’ behavior was equivalent to that of the unrighteous—those who would not inherit God’s kingdom (v. 9a). Such pagans were characterized as sexually immoral, idolaters, thieves, greedy, drunkards, verbally abusive, and swindlers (vv. 9-10). The Christian Corinthians had once lived in the same destructive sin as the pagans had. However, they were saved now. Holy living was what they were called to do. And, they were “justified” (v. 11) or “put right with God” (GNT) based upon God’s grace and their profession of faith in the finished work of Christ. This concept of Paul’s was concerned with a right standing before God. It couldn’t be earned by being obedient to the law and couldn’t be purchased as if we were paying for goods.

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In verse 11b, when Paul mentioned the Lord's name, he did so purposefully to remind the believers whom they had pledged to follow. He knew the pull of their past sins would be strong. But, because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, they were stronger. They were equipped for victory.

Sanctified Through the Struggle (1 Cor. 6:12-13)

The Corinthian church members created slogans to justify their inappropriate behavior. One such slogan, "Everything is permissible for me" (v. 12a), was used to boast the freedom they believed they had in practicing sexual immoralities. Christians had indeed been freed from legalism that prohibited them from eating, drinking, and touching (see Col. 2:20-23) certain things. But they certainly didn't have a free ticket to live wildly and carelessly. Holy living is what would keep them free.

Paul's response to the slogan was twofold. First, he said, "Not everything is beneficial" (v. 12). His second response was, "I will not be mastered by anything" (v. 12). He likely was referring to their sexual appetites, to which they had become enslaved (v. 13). Paul addressed another Corinthian slogan, which had sexual undertones, "Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food" (v. 13a). The implication here was that sex was a natural bodily function like eating; they both should be enjoyed. Paul's response to this involved how God would do away with some of our physical desires at the resurrection. We'll get new bodies that are able to be in the presence of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1). As a result, we are called to honor God's Word not the desires of our flesh. His Word tells us, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God" (Rom. 12:1).

Sanctified as a Sanctuary (1 Cor. 6:18-20)

Paul had his work cut out for him. He was writing to a church group whose underlying culture accepted sexual immorality as the norm. Most likely inspired by Joseph's story in Genesis 39:1-15, Paul instructed the Corinthian church members to flee this type of behavior.

Our current culture is similar to the audience Paul addressed. People have even tried to justify homosexual acts with creative interpretations of timeless Bible stories. They tell Joseph's story (Gen. 37-50) from a perspective that excludes God's favor. They say that sexual immorality was the means by which Joseph obtained kindness, approval, and partiality with people in authority. They claim Joseph rejected a sexual advance from a woman because he was gay. However, the Bible clearly lets us know Joseph was merely being obedient to God (Gen. 39:9c). God rewarded Joseph's obedience and granted him favor.

What is generally agreed upon is that Paul wasn't suggesting a tiered system of sins with sexual immorality ranked worst. He was, however, emphasizing that believers who participated in sexually immoral behavior were using their bodies inappropriately for sinful purposes. In essence they were sinning against themselves.

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Earlier in his letter (3:16-17) Paul pointed out that, corporately, the church body was the dwelling for the Holy Spirit. However, Paul's teachings in chapter 6 revealed that individual Christians' bodies were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Consequently, they, too, were sanctuaries for the Holy Spirit. As such, we not only sin against ourselves when we perform sexually immoral acts, but we also sin against the Holy Spirit. Because the Corinthian church members were purchased with Christ's blood, Jesus owned them. The same is true for believers today. Our entire being belongs to Christ—body, mind, and spirit. We are joined to Him in oneness (6:15a).