

Christians Gone Wild!
1st Corinthians, week 16
Bad Sex and Good Sex (1 Corinthians 6:12–7:7)
April 23, 2006
Pastor Mark Driscoll

Flee from sexual immorality.
1 Corinthians 6:18

Like Mars Hill Church, the Corinthian Church was filled with hip, young singles who were experienced in all sorts of sexual sin and reticent to see the need to repent of their “alternative lifestyles.” So their Pastor Paul spoke frankly about the difference between good sex and bad sex while also refuting their silly arguments denying that the lordship of Jesus extended over their pants.

Bad Sex (6:12–20)

¹²*“Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything.*

Apparently some of the single Corinthians were arguing that because they were adults and weren’t breaking the law by having sex outside of marriage (fornication), they were doing nothing wrong. Paul responds by saying that although we do have many freedoms as Christians, we are not free to call sin good and pretend that we are acting in freedom when we are enslaved by our own lusts, lacking self-control which enables holiness.

¹³*“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.*

The sexually active singles in the church also argued that sex was simply the natural way to meet a physical need (much like eating cures hunger) and therefore not a big deal. They were also arguing much like the pro-abortionists do in our day, saying that our bodies belong to us alone, to do with as we please. But Paul says that the body belongs to the Lord who made it and who will raise it from the grave to be with Him forever. Therefore, all that we do in our body, including having sex, is a spiritual matter that greatly affects our relationship with Jesus.

¹⁵*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

Because our body belongs to Jesus, when we sin with it we are essentially implicating Jesus. Therefore, when someone who claims to be a Christian has sex with a boyfriend/girlfriend, has a “friend with benefits,” watches porno, hangs out at a strip club, or engages in prostitution (which can range from a guy getting a happy ending at a seedy massage parlor to a woman doing a sexual favor for a man because he paid for dinner or took her on vacation), they are implicating

Jesus. Since Jesus is always with us, we have no right to take Him out whoring around with us.

¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

God's people are commanded to run from any and every form of sexual sin like Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife. Because our body belongs to God, we must say no to sinful sex. Because God the Holy Spirit resides in our body, we have the power to say no to sin and yes to holiness.

In summary, bad sex is any sexual contact of any kind with any person or image of any person other than one's spouse. God intends for sex to occur ONLY within the confines of heterosexual marriage.

Good Sex (7:1-7)

¹Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry [the more likely translation reads: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."]. ²But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

Here, Paul is not stating that a man should not marry, because that would contradict Scriptures that say it is not good to be unmarried (Genesis 2:18), God made us to marry (Matthew 19:4-6), marriage is honorable (Hebrews 13:4), discouraging people from marrying is demonic (1 Timothy 4:1-3), and men who find a wife find what is good (Proverbs 18:22). Instead, Paul simultaneously acknowledges and condemns the widespread sex before marriage in the church and city, and presents marriage as God's only acceptable means by which sexual desires are to be satisfied.

³The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. ⁵Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command.

Not only did God make the human body male and female for the enjoyment of marital pleasure, He also made marriage for us to enjoy sexual pleasure together. Therefore, those who desire sexual pleasure are commanded by God to first ready themselves for marriage and then pursue a loving marriage with a fellow Christian. Once married, Christians are supposed to meet the sexual desires of their spouse, providing of course that they are not sinful, which negates such things as spousal rape and sexual abuse. Married Christians are to channel their sexual desires toward building an intimate, loving, and satisfying marriage. For this to occur, sex must not become a bartering chip for power in the marriage, but rather a special way to provide connection and care.

Occasionally, however, there may arise times that normal sexual relations are not possible within marriage. Examples would include one or both spouses

suffering a major injury or illness, business-related travel, recent childbirth, or during a particularly difficult emotional season. During such seasons some couples may choose to temporarily refrain from sexual activity for an agreed upon number of days so that they can then prayerfully re-enter the marriage bed and enjoy their spouse. If sex is not frequent within marriage, or if one spouse is feeling neglected by the other, Satan will have an opportunity to destroy the marriage with everything from bitterness to the temptation to sin by pursuing sexual satisfaction outside of the marriage.

⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

Lastly, not everyone is or will be married. Though most people will be married, some will remain single as Jesus was. Those who are unmarried should be careful not to assume that God has done evil to them; He has gifted them with a certain kind of freedom and ministry that married people do not share. This was the case with Paul, who was either always single, had been widowed, or was possibly even divorced.