

# ***International Bible Lessons Commentary***

## ***1 Corinthians 6:11-20***

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**Sunday, July 6, 2014**

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, July 6, 2014**, is from **1 Corinthians 6:11-20**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

### ***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

## **1 Corinthians 6:11-20**

**(1 Corinthians 6:11)** **And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.**

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul wrote that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God, and he listed some examples of wrongdoers. Some, but not all, of those in the church in Corinth had at one time practiced the wrongdoing Paul named. After they came to faith in Jesus Christ, they repented of (turned from practicing) their sins. Because Jesus Christ had died on the cross for them and had filled them with the Holy Spirit, they were cleansed from sin, set apart by God for His holy use, and could be forgiven by God. Consider also: Acts 22:16 — “And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and *have your sins washed away*, calling on his name.” Acts 26:18 — “I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are *sanctified by faith in me*.” Romans 5:-8-9 — “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been *justified by his blood*, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.”

**(1 Corinthians 6:12)** **“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.**

Paul quoted the beliefs of some who claimed to be wise in the church, and who may have misunderstood Paul's message. Some believed that because they did not need to obey the Jewish ceremonial laws to be saved, and because they were saved, they did not need to obey any of God's laws. Some thought that because Jesus had died for their sins and had forgiven them for all of their sins (past, present, and future) that they did not need to obey God's moral law (summed up by love for God and others and the Ten Commandments). Some thought that because of their spiritual privileges as Christians that they could do whatever they wanted with their physical bodies and it would not make any significant difference. Paul began to show how foolish these beliefs were by saying that even though something may seem lawful, not everything people do or want to do is helpful, expedient, or beneficial to themselves and others. Obeying God's moral laws are always the most helpful, expedient, and beneficial way to live. Paul warned believers that they could become enslaved again to sin and wrongdoing. Consider also: Romans 6:6 — "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and *we might no longer be enslaved to sin.*" Galatians 4:9 — "Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? *How can you want to be enslaved to them again?*"

[**NOTE:** As a lawyer and Christian evangelist, Charles Finney defined "moral law" — "Moral law is a rule of moral action with sanctions. It is that rule to which moral agents ought to conform all their voluntary actions, and is enforced by sanctions equal to the value of the precept." A sanction is a threatened penalty or punishment for disobeying a law or rule that should serve as a deterrent to disobedience. The threatened penalty shows how important the lawgiver or legislature considers the law. For example, the penalty for stealing is serious, but the penalty for committing murder is more serious. Whenever a lawgiver breaks a law or does not enforce a law, he shows his disregard for the law and that disregard often leads others to disregard the law too. Many people suffer when a lawgiver or leader breaks any of God's moral laws. Jesus Christ obeyed all of the moral laws of God, and when He died on the cross He suffered the penalty we deserve for breaking God's moral laws; by doing so, He showed that God highly regarded the keeping of all of His moral laws. The only begotten Son of God did not die on the cross so those who believe in Him could feel free to break God's moral laws and do whatever they felt like doing. The fact that Jesus Christ died for us should inspire a deeper desire within us to obey Him.]

**(1 Corinthians 6:13) "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**

Some in the church thought that since our body parts were made for different purposes that it did not matter how we used these body parts as long as we used them for their intended physical purpose. They did whatever their natural human desires or emotions led them to do however and whenever they wanted without consideration for God's moral laws. They believed that whatever they did with their bodies was morally equivalent to their eating food. Paul replied that someday God will destroy both the food and the stomach, both will eventually physically die. Based on what Paul wrote in 1

Corinthians 6:12, we know that it is not beneficial to be dominated by food or any other physical desire. Paul argued that God did not design the body as He did for people to practice fornication or to break His moral or physical laws. God created our bodies “for the Lord,” and Christians should obey God’s laws because the Spirit of Christ indwells them.

**(1 Corinthians 6:14) And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.**

Our bodies are meant for the Lord, and God the Father raised the Lord from the dead so His Spirit can indwell our bodies. God will also raise our bodies from the dead, so our bodies are important to God and we should not use our bodies to violate any of God’s moral laws. It matters to God and should matter to us how we use our bodies in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ now and forever.

**(1 Corinthians 6:15) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!**

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul elaborated more fully on how our bodies are members of the Body of Christ and how we should serve different functions in the church. When Jesus Christ walked physically upon the earth, He was at one place at a time. Now, because He spiritually indwells the physical bodies of His followers, He is many places all around the world and He serves others directly through the physical bodies of His followers. Every physical body part belongs to Jesus Christ; therefore, we should never use any of our body parts in violation of the moral laws of God.

**(1 Corinthians 6:16) Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.”**

To show his readers the importance of obeying God’s law, Paul referred them back to the teachings of the Bible, the Hebrew Scriptures, and to the teachings of Jesus when He quoted the Bible: “Jesus answered, ‘Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?” (Matthew 19:4-5). As Paul demonstrated, the Word of God written remains the ultimate authority for what we should believe and do. In the marriage union, a man and a woman become united at the deepest levels of their physical, mental, and spiritual being – something happens that only the Lord can fully explain. The Bible teaches that no one should do or try to do physically what God meant only for a married man and woman to do physically. In a Christian marriage, a Christian man and a Christian woman are united spiritually with one another and with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**(1 Corinthians 6:17) But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.**

When a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord, Jesus unites with them spiritually so that Paul can teach by analogy that the two become one spirit (similar to a man and a woman becoming one flesh, but on the spiritual level, because Jesus' resurrected and glorified human body remains seated at the right hand of God). Every part of our being becomes united with Christ; just as we fill our bodies, His Spirit fills our bodies.

**(1 Corinthians 6:18) Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself.**

Once again, Paul commanded Christians to shun fornication. Paul knew about the horrible consequences of sexually transmitted diseases (when there were no antibiotics), and he knew God's law and the consequences of disobeying God. In Exodus 15:26, we read: "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you." For these reasons, Paul wrote that a "fornicator sins against the body itself." At a deeper level, Paul also knew about the mental and spiritual damage that the fornicator can suffer within themselves.

**(1 Corinthians 6:19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?**

As Paul concluded his arguments, he wrote that the physical body of believers is the temple or shrine of the Holy Spirit Who dwells within them. Our bodies have been created and given to us by God, so we do not belong only to ourselves. Jesus told His disciples that He would send them the Spirit of truth: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you" (John 14:15-17). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached that Jesus had promised that the gift of the Holy Spirit was intended for everyone who followed Him: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Paul also affirmed this fact: "But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Romans 8:9).

**(1 Corinthians 6:20) For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.**

Before Christians come to faith in Jesus Christ and repent of their sins, they are slaves of sin and elemental spirits (Romans 6:6; Galatians 4:3). Before they accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, people have committed themselves to self-centered, self-directed, and self-opinionated behaviors, which are manifestations of their slavery to sin and Satan (see Acts 5:3; Acts 26:18). By the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God made freedom from sin and Satan possible for all who believe in Him. Faith, love,

appreciation, thankfulness, and good sound reasons, motivate Christians to glorify God by the way they use their bodies and obey God. In addition, Paul wrote to the Romans: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What might Paul say to an unbeliever who continually disregarded the law of God?
2. What might Paul say to a believer who continually disregarded the law of God?
3. Why is it important to Christians today that God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead?
4. How does knowing that your body is a member of Christ help you overcome temptations to sin?
5. What was the price that God paid so you could be forgiven for your sins, be cleansed from sin, and be filled with the Holy Spirit? What can you do in response?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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