

Niveen Sarras

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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Global church is divided on issues of sex. ELCA decided in 2009 to allow gays and lesbians in committed relationships to serve as clergy. As a result of this decision, several churches left ELCA. ELCA accepts the monogamous relationship, and other churches reject this relationship. Usually, the pastors of ELCA are uncomfortable to preach about sexuality or to encourage celibacy among unmarried people. Other churches preach about celibacy. Sexuality is a difficult topic to discuss in any church.

Freedom of individuals is important in our country. We talk about human rights and our right to choose our way of life. In a culture like the United States, many Christians may argue for their rights to sex and this culture clashes with Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

Paul explains in his letter to the Corinthians our freedom in Christ. He says "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" (vv. 12-13). Paul is talking about freedom that has limitations and boundaries. Corinthians understand freedom in Christ to mean freedom to do what they want. They engage in fornication under the slogan that "all things are lawful for me, or all things are permitted." Paul argues against this kind of freedom.

Paul tries to solve this problem by explaining the new identity of the Corinthians as believers in Christ. He focuses on two points: first, “the body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord.” That means, you cannot be committed to Christ and, at the same time, give your body to a prostitute. “In sexual union, one becomes part of the other, belongs to the other.”¹ According to Paul, your body is a member of Christ; for this reason, your body must not be a member of a prostitute. Paul shouts in his letter saying “NEVER.” Never for the body of Christ to be united with a prostitute. He also shouts asking the Corinthians to “shun fornication.” Fornication is a sin committed against the body itself. From the Apostle Paul’s perspective, “sex is to be revered, and its context in Paul’s teaching is within Christian marriage”² (1 Corinthians 7:4). In the same letter to the Corinthians, Paul limits sexual activity to marriage. He says, “but because of cases of sexual immortality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2).

The second point that Paul discusses is “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you.” It might be difficult for us who live in a postmodern society to envision our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. It is difficult not to claim your body as yours, not somebody else. But Paul emphasizes that your body is not yours, but it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Your body belongs to God. Can you think of your body as a church that you need to be revered? The Holy Spirit dwells in your body, and you are called to honor your body as you honor this building, the church. Paul is inviting you and me to honor and glorify God in our body by treating our body with respect

¹ Valerie Nicolet-Anderson, "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:12-20," *Workingpreacher*, January 2015, https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2338, (accessed on January 13, 2018).

² Israel Kamudzandu, "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:12-20," *Workingpreacher*, January 2018, https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3530 (accessed on January 13, 2018).

and honor. Your body is holy, and you are invited to take care of your body and not use it to fulfill unholy desires.

In a world challenged by fornication, pornography, human trafficking, and sexual abuse, Paul is not only talking to individuals, but he is also talking to the entire church whose a new identity was purchased by the blood of Jesus for God's glory. You are not only called to consider your body as holy and temple of the Holy Spirit, but you are also called to view the body of your neighbor as holy and the temple of the Holy Spirit. You cannot claim that you treat your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and turn your back to your neighbor who is sexually harassed or trafficked.

I guess many of you are excited because Super Bowl just started. But there is a very dark side to the Super Bowl event. The Super Bowl is known as largest human trafficking event of the year. Women's body is not treated as the temple of the Holy Spirit but as an object. The sex buyers make their body as members of a prostitute and work with the pimps to use and abuse women and children's body. They are taken advantage of vulnerable women and children.

Because Jesus Christ bought us with a price and because we are invited to glorify God in our body, we need to speak up against human trafficking. During Super Bowl, I'm going to post each day prayer on Facebook. I invite you to fight human trafficking by praying for the victims and every person tries to help them. If you suspect trafficking in any form, call Law enforcement, or

the national human trafficking hotline or an advocacy group like The Women's Community in Wausau. Try your best to monitor your children and grandchildren social media because lots of traffickers target young people on social media. Christ has bought us with a price, and we are called to honor him in our body so, you are urged to help the victims of human trafficking to glorify and honor Jesus in their body.