

Week 9

Why Sex Matters (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)

Tonight, we're wrapping up our series called "Chasing Love." And in this series, we've learned how to wisely approach singleness, dating and sex, so tonight we're going close out the series by learning "Why Sex Matters."

And in 1 Corinthians, Paul is writing to Christians who lived in a city called Corinth. And Corinth was a highly sexualized city. In fact, sexual sin was so common in Corinth that the word "**corinthianize**" was a verb. In other words, if you were living in sexual sin people would say, "You've been *corinthianized*." It was so bad in the city of Corinth that 1 out of every 30 people was a prostitute!

So, Paul is talking to Christians who grew up around, and participated in, all kinds of sexual sin. And by the way, this should encourage some of you who may feel out of place being in church because of your sexual past. This passage shows us that the early church was made up of people with a sexually dysfunctional past, but God was working to deliver them from that sinful lifestyle.

But some of them were tempted to slip back into that sexual sin, and some had never fully walked away from those sins. So, Paul was addressing two false beliefs about sex, and those two beliefs are still common in our culture today. First is the belief that...

1. Sex is no big deal.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Sexual sin is not the *only* sin he mentions in that list, but he does bring it

up three times in the opening verse! Why? Because sex is a good gift from God and it's a BIG deal when we ignore, disobey, or distort God's design for sex. You see, our culture tells us that sex is no big deal – that you should be able to hook up with anyone you want with no real consequences. They say there is nothing wrong with...

- **“Sexually immorality”** – A general term that describes ANY sexual activity outside of marriage.
- **Adultery** – When a married person is unfaithful to their spouse.
- **Homosexuality** – Jesus said, from the very beginning of time, God meant for sex and marriage to ONLY be between one man and one woman. This is a consistent message throughout the entire Bible and God has not changed His mind on that.

Notice: Paul didn't say it's a sin to be *tempted* in these areas. He said it's a sin to act on or *“practice”* these sins. We're all tempted in various ways, but acting on the temptation is where sin begins.

But the people of Corinth were so used to these sinful lifestyles – they didn't even realize how corrupt they had become. In fact, some people in the Corinthian church were even saying that the occasional visit to a prostitute was no big deal!

This is why Paul uses one their favorite quotes in verse 13 when he says, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food.” People in Corinth used this phrase all the time to say, “Sex is no different from our appetite for food, right? I mean, when you're hungry you eat, then you feel better. It's natural. It works the same way when you want to have sex – you want it, you have it, and then you feel better.” So, their mentality was the same as the adulteress in Proverbs...

Proverbs 30:20 “This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, “I have done no wrong.”

No big deal. Just another appetite to be satisfied however and whenever I want. This is the way the Corinthians viewed sex. But, Paul wants to show them that there's a *spiritual* dimension to sex that they were forgetting. You see, God designed our body and soul to be *intricately* and *eternally* joined – you can't neatly separate one from the other. Yes, it's true that when our body dies, our soul goes on to be with Jesus, and our soul is disembodied for a while, but that's not the way our soul was created to be. In fact, when we're in that state, Scripture says we “long to be

clothed” with our resurrected bodies. Our soul is created to be united to our body for all eternity. That’s why your resurrected body will still be YOU – just without the sinful tendencies and limitations you have now.

By the way: This is another reason why the trans movement is so unbiblical. They believe their soul and body (gender) are mismatched. Or they believe they have no gender at all. But this is a lie. Every person’s God-given soul is forever linked to their God-given body. You can medically, surgically, and cosmetically alter your body here on earth, but your resurrected body will be the exact gender that God originally created you to have. So, if you struggle with gender issues – rather than trying to alter your biological body to fit your feelings, you should ask God to alter your feelings to fit your biological body. God did NOT make a mistake with your gender.

So, our culture tells us that sex is no big deal – that you should be able to have any type of sex you want, with whoever you want, any time you want. But the truth is, sex is NOT about just satisfying an immediate craving like eating a meal. Sex has an extremely spiritual dimension to it.

Notice what Paul goes on to say...

1 Corinthians 6:13b–18 “...The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.”

You CANNOT have sex with someone and not become one flesh with them. And Paul says this is true even with the most casual sex possible, which is sex with a random prostitute. In that scenario, the prostitute says...

- I don’t know your real name and you don’t need to know mine.
- We will most likely never see each other again.
- So, just pay me the money and walk away.

You can't get any more casual than that, but Paul says even then, those two people become one. Why? Because sex is not just biology; there's something deeply spiritual about it. God has designed it that way.

If you don't believe me then answer these questions...



If sex is just physical, why is rape so much more psychologically damaging to a woman than physical abuse? Women will report physical abuse much more often than they will rape. Why? Because the wound goes much deeper when it's sexual, and they find it hard to even talk about it.



Why is it that when a child is sexually abused, it is so difficult for them to move forward, even years later in their adult life? It's not just that an authority figure betrayed them. No, that wound goes much deeper because it was sexual.



If sex is just physical, why is adultery so hard to get over? Because the wound goes much deeper when it's sexual.



Why is it that most people's greatest and most shameful regrets are usually sexual? When somebody comes to me and says, "Pastor Gene, I need to tell you something I've never told anybody else..." It's almost always sexual regret.

If sex is just physical, then none of those things would be true. But everything in our human experience tells us that sex IS a big deal. That's why, in verse 18, Paul says every other sin is outside the body, but there's something different about sexual sin. And that's because God designed sex to ONLY be enjoyed by one man and one woman within a life-long marriage relationship!

Several years ago, a book called *"Hooked"* came out and it was written by a couple of neurologists (not pastors with an agenda) showing the effects of having multiple sexual partners, especially when you're young. They found that casual sex, or multiple sexual encounters, actually rewires your brain in a way that makes genuine, lasting relationships much more difficult. They said...

"The individual who goes from sex partner to sex partner is causing his or her brain to mold in such a way that eventually accepts that sexual

pattern as normal... The pattern of changing sex partners therefore seems to damage their ability to bond in a committed relationship."

– "Hooked: How Casual Sex is Affecting Our Children" pg. 48

Illustration: Duct Tape losing more and more "stick" each time it's removed. And with every sexual encounter, you lose the ability to "bond" in a committed relationship.

So, on one hand our culture tells us that sex is no big deal. But ironically, at the same time, our culture tells us that...

2. Sex is everything.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Paul is reminding the Christian that, even though sex IS a big deal, it's not the most important thing in our human experience...

- For the Christian, your body is meant for much more than just sex. It's a temple where God Himself (the Holy Spirit) is enthroned. (vs.19a)
- For the Christian, your body doesn't belong to you, it was "bought with a price" – the shed blood of Jesus. (vs.19b)
- So, rather than glorifying your body by focusing so much on your sexuality, you should use your body only in ways that glorify God. (vs. 20)

So, on one hand, our culture constantly tells us that sex is no big deal. But, at the same time, it constantly tells us that sex is *everything*, which is why...

- Guys think about sex more than anything else during the average day.
- Girls often have eating disorders because they feel constant pressure to be sexually attractive.
- Men and women often get depressed as they age (when their physical attraction is gone, they feel like they've lost their identity).

- The gay and trans community believes their very IDENTITY is found in their sexual preference. They believe sex actually defines who they are!

In fact, most people believe that happiness and fulfillment cannot be found unless they can express themselves sexually. But remember, sex won't even exist in heaven. Jesus said...

Mark 12:25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

Sexual activity only exists during the relatively small window of human history, but we often view sex as THE most important part of the human experience! Sex is DEFINITELY a wonderful gift from God but Jesus never had sex, yet He was the most fulfilled Person who ever walked the earth!

Even though it's an awesome gift from God, we have to keep sex in it's proper perspective. It's a lie to say that sex is no big deal, but it's also a lie to say that sex is everything!

You see, many people feel like Christians are anti-sex. Like we don't appreciate its goodness and power. But the truth is, God puts limitations on sex BECAUSE of its power and goodness!

"Sex outside of marriage is not a sin because it is so bad, but because it's so good." – Tim Keller

Small Groups