

their conclusions are dead wrong—on both counts: The body is not for *porneia* but for the Lord; and it is not destined for destruction but for resurrection, the proof of which is Christ's resurrection."¹⁰¹

Whether the Corinthian slogan about food is "Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food," or something slightly longer, the main point driven home by the Apostle Paul is "Anyhow, the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body" (CJB). Even with significant changes to take place in the matter of food and the stomach in the future resurrection, human sexual behavior must conform to the standard of the Lord.

14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Messiah? Shall I then take away the members of Messiah and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH" [Genesis 2:24]. 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

6:14 The significance of the human body to the Creator is witnessed in Paul's assertion, "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also" (NIV). The subject of the doctrine of resurrection is thoroughly handled by Paul later in 1 Corinthians ch. 15.

The high regard that God as Creator has for the human body, was witnessed by the Messiah event, and how the Son was not just executed, but subsequently raised from the dead (15:20). Being in Yeshua, redeemed men and women are innately connected to Him not just in terms of salvation from sins, but in the culmination of their salvation, which will be witnessed at the resurrection of the righteous and the redemption of the whole human being (Romans 8:11; Philippians 3:21). The redemption of the human body, and not just an immaterial consciousness, ran into stark contrast and conflict with Platonic dualism (discussed further). The need to treat the human body, with a great deal of honor and respect, is true of both men and women equally (Ephesians 5:28-29). And, Soards appropriately draws our attention to how the power, which resurrected Yeshua from the dead, is already present in the lives of Believers, and is not just going to transform their bodies in the future eschaton—but is to transform their character and behavior in the present:

"They belong to the power of God, which raises them from the dead and which already works to transform them in the present. God has a clear claim on the believers; they do not merely have the freedom to make claims because of God. Indeed, God's own mission manifests itself powerfully in resurrection and transformation of human life."¹⁰²

6:15 If Believers are to experience the resurrection of the dead, the same as Yeshua experienced the resurrection Himself (v. 14), then the importance of adhering to an upstanding code of sexuality and control, is greatly intensified. As Paul inquires, "Don't you know that your bodies are members of Messiah? Shall I then take the members of Messiah

¹⁰¹ Fee, 255.

¹⁰² Soards, 130.

and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!" (TLV). Much of what it means for Believers to constitute the Body of Messiah, in different roles and responsibilities and giftings, will be elaborated on more fully, using the different limbs and organs of the human body as a frame of reference (12:12-27; cf. Romans 12:4-5). The singular term *melos* (μέλος), "**a part of the human body, member, part, limb**" (BDAG),¹⁰³ is notably expanded a bit in the REB rendering of v. 15:

"Do you not know that your bodies are limbs and organs of Christ? Shall I then take part of Christ's body and make them over to a prostitute? Never!"

While commentators will often not discuss the issue of foods and the stomach (v. 13) that much more, Soards is one who says, "Paul expresses mild shock that some Corinthians, aware of their freedom, work from the notion that all foods are fit for consumption to conclude that engaging in casual sex with a prostitute is a celebration of their freedom."¹⁰⁴ While eating in general is what "Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food" (v. 13)—and not adherence or non-adherence to the Torah's dietary code—is actually what the slogan intended to use as a validation of sexual immorality, Soards has brought out how the dismissal of something seemingly unimportant like adhering to God's instruction on diet, can lead to the dismissal of something much more important like adhering to God's instruction on sexuality.

6:16 The Apostle Paul makes a direct appeal to the Tanach or Old Testament, to get the various Corinthian men, who think that they are permitted to solicit prostitutes, to see what they are really doing. He says, "Don't you know that a man who joins himself to a prostitute becomes physically one with her? For the *Tanakh* says, "The two will become one flesh" (CJB). In quoting from Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh," an appeal to marriage instructions (cf. Matthew 19:4-5) is relayed to the sexual act between a man and a female prostitute. Doubtlessly implied is how the sexual relations and marital bond, which are to be exclusive to husband and wife, are violated when a prostitute's services are solicited. The Jewish philosopher Philo spoke to the effect that the act of fornication would corrupt a person, appealing to Genesis 2:24 as well:

"But the sons of earth removing their minds from contemplation, and becoming deserters so as to fly to the lifeless and immovable nature of the flesh, 'for they two became one flesh,' [Genesis 2:24] as the lawgiver says, adulterated the excellent coinage, and abandoned the better rank which had been allotted to them as their own, and deserted to the worse rank, which was contrary to their original nature, Nimrod being the first to set the example of this desertion..." (*On the Giants* 65).¹⁰⁵

Garland is entirely correct in drawing attention to how the Corinthian men soliciting prostitution was not just a physical affair. There were truly emotional and spiritual components to their sinful action to be acknowledged:

¹⁰³ BDAG, 628.

¹⁰⁴ Soards, 131.

¹⁰⁵ *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, 157.

“Sexual intercourse entails the joining together of persons with all their spiritual associations and is not simply the coupling of bodies. The prostitute indiscriminately flings herself at chance customers; but the customer, when captured by her, is also put at her disposal...No prophylactic exists that can protect this unlawful union from extending its difficult tendrils into every part of a person’s being. Using a prostitute is not a victimless crime in which no one gets hurt. This sin contaminates and breaches the union with Christ.”¹⁰⁶

Whether the prostitution sought by the Corinthian men was prostitution in general via some sort of brothel, or if it was temple prostitution, would not have mattered in terms of an entirely prohibited and utterly condemned action. But, if the Corinthian men, as presumed “Believers” in Israel’s God and Messiah, did actually seek out temple prostitutes, then the immaturity of the Corinthians is further intensified. Joining with a temple prostitute in sexual relations was not just a mere act of intercourse and/or joining of intimate emotions; most frequently some kind of union with and/or worship of a god or goddess was also believed to be taking place during such intercourse.

6:17 Rather than being joined to a street prostitute, or a temple prostitute, or even just a woman looking for sexual intercourse and treating her as though she were a prostitute—Paul issues an imperative word to the Corinthian men: “But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (TLV). Far from sexual intercourse with a prostitute providing the intimacy that such men ultimately were seeking, they are to seek it with their relationship with Israel’s Messiah and King. The need for God’s own to join with Him, in relationship and fidelity, is something rooted deeply in the Tanach Scriptures:

“They will ask for the way to Zion, *turning* their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the LORD *in* an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten” (Jeremiah 50:5).

“Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you” (Zechariah 2:11).

Also rooted deeply in the Tanach is the judgment that will come upon God’s own, when they join themselves to false gods and idols:

“So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel” (Numbers 25:3).

“Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone” (Hosea 4:17).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Garland, 233.

¹⁰⁷ Also to be considered could be Hosea 4:14.

18 Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

6:18 The answer to the sin problem here is, “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body” (ESV). It has been suggested that *Pheugete* (Φεύγετε), a present active imperative plural, could be a continual activity to be conducted, consistent with what is stated later in 1 Corinthians 10:14: “Therefore, my beloved, flee [*pheugete*] from idolatry.” Memories of Ancient Israel’s lack of fleeing from idolatry—that “you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice” (Exodus 34:15)—might be in view. Also to be invoked could surely be how the Patriarch Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife, when she demanded that he have intercourse with her: “She caught him by his garment, saying, ‘Lie with me!’ And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside” (Genesis 39:12).

There are certainly many warnings in both the Tanach (i.e., Proverbs 5:3; 6:23-7:27) and Apocrypha (i.e., Sirach 19:2), about the corruption of sexual immorality and prostitution. In full alignment with Paul’s word in v. 16, is a statement appearing in the Pseudepigrapha: “Accordingly, my children, flee from sexual promiscuity...” (*Testament of Reuben* 5:5).¹⁰⁸ And as Sirach 2:3 from the Apocrypha would further direct, also in alignment with Paul’s instruction, “Cleave to him and do not depart, that you may be honored at the end of your life.”

Some take issue with the presence of “*other*” in v. 18,¹⁰⁹ which has been frequently added by translators to *ho ean poiēsē anthrōpos ektos tou sōmatos estin* (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος ἐστίν), which the NRSV has as, “Every sin that a person commits is outside the body.” This might be on account of choosing to identify this as yet another Corinthian slogan, as the HCSB actually does place, “Every sin a person can commit is outside the body,” in quotation marks to indicate this “ ”.

When not taken as a Corinthian slogan, and with the inclusion of “*other*” in one’s translation, then by saying “All other sins people commit are outside their bodies” (TNIV), Paul would necessarily be communicating something in view of the fornication practiced and prostitution solicited. In the estimation of Garland, “The context and rhetorical tone suggest that Paul wants to draw out the distinctive character of sexual sin compared to every other sin a person could possibly commit.”¹¹⁰ He further notes how a sin such as “drunkenness does not have the capacity to make a person one flesh with alcohol. This one-flesh union is true only of the sex act...In the context, sex with a prostitute severs the union with Christ and

¹⁰⁸ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, 784.

¹⁰⁹ Hays, 105.

¹¹⁰ Garland, 237.

sabotages its resurrection destiny.”¹¹¹ The sin of prostitution, here with a Corinthian man joining with a woman paid for sex, is an internal sin committed against one’s personal self for sure—but it is most especially a sin committed against the God who is to not only inhabit a person via His Spirit, but has provided to His people access to the resurrection power which raised Yeshua the Messiah from the dead.

Keener makes the important observation, “Sexual intimacy is difficult to separate from emotional intimacy, and such intimacy flourishes in the context of vulnerability and trust, hence commitments.”¹¹² The being of “one spirit” (v. 18), is to occur in one’s relationship with the Lord, through prayer, meditation upon His Word, and in times of worship. *These are the times when His own are to be candid with Him about their vulnerability as mortals, and their need for reliance upon Him.* Such personal disclosure is a matter to be left between the created and the Creator; it is not to be something taking place between a man and a prostitute, who can never make up for God as Heavenly Father and King.

6:19 A redeemed individual is to look at himself as being a temple or sanctuary for the Holy Spirit, and not as a place for prostitutes to cohabit: “Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own” (HCSB). While this word would be critical direction toward those in Corinth who had solicited prostitutes, the pronouns in the source text of v. 19 are notably in the plural, an indication that Paul is speaking collectively to the Corinthians, and how there are certainly many more applications of Believers being the temple or sanctuary of the Holy Spirit beyond that of being sexually moral.¹¹³ It is worthwhile remembering what happened to the Jerusalem Temple during the Maccabean crisis of the Second Century B.C.E.:

“For the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit” (2 Maccabees 6:4).

The presence of the Lord within His people, as though one’s body is a temple, is something partially witnessed in the Pseudepigrapha. *Testament of Joseph* 10:3 astutely states, “And where the Most High dwells, even if envy befall someone, or slavery or false accusation, the Lord who dwells with him on account of his self-control not only will rescue him from these evils, but will exalt him and glorify him as he did for me.”¹¹⁴

6:20 Even though it was important for Paul to explain to the Corinthians how their bodies will be resurrected in the eschaton (v. 14), and how their bodies were not to be viewed as members of a prostitute (vs. 15-16) but instead as part of the Messiah (v. 17), and just now

¹¹¹ Ibid., 238.

¹¹² Keener, 60.

¹¹³ Cf. Soards, 133.

V. 19 in the Greek reads *ē ouk oidate hoti to sōma humōn naos tou en humin Hagio Pneumatōs estin ou echete apo Theou, kai ouk este heautōn* (ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν οὐ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστε ἑαυτῶν). The Brown and Comfort interlinear has noted the placement of plural pronouns and possessive pronouns by a degree ° sign:

“or do you° not know that the body of you° a sanctuary of the in you° Holy Spirit is, whom you° have from God, and you° are~not your° own” (Brown and Comfort, 591).

¹¹⁴ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, pp 821-822.

how they are to view themselves as a temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19)—the real crux of the matter is how “you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” The implication is that the Corinthians’ redemption has only come about by the sacrifice of Yeshua (cf. Ephesians 1:7), and as such they must demonstrate proper conduct via their bodies. It is not a surprise at all why some versions offer slight paraphrases of v. 20: “for God bought you with a high price” (NLT) or “You were quite an expensive purchase!” (Kingdom New Testament).¹¹⁵

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 application One of the questions that readers reviewing 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 might legitimately ask, is why there have not been more direct quotations from the Tanach or Old Testament, and instead far more indirect allusions to Israel’s Scriptures and sentiments witnessed in Second Temple Judaism. The Apostle Paul certainly believed that the throwing off of all restraints, by various Corinthians, via the slogan of “All things are permissible for me” or *panta moi exestin* (6:12), was wrong. Just as wrong was the slogan “Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food” (6:13), as though men having intercourse with prostitutes was quantitatively indifferent than eating. The arguments made, while Paul could have made a direct appeal to the Tanach and how sexual debauchery corrupted many in Ancient Israel, instead focused on the resurrection of Yeshua (v. 14), Believers’ connection to the future resurrection, and Believers’ being like limbs and organs of Yeshua’s body (v. 15). To engage in prostitution is to be like corrupting God’s own Temple (vs. 18-19). Holiness or sanctification does not end at one’s immaterial person, but is to be manifested in physical acts performed by the body as well (v. 20).

Examiners of Paul’s letter have certainly had to reason through why Paul chose not to make more appeals to the Tanach in a passage like 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. It is possible that more appeals to the Tanach were made in the non-extant first letter (5:9), and now more “Does it make sense what you are doing?” logic had to be employed—as a group of people who think “All things are permitted for me” might be more prone to entrench their sinful behavior, when told they must follow God’s Instruction and commandments. Ciampa and Rosner suggest,

“Some have questioned the relevance of the Old Testament to Paul’s ethical teaching on the grounds that Paul overlooks the opportunity to quote Scripture in such a context. He could have cited any number of texts forbidding prostitution, premarital sex, or extramarital sex. The fallacy with such a reasoning is that the most fundamental reason someone is opposed to something will not necessarily be made explicit in their arguments against it. Paul’s arguments in 1 Corinthians 6 against the use of prostitutes in effect presuppose that prostitution is wrong. Paul is like a passenger trying to convince the driver who is speeding to slow down with appeals to road safety, expensive fines, no need to hurry, and so on. The use of such proofs does not betray a lack of interest in the law; even if left unmentioned, the relevant law might rest at the heart of their opposition.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Cf. Romans 3:24-25; 12:1.

¹¹⁶ Ciampa and Rosner, pp 261-262.

Thankfully, we get the impression from later Pauline correspondence that he was able to get many of the Corinthians to turn from their sinful ways:

“For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of repentance*; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of God*, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Corinthians 7:7-10).

When evaluating the Corinthian slogans “All things are permitted for me” (v. 12, my translation) or “Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food” (v. 13), what it manifested itself in was a gross disrespect for the human body. The human body was to be regarded as something intended for the Lord’s intimate presence and for services of faith rendered unto Him—all with the future resurrection and transformation of the human person in view! *The truth is that not all is permitted, nor is immoral sexual conduct little different than eating food.*

Dualism, or more specifically Platonic dualism, would have advocated that the immaterial human consciousness was trapped inside of the prison of the human body, and that death was something to be greatly anticipated, with the soul released into the great beyond.¹¹⁷ A future reanimation of human remains, via the resurrection, was not at all to be anticipated. This is where there were conflicts in the early Body of Messiah, as many Greeks and Romans coming to faith had difficulty with concepts of a personal eschatology culminating in a bodily resurrection. When it is thought that only the redemption of an immaterial consciousness is important, and not the entire human being—then it can be errantly thought that with the redemption of such an immaterial consciousness accomplished, what one chose to do with the physical body did not really matter. Paul made it contrastingly clear: **“glorify God in your body”** (6:20). Prior further observes,

“If the human body is thus denigrated and trivialized, it is logically possible to adopt one of two-mutually contradictory attitudes to it: either batter it into total subjection and ruthlessly control all your physical appetites, or let the body have its full scope and satisfy every whim and fancy, because it is of no moral significance anyway, and certainly does not affect soul or spirit.”¹¹⁸

Fee makes a specific assault against some of the ancient dualism, which has introduced itself into contemporary Christianity:

“[T]his passage needs to be heard again and again over against every encroachment of Hellenistic dualism that would negate the body in favor of the soul. God made us whole people; and in Christ he has redeemed us wholly. In the Christian view there is no dichotomy between body and spirit that either indulges the body because it is irrelevant or punishes it so

¹¹⁷ Consult the FAQ, “Dualism.” Also consult the relevant sections of the publication *To Be Absent From the Body* by J.K. McKee.

Also useful to be considered are the observations made in Beth Felker Jones, “Body,” in *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, pp 105-109; Scott B. Rae and J.P. Moreland, “Dualism, Anthropological,” in *Ibid.*, pp 247-248.

¹¹⁸ Prior, 95.

as to purify the spirit. The pagan view of physical existence finds its way into Christian theology in a number of subtle ways, including the penchant on the part to ‘save souls’ while caring little for people’s material needs.”¹¹⁹

Indeed, too many of us forget how the Psalmist exclaims the great creation by God of the human body:

“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, *and* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained *for me*, when as yet there was not one of them” (Psalm 139:13-16).

Unfortunately, when we look at the slogan “Everything is permissible for me” (v. 12, NIV) that the Apostle Paul refutes, we see that we have much of the same situation today in modern Christianity. There are people who actually think that once they “get saved” and have been forgiven of their sins, and since they have the covering of grace, they do not have to live in real accordance with any commandments or instructions or protocol—and perhaps are not even subject to some kind of Divine correction. We can legitimately wonder if such individuals are indeed spiritually regenerated, but ultimately God only knows if they are truly born again or not.

What we do know is that as Believers **we each have the responsibility to obey the Lord and not fall prey to the kinds of gross immoralities** in which many of the Corinthians participated. The Lord’s standard of holiness, godliness, and permissible living is certainly defined for us within the commandments of the Torah. The Torah clearly defines what sin is and what He considers acceptable and unacceptable. By obeying the Torah, we find ourselves able to experience the blessings of God—rather than the penalties, curses, *and* pain that follow from disobedience to Him.

The following Corinthian slogan, “Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food” (v. 13), did not have anything to do with the dietary code of Moses’ Teaching. But, thinking that one’s sexual misconduct is little different than eating food, is rooted in a dualism which will conclude that God cares nothing at all for what people eat. The contemporary Christian dualism of today, which cares very little for physical actions, and can over-emphasize salvation of one’s immaterial consciousness, is very quick to dismiss kosher as having any relevance for Messiah followers. ***Such dualism is an ideology which needs to be opposed.*** While eating or not eating unclean meats is hardly at the same level of offense as sexual immorality or soliciting prostitution, when people completely dismiss the idea that God as Creator can tell His people what not to eat, they can open a door to thinking that other physical actions matter little to Him as well, and perhaps later that “All things are permitted for me” (v. 12).

¹¹⁹ Fee, 266.