

The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity #4

by Albert N. Martin

Edited transcript of [message](#) preached December 5, 1999

[More Transcripts](#)

May I encourage you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 6. Follow, please, as I read beginning at verse 12 to the end of the chapter.

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Now, it is evident, as we've already announced and as we see from the spread table before us, the culmination of this service will be an act of obedience on the part of God's people to remember the Lord Jesus in the way of His appointment by the eating of bread and the drinking together of the fruit of the vine. And here I am tonight about to bring the fourth message in a brief series entitled "The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity" or more positively stated, "The Divine Prescription for Sexual Purity," and I trust it will be both. Surely some may say few subjects could be less fitting and more inappropriate for a communion service than the subject the divine antidote to sexual impurity. Now I can understand why some might think that way. However, if you will listen and carefully attend to the Word of God that I trust you have open before you, as together we look at this portion of God's Word, I trust you will be persuaded that few subjects could be more evidently appropriate than this subject as it is handled by the Apostle Paul in the passage read in your hearing.

In the first three messages on this subject on the divine antidote to sexual impurity or the divine prescription for sexual purity, I set before you four propositions, which I used to embody some of the most basic teaching of the Word of God on the issue of sexual purity. Given the time constraints, I cannot go back and repeat those propositions much less open up the many Scriptures we studied together. The messages are on tape. The series is in a very real sense a fabric of truth. And I trust that none would detach what we hear tonight from the previous three or stop with the previous three and detach it from our meditation tonight and, God willing, the completion of this series next Lord's Day evening.

Tonight I want all of our attention to be given to this passage in 1 Corinthians 6. And if I were to give a title to our subject tonight or to our study in the Word of God, it would be this: as a Christian, a Biblical understanding of my body is essential to sexual purity. As a Christian, what Paul is writing in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 is directed to Christians, to people who have heard the Gospel, and by the power of the Spirit have come to see their desperate need of Christ, and by the same Spirit have been brought to repentance and faith. They are not strangers to the new birth and what it is to be constrained now by the love of Christ and other Gospel motives. And in this passage, what we have is Paul's directive to these saints at Corinth, that they must as Christians have a Biblical understanding of their bodies if they are to maintain sexual purity, especially in a pagan society where sexual uncleanness hung in the air like fog.

Now, why do I state the essence of the teaching in the passage in these words? Well, for the simple reason that we have two imperatives in the passage. If you were listening carefully, you would have picked up, that in verse 18, there is a simple, straightforward, terse imperative: flee fornication, run from sexual impurity. That's the negative. Then in verse 20, you have the second and only other imperative in this paragraph: glorify God in your body. Now surely those two imperatives should be enough for any Christian to avoid sexual impurity. God says run from it. And in place of sexual purity from which you run, bring glory to God in your body. Use your bodily functions in such a way that it reflects the honor and glory of the God who in Christ has redeemed you and would give no thoughtful person reason to conclude that you were using your body as a sensual playground or a tool of the devil to bring dishonor to God.

But the Apostle Paul is not convinced that those two imperatives stripped of Gospel motives would be sufficient for the Lord's people. If God thought that the mere commands to flee sexual impurity and glorify Him in your body were enough, that's all He would give us. But He's done more than that. He has surrounded those imperatives with a Biblical theology of the body of a Christian, for the most frequently used noun in this paragraph is the Greek word "soma." It's the word that refers to the body. Eight times Paul uses the word "body." And the message that comes through to these Corinthians and to us if we follow the track of the Holy Spirit as He speaks through the mind and pen of the Apostle is, as a Christian, a Biblical understanding of my body is essential to sexual purity. Now what I propose to do within the added time constraints of a communion meditation is to look with you from the passage at five principles which the Apostle Paul sets before us in enabling us as Christians to have a Biblical understanding of our bodies with a view to obeying the imperatives "flee sexual impurity" and "glorify God in your body."

Principle number one is this: my body has been given to me to serve Jesus Christ the Lord in this world and in the age to come. That's the essential teaching of verses 13 and 14 of this paragraph. Passing over the significance of verse 12 (and it does have significance for the Corinthians but is not essential to our understanding of these principles), notice what the Apostle says in verse 13:

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. [God will render inoperative both the stomach and food that is suitable for the stomach.] Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power."

Now what in the world is Paul saying? Well, basically this: Apparently there was a saying going around among the Corinthians at Corinth that it is obvious that foods are made for the stomach, the digestive system, and the digestive system is perfectly suited to receive food. And apparently, though this can't be established with dogmatism, some were also saying that in the same way as there is this congruity and suitability between food and the digestive system (foods, meats, and the stomach), likewise, you have the body that is suited for fornication. It has sexual appetites and powers and drives and capacities, and you have fornication that is suitable for the body and its appetites and passions. So it's logical, is it not, that if a loving God made foods, He made them to be consumed by men's bellies. So He makes a belly suitable for food and food for the belly. In the same way He makes a body that has sexual appetites and passions. And fornication relieves the passions, gratifies the appetites. The appetites are suitable for the body, the body for the appetites. Paul says, "No, you've totally misunderstood what your body is for." So he answers by saying, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but [that is not to go on forever] God shall destroy both it and them." In the resurrection, we shall not have the precise same physical constitution that we now have. There will be no necessity to consume food. Apparently our glorified bodies will not have the same digestive system that we now have. So Paul can say, "God shall destroy both it and them."

And then he takes up their second premise: "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." Your body is given to you to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in this world. Your body is not given to you with all of its capacities and appetites (physical appetites for food; sexual appetites for sexual gratification) to be your personal playground. That body was given for the service of the Lord. And for you who are believers, Paul says that body in a unique way is not for sexual uncleanness, but it is for the Lord. And the Lord is committed to the good and the well-being of that body. And it's as though someone says, "How do we know that?" Paul says that God will even go to the trouble of raising it from the dead. Look at the next verse: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." The acme of the glory of the Christian is not the disembodied state. When the spirit leaves this body, it is in an instance of time made perfect in holiness and joins the spirits of just men made perfect. But the hope of the Christian goes beyond the intermediate state. Yes, to depart and be with Christ is far better. But the hope of the Christian in the Bible is not defined as the intermediate state. It is the glorified state at the coming of the Lord Jesus when our bodies shall be made incorruptible. And we shall have bodies fashioned, Paul says, like unto the body of His glory.

So for these Corinthians struggling with a society in which sexual uncleanness was not only accepted by the rank and file of people, it was augmented to the place of a sacred act of worship. And there were men in the Corinthian church who had been brought up in a society in which a part of the religious ritual into which you were introduced as a young man was having intercourse with temple prostitutes as an expression of worship to the gods. That's how much they had sunk in the wretched moral degeneration that accompanies idolatry. And now Paul comes along as says, "Now look, if you're to flee sexual uncleanness, if you're to glorify God in your body, get this principle firmly embedded in your soul: your body has been given to you to serve Jesus Christ the Lord in this world and in the next."

Principle number two: my body and my spirit are inseparably united to Jesus Christ in a real spiritual union. Verses 15-16:

"Know ye not that your bodies [your physical constitution] are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot [prostitute]? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

What is Paul doing? He is planting the lofty doctrine of the believers union with Christ smack down in the midst of the moral mess at Corinth. And he's saying to these believers, that if you want to flee sexual uncleanness, if you're to glorify God in your body, get hold of this truth, that as a Christian, your body and spirit are inseparably united to Jesus Christ in a real spiritual union. I did not say a carnal union, but a spiritual union. But because it's spiritual, that doesn't mean it's not real. Paul says it's so real that when you Corinthians who are united to Christ join yourself in an immoral sexual relationship, you implicate Jesus Christ Himself. Look at the passage: "What? know ye not...." This is one of Paul's favorite teaching devices. It's the sixth time he's used it in this epistle alone. He uses it several times in the epistle to the Romans. And whenever he uses it, he's not introducing something that is not true of those to whom he writes. He's introducing it as a fact that is true, which they ought to know and ought to be living in the light of it. But if they have forgotten it, they need to get hold of it afresh. If they are living in the light of what he's about to remind them of, they would never live the way they are living. That's how he uses this terminology. He uses it twice in this passage. "Know ye not that your bodies...." If you're a Christian, look down at you fingers and hands, your arms, your legs, your feet. Think of your primary and secondary sexual organs. That's part of your body. And every bit of you is united to Christ. That's what the text says. Look at it; let the truth of it sink down in: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" And he doesn't put a parenthesis: "except your little toes, except your fingers, except your primary and secondary sexual organs, for God has nothing to do with that dirty stuff." No, he says your bodies from the tippy toe to the top of the head: all that constitutes your body your body.

Paul now sets before them the unthinkable: "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?" How deep and real is the union with Christ that makes our bodies members of Him. And shall we take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? And it's though a Corinthian says,

"O, but wait a minute, Paul, what we do with a harlot, what we do when we play around with the young ladies and with the young men, when we indulge in our necking and our petting and heavy breathing short of intercourse, that has nothing to do with being intimately joined. That's just casual sex."

Paul says, "No, casual sex doesn't exist." He uses the same word when he says your bodies are members of Christ. The union with Christ is deep and real and spiritual. He says you take them away from Christ and make them members of a harlot. The relationship is deep and real. There's no such thing as casual sex. Look what he goes on to say to prove it: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot [a euphemism for having sexual relations] is one body?" He says, "Don't you know that the very nature of that relationship is that it constitutes you in a relationship of the deepest intimacy?" He says, "How do we know that?" He goes right back to Genesis 2:24 where God says, "The two shall become one flesh." And then to add as it were insult to injury, Paul says, "But he that is joined to the Lord is not only in his body joined to Christ, but becomes one spirit with Christ." That doesn't mean we become

Christ, that we are elevated to deity. But it means this union is not just this physical frame. It is spiritual. Hence, the principle, my body and my spirit are inseparably united to Jesus in a real spiritual union. Wherever I go, whatever I do, whatever I touch, whatever I look upon, I do so as one united to Christ. You see how profound the impact of this would be in an immoral society?

Some young man begins to hit on a young woman who belongs to Christ; he thinks that she's in the same orbit of sexual laxity. She looks the young man in the eye and says, "Do you know who you're fooling around with? You're fooling around with the Son of God." The young man says, "Well, where is He?" She says,

"I'm joined to Him. He's in heaven at the right hand of the Father. But by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit, I have been called (1 Corinthians 1:9) into the fellowship, into the communion of Jesus Christ. I'm united to Christ. My body, my soul, my spirit, all that I am is united to the Son of God. Be careful how you treat the property that is united to Him."

You see how profound the impact this would be, that when they hear the words, "flee fornication, glorify God in your body," it is a body along with the spirit that is inseparably united to Jesus Christ in a real spiritual union. And in a way that I cannot fathom, the Bible makes plain that the bodily union of the believer with Christ is not even dissolved in death. The Scriptures say that the Lord will come and pay special attention to those who die in the Lord, those who sleep in Jesus. And the sleep never refers to the soul but to the body. Our union to Christ is not dissolved even in death--precious truth!

As though this were not enough, Paul says, "Let's load up all the Gospel guns against this horrible sin of sexual promiscuity at Corinth." Principle number three: my body which belongs to Christ and is united to Christ and exists for the service of Christ is in a unique way compromised by sexual impurity. Look at verse 18 after the imperative to which we've been referring to again and again ("flee fornication"). He brings in another motivation: "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication [sexual uncleanness] sinneth against his own body." He not only sins against the Lord, sins against the one with whom he indulges sexual uncleanness, but in a unique way, he sins against his own body (not just his own soul). In a very helpful commentary on this first epistle to the Corinthians, Leon Morris writes, "The Christian must not temporize with sexual impurity but flee the very thought.

Paul goes on to develop the idea that this sin strikes at the very roots of a man's being. He does not say this is the most serious of all sins, but its relation to the body is unique." This is the paraphrase that one commentator gives: "Other sins will occur to us, which have their effects upon the body, but this sin, and this sin only, means that a man takes that body, which is a member of Christ, and puts it into a union that blast his own body." Other sins against the body, such as drunkenness and gluttony, involve the use of that which comes from without the body (excessive drink: drunkenness, excessive food: gluttony). The sexual appetite rises from within. These sins serve other purposes. This has no other purpose than the gratification of the lusts. They, that is, drunkenness and gluttony are sinful in the excess; this is sinful in itself. Fornication involving a man is what Goday calls "a degrading physical solidarity incompatible with the believer's spiritual solidarity with Christ." Paul wants them to

understand that their body, which belongs to Christ and is united to Christ and exists for the service of Christ, in a unique way is compromised by sexual impurity.

Do you remember what Paul says in Ephesians 5:28-29 when giving directions to Christian husbands on how to love their wives? He says, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." It is unnatural to hate your own flesh. Paul is saying that if you love your own flesh, flee fornication. And I need not tell you--you know--they have a word for it: STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) in which God seems determined in the patterns of the horrible diseases to make it plain to man, he that sins in this area sins against his own body. A man may murder another and live with a screaming, horribly torturing conscience for his murder that he may cover up, but he doesn't self-destruct the body with which the murder was committed. It will eventually, if he doesn't repent, be destroyed when he's cast into hell. But in terms of its present effects, someone may blaspheme and have very little effect if any upon his body. He may steal; he may be a professional thief, but in a unique way the violations of the 7th Commandment terminate upon the very body that indulges the sin. That's reality, and Paul says Christians need to remember that.

You say, "Surely that's enough." No, it isn't. Paul's going to load up the Gospel gun and shoot some more at this sin so that when God's people think of the words "flee sexual impurity; glorify God in your body," their minds will be loaded with all of this Gospel ammunition. Principle number four: my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit made such by God; thus making my body the soul possession of God. Look at verse 19:

"What? know ye not that your body [see the crassness of it again. He doesn't say 'you' generically or 'your soul,' but 'your body,' that comprised of the stuff that makes your fingers, your hair, your face, and your armpits--the whole shebang] is the temple [not the general court of the temple but the inner sanctuary] of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God [it's God who made your body the temple of His Spirit, underscoring the preciousness of the divine initiative in grace. It's God who takes the initiative. Salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. And Paul says to the Corinthians, 'You need to think of this reality, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.' How did it become that? Because God in grace and in power took the initiative to call you out of darkness into light and to place His Spirit within you. But having done that, that gives God unique claims over the temple which He has made for Himself. The gods own the temple in which they are worshipped. The one true and living God who in grace has made your body and mine His temple has absolute claims over His temple], and ye are not your own?"

You see, the language "do my own thing" should never be found on the lips of a child of God. You're not your own. How do I know I'm not my own? Because the God of heaven and earth in grace and mercy has arrested me, brought me to His Son, cleansed me, purged me, made me His child, placed His Spirit within me. And He has absolute rights over that which He has made His own dwelling. Now, will that make a difference when your hormones are raging, or when you as a married woman get a crush on a man other than your husband (and it does happen), or at work you see a woman more attractive than your wife (and that will happen)? And when all of the glossy photos and all of the images constantly paraded over the TV and over the Internet with its vile glut of pornography--when all of that is pressing in upon you,

what do you need, child of God, man or woman? My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit made such by God; thus making my body the soul possession of God. I have no right to use these eyes to serve that wicked, devilish god of lust. And leering looks, inordinate and illicit desires and fantasies--no such foul filth should be allowed in the temple of the Holy God. This body is His temple.

You say, "Pastor, you still haven't convinced me it's an appropriate communion meditation. Well, we come now to the fifth and final principle, and I think you'll see the relationship. This is most likely brought forward as a further explanation and buttressing of what was just said ("Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own"), but I've chosen to isolate it as a fifth principle and state it this way: my body along with my spirit was bought by God. Paul says you were bought, not just your body. Here he finally refers to man as Christian, woman as Christian in the total integrity of the body-soul existence. He doesn't do that till now. It's always body, body, body. Now he says, "For you in the entirety of what you are were bought with a price."

And does he need to tell us what the price is? We know what the price is. This word "agarotso" is a market-place word. When you went into the market place with some money in your bag and threw some shekels on a counter to purchase something, this is the term you would use. You went to market today, and you purchased something. It's market place language and most likely has reference to what was common in that day when slaves would be held up for auction. And someone would buy the slave, and from then on, that slave was his purchased possession. God has come into the slave market where we were found with our chains and our manacles and our old master, the devil, gloating that we belong to him. Christ went to the cross, and there under the anathema of God, in the language which Pastor Jeff read from Mark 15, our blessed Savior was plunged into the abyss of outer darkness. And all the billows of the waves of the wrath of God broke upon His head. And He cried, "My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" That's the price that was paid that we might be released, that we might be the bought possessions of the living God and His Son, the Lord Jesus. "For you were bought with a price," you and all that you are, not you minus your sexual urges, minus your primary and secondary sexual organs. No, everything that makes you you has been purchased.

If I may say something that I trust will help to make it stick, there's not a member of your body that is not branded with the sign of the cross. Think of your eyes branded with the sign of the cross. Can you look through the cross upon images on a screen in the theater, in your home, at your computer, in a magazine, at an airport, in a local bookshop? Can eyeballs stamped with the cross look upon uncleanness? Can hands marked by the cross illicitly touch erogenous zones of anyone other than one's wife or husband? You work out the rest of the details, but you must. Paul says, "You were bought with a price." Everything that makes you you is purchased property; it's marked with the sign of the cross.

You who have yet to enter into boy-girl relationships, ask God to imbed this principle in your mind. And in those moments you may be tempted; the young man may be tempted, graciously say,

"You cannot touch me there. You cannot place your lips on mine. They're marked with the sign of the cross, and the one who purchased them has said these are to be kept for my husband. These parts of my body that God gave that they might be the

expression of the intimacy of marital love, they are marked with the sign of the cross. Don't put your dirty hands on them. If you claim to have yours marked by the sign of the cross, keep them to yourself, bucko."

May God help you young women to take that stance. You may be called a prude; you may be called a number things. But to be able to come home any night from any relationship in any circumstance and get on your knees and say, "Lord Jesus, thank You, that by Your grace, I conducted myself as one bought with a price."

Now, will it make a difference if you bring to those two imperatives "flee fornication [run from sexual impurity of all kinds]; glorify God in your body" these five principles? My body has been given me to serve Christ the Lord in this age and in the age to come. My body and spirit are inseparably united to Jesus Christ in a real spiritual union. My body which belongs to Christ and is united to Christ and exists for the service of Christ in a unique way is going to be compromised by any sexual impurity. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit made such by God, and thus my body is the sole possession of God. And my body along with my spirit is the blood-bought property of Jesus Christ the Lord. Will it make a difference? My friend, let me state it bluntly, if that doesn't make a difference, you're a stranger to grace. There's nothing that will touch you and awaken you but God's sovereign mercy or the flames of hell, one or the other, if those things do not, as it were, have divine talons that grab you and will continue to grab you, even when passions and lusts and drives and urges are raging.

God's grace is sufficient to keep Corinthians pure in the midst of a society that was proverbial for its sexual uncleanness. When you wanted to speak of someone being really debauched, there was a word you could use: they've been Corinthianized. That's all you needed to say, and everyone would know exactly what you were saying. It has just about come to the place where you can say in our day if someone is debauched, he's been thoroughly Americanized. Talk to some of our friends from Third World countries and ask them what our exported television is doing in Third World countries to Americanize them, that is, to suck them into the vortex of this whirlpool of ever increasing filth and moral degeneration. Children of God, if they needed those principles, who are we to think we don't need them. May God help us here at the table to say,

"Lord Jesus, as I take in my hand the symbol of the body that You gave up to death for me, this was the purchased price, the price which You paid to purchase me to make me a temple of the living God, a temple in which God dwells by the Holy Spirit to enable me to live a holy life in all of the ramifications of that for our human sexuality in the midst of the reality of remaining sin, a seducing devil, and an evil world."

God's grace is sufficient for us. May God help us then as we come to the table, that here we will afresh say, "Lord, brand every faculty of my mind and body with the sign of the cross." If I thought wearing a cross around my neck and one around my wrist and going and getting tattooed crosses on my hands would help, I would be willing to bear the social stigma from most of you and get tattooed. But that won't do it, friends. It's got to be a truth that embeds itself in the mind and is kept fresh in the mind by reflection, by meditation; constantly praying through this passage. Nine tenths of what you heard will go out by the time you go out the door. But if you go back and by reflection and meditation and re-assimilation, these things will by degree take root in

your heart under the blessing of the Spirit. And I trust that as a result, in that day when we're gathered home to our Lord Jesus, if we reflect upon things that are down here, what a blessed thing it will be to have someone say, "Pastor (whatever you call me there. I don't know what you'll call me, but I know it will be kind and loving. And whatever I call you will be the same), I'm so thankful that at the communion service, you didn't break off the series on sexual purity. That passage was used of God at a critical time in my life. And God, by the Holy Spirit, helped me and enabled me. And I bless God for the truth that was brought that night."

If you're sitting here as someone who says, "Phooey on that. My body is my own; I'll do with it what I want. Christ, God, the Word of God will have no influence over me." My friend, I just remind you of one of those propositions we looked at and the seven texts used to support it. Willful, impenitent continuance in sexual sin will land you in hell. So the next time you think it's worth it to indulge the feelings at your fingertips and at the tips of anything else that's part of your body, remember, willfully to continue is to welcome hell. May God help you to flee the wrath to come. I pray that God will make you His child and that, by His grace, you will begin to live a life that reflects joyfully that you're not your own. You're bought with a price; you're committed to glorify God in your body.

Now to just tease you a little bit with a little teasing, I urge all married couples to go right on, remembering that there were no chapter breaks, and read the first four verses of chapter 7. In our message next week, we're going to see that the very God who says, "Your body's Mine--I bought it" assigns a lesser authority to that body to your husband/wife. God says to every wife, "Your body is not your own [same word: soma]. It's your husband's." And He says to every husband, "Your body's not your own It's your wife's." You reflect on that and ask yourself, "What does this involve in my relationship to my husband/wife if the God who purchased my body says my husband/wife, in a sense, owns it in the marital relationship?" You think through that, and I hope it will prepare your own mind as we move on into that section and several other portions of the Word of God in bringing this series to a conclusion.

www.eternallifeministries.org