

(1 Corinthians) Overview to Chapter 6

by Brian Brodersen

Paul's epistle to the Corinthians emphasizes the importance of trusting God and living according to His standard, rather than human wisdom and unrighteous behavior.

Duration: 55:44

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:1

Topics: "Sin And Salvation", "Gospel Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of the gospel to transform lives. He states that no matter what sins a person may be caught up in, whether it be homosexuality, theft, or drunkenness, the message of the gospel remains the same. The speaker highlights that through Jesus, sinners can be washed, sanctified, and justified, and can become new people. He also addresses the idea that Satan uses propaganda to convince people that they are bound in their sin and cannot be saved, but the speaker affirms that through the grace of God and the power of the gospel, anyone can be delivered from the power of sin. The sermon concludes by reminding listeners that all people, regardless of their moral standing, are sinners in need of salvation.

Transcript

Now, let me refresh your memory for a moment. This epistle of Paul to the Corinthians is, to a large degree, a corrective epistle. A lot of trouble in this particular church.

And as I pointed out in the past, this church, I think, in many ways, is very much like the modern church. Therefore, I think this first epistle to the Corinthians is a very relevant epistle for us today. As we've been studying through it, we found that the first problem that the Corinthians had was that of an enamoration with human wisdom.

And you remember, in the first four chapters, Paul spent all of those chapters dealing basically with that subject, showing them the fallacy of exalting human wisdom and wanting to bring them back to submitting to the authority of God's Word. As we moved into chapter five, we saw that an exaltation of human wisdom and subsequently sort of a rejection of the authority of God's Word will always lead to problems in living. And so we saw in the fifth chapter some of the problems there in the church.

And as we come to chapter six, Paul is again dealing with some of the problems. The Corinthians were having a difficult time getting their lives together ethically and morally. And it was, again, due to the fact

that they were shunning the apostles' message.

And they were more impressed with human wisdom than with the wisdom of God through the apostle Paul. And this was leading them to a real inconsistency in their Christian walk. We remember Paul referred to them as carnal.

And we talked about how carnal means to behave as though you're not a Christian. And as we come to the sixth chapter, this is again what we see. There was this pattern in the church.

They were misbehaving. They were not living like Christian people. And so Paul is seeking to correct these problems.

So as we come to chapter six, he says, Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? So here's another problem. They were suing one another. They were going to court one against the other, and they were bringing their cases before the secular judiciary.

And in doing so, they were being a bad witness, to say the least. So Paul is reminding them of the high position that God has given to them as Christians. He says, Do you not know that you will judge the world? The saints are going to judge the world.

And so he's saying, You're going to judge the world someday. Can't you make a judgment among yourselves? Do you have to go outside? Do you have to take your disputes and your problems and air them out before the world and subsequently be a bad witness? Now, this whole idea of the saints judging the world in Revelation chapter 20, we are given an indication of that judgment. John says, And I saw thrones, and those who were seated upon them and judgment was committed to them.

As you look at the context, the thrones and those seated upon them are the believers. So we are going to have a part in the final judgment. This is part of the privilege of being a child of God.

Paul says, Do you not know that we shall judge angels? So this is part of the privilege that God has given to us. And then he goes on to say, If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, not even one who will be able to judge between his brethren? So he's rebuking them for appointing secular judges to determine matters among them.

That's what he's referring to when he says those who are least esteemed by the church. Those are the secular courts that they're going into. And then he says, I say this to your shame.

Is it so that there's not a wise man among you? Now, remember, the people that he's talking to, they think that they are extremely wise. They've actually felt themselves wiser than the apostle. Now he's turning things around on him and he's showing them their folly.

Says you claim to be so wise. But if you're so wise, how come you can't even make a wise judgment, showing them that they really weren't behaving in a wise manner at all? I say this to your shame. It was to their shame to be behaving in this manner.

Brother going to law against brother and that before unbelievers. So that was that was the problem. Brother going to law against brother and that before unbelievers.

Now, therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. So not only was it wrong that they were going to to law before the unbelievers, he said, it's wrong that you're suing one another in the first place. So you see, here are Christian people, but they're behaving like non-Christians.

They're behaving just like everybody else. This is what everybody else does. You have a dispute.

You have a problem. What do you do? You take them to court. And they were doing that very thing.

And they had completely forgotten the teaching of Jesus. You remember in Matthew, chapter five, Jesus said, if someone wants to sue you. And take away your coat.

Give them your cloak also. If someone forces you to go a distance with them, go even beyond that. You see what Jesus was teaching and what Paul is reiterating and emphasizing here to these people is that we are not to be like everybody else.

And we're not to be so self-absorbed or so caught up with our rights and our prerogatives and those kinds of things that were consumed to the extent that we would actually fight with another believer over these kinds of things. The better attitude, the more godly attitude Paul expresses here in verse seven, he says, why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? You see what Paul is saying is this. He says it's better to get swindled than to take your case as Christians before unbelievers and to be a bad witness in their presence.

It's better just to take the loss. It's better just to say I'm going to trust God. God is going to take care of it.

Some years ago, I had an opportunity to counsel with a family. And I knew this family quite well, actually. And they had purchased a home and they purchased it from some Christians.

And things were not what they had actually appeared to be. And so once they got into the home, they found that, you know, there was some problem. I can't remember exactly what it was.

And they were disappointed, to say the least. You know, they bought the house in good faith. They felt that they were getting something and they actually weren't getting it, come to find out.

And so they were disappointed and angry. And they contemplated going to court with these people. And this particular man came in to see me.

We sat down and we talked and we prayed. He told me the whole situation. And as he was telling me, from from a strictly human standpoint, I could totally sympathize with him.

And I could even agree that he ought to sue this person because this person deceived him. This person was wrong. But yet.

I sensed that God was wanting to raise him to a higher standard. So. As much as I wanted personally to just say, oh, yeah, you've got a great case, you ought to just go ahead, because we could even question the validity of this person's Christianity.

After all, look what they did to you. So they might say they're Christians, but they probably aren't. So we could, you know, get away with it.

But yet I felt the Lord encouraging me to take him back to the words of Jesus and Matthew. To take him here to First Corinthians chapter six. And so I went ahead and did that, and as we shared in the scriptures together.

He said to me, he said, you know. As much as I'm angry and disappointed and feel like I have a valid case, I do believe that God wants me to let it go. And to just accept the fact that I've been cheated and to trust him to make up the difference whenever he chooses to do so, whether it be in this life or in the next.

And he did that. He let it go. And he was able to just have peace.

He didn't have to go through all of the anxiety and all the turmoil that he would have gone through had he gone out and, you know, got his attorney and went through the whole process of suing and all of that. He just left it with the Lord. He just trusted God with the thing.

And that's what Paul is saying to these people here. He says, why don't you rather just accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? Now you see here. Here's some teaching that is so contrary to human nature, isn't it? I mean, this just goes completely against the grain of our humanity.

We want justice. We've been defrauded. This is wrong.

I want I want justice to be meted out. But yet there are times when God says, I want you to trust me. I want you to just let it go.

I want you to leave it alone. We can bring untold misery upon ourselves by pursuing after the types of things that God is calling us to let go of. And of course, as you study this epistle of the Corinthians, one thing that I think becomes obvious is that we're dealing with a miserable group of people here.

They were Christian people who should have been enjoying all the richness and all the fullness of God's blessing and his love and his peace. You know, they should have been living a victorious life in the sense of knowing. The love and the peace and the joy of God, but they weren't.

They were living so far from that and they were living so far from it because they were failing to live according to God's standard and they were still wanting to live according to human standards. You see, God calls us to live according to an entirely different standard. And what might look like the right thing to do or in some cases, even the wise thing to do, the responsible thing to do, the just thing to do when it comes to, you know, an area where we might have been cheated.

We have an opportunity to sort the thing out ourselves. There are times when God would actually say to us, let it go. And of course, that would always be the case when my pursuit of something like that would bring the name of the Lord into reproach before nonbelievers.

That's when I know for certain that I could not pursue whatever it might be any further. If the risk is I'm going to bring reproach to the name of Christ by my actions, then I know that I have to just drop it and trust God and say, Lord, I will leave it in your hands. That's what the Lord calls us to do at times.

You know, this whole idea of trusting God and leaving things in his hands, that is something that, you know, is much easier said than done, isn't it? And it's easy to give someone advice to do that. But then

when it's you that has been wronged, there's all kinds of justification that you start to develop in your own mind. You can rationalize it and come up with 101 reasons why you have a legitimate case here.

See, we have to be so careful. We never want to do anything before the unbeliever that's going to bring reproach to the name of the Lord. So if a person who claims to be a Christian has wronged us or hurt us or done something inconsistent with the Christian faith to us, we need to be really careful about how we deal with that person, remembering that we do not want to bring any reproach to the Lord's name.

Know you yourselves do wrong and cheat, rebuking them, and you do these things to your brethren. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Now, Paul's going to get real firm with them here. And he just speaks to them very candidly.

And he he says, in essence, what you're doing is unrighteous. All of this behavior that he's been addressing, the sexual immorality that he's going to go back and address now again, the cheating of one another and a few other things that he's going to mention here, these things are all acts of unrighteousness. And now Paul is going to give a severe warning that those who are practicing these things are not going to be inheriting the kingdom.

So he's going to seek to motivate them to godly living by warning them about the possibility of judgment for unrighteous behavior. So he says this. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? So putting it in the simplest terms possible, those who live unrighteously are not going to go to heaven.

That's what Paul is talking about here. Do not be deceived. It's interesting, whenever Paul deals with these kinds of issues, whether it be here to the Corinthians or when he was writing to the Ephesians, when he addresses the Colossians, he always inserts that warning.

Do not be deceived. We can be deceived so easy. And there are multitudes of people today as we look at the list that we're going to look at here in just a moment.

You will see that multitudes have failed to heed Paul's warning. They have been deceived. They've listened to propaganda or they've talked themselves into something, but they're living a deception.

They're living unrighteously, and yet they're assuming that everything's okay. And in the end, they're going to go to heaven. It's going to be all right.

But that's the thing that Paul says. Do not be deceived about. Do not be deceived about unrighteous behavior.

People who live unrighteously do not inherit the kingdom of God. Don't be deceived about that. That's his point.

Now, listen to the list that he mentions here. He says neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. As I said earlier, the epistle is extremely relevant to today.

This list is extremely relevant to the behavior of people all around us today. Let's look with a little more detail at some of the things that Paul mentions here. The first thing he mentions is fornication.

Neither fornicators. This word translated fornication comes from a Greek word from which we get our English word pornography or pornographic. Pornos is the word here.

And it's a word that has a broad application. But what it essentially deals with is unlawful sexual activity. That's really what is being addressed here.

Unlawful sexual activity. So the question is, what is unlawful sexual activity? Or another question we could ask is what is lawful sexual activity? It's really simple. Lawful sexual activity is sexual relations between a man and a woman who are married to one another.

A sexual relationship between a man and a woman who are married to one another is lawful sexual activity. Any sexual activity outside of that is unlawful, regardless of what it is. Anything outside of that is unlawful.

And that's what constitutes fornication. That's what Paul is talking about here. So whatever type of sexual behavior a person is involved in, if it's anything but a man and a woman having relations with one another in the bond of marriage, it is forbidden by God and will bring about the judgment of God and will, if practiced consistently, will prevent people from entering into the kingdom of God.

That's what Paul says here. Now, secondly, he mentions idolaters. So an idolater, most of us are familiar with what an idolater is.

An idolater is a person who worships an idol. But what we so often fail to realize is that an idol is much more than a carved image. You see, because in the scriptures or back in the Old Testament period of time or even the New Testament period of time, and even in different cultures today, the image that's worshiped is merely the visual object of some ideology.

So in other words, there was always a concept or an idea behind the image that was worshiped even back in the ancient days. They would worship the various gods and goddesses, but the god or the goddess stood for some ideology, stood for some, you know, some concept. There was the god Nebo, for example, that was worshiped in the Middle Eastern area.

And Nebo was the personification of wisdom. So there was the worshiping of wisdom. In the Greek culture, they worshiped Sophia.

That was the personification of wisdom. Different culture, different name, but the same idea behind the idol. Some of the idols, the worship of the idols involved sexual rites and different kinds of ceremonies and things that had sexual aspects to them.

And so some of the idols represented fertility and things like that. So today when we talk about idolatry, we need to be careful that we do not make the mistake of thinking that just because I do not bow down to a carved image, I'm not guilty of idolatry. Now, if I bow down to a carved image, I'm certainly guilty of idolatry.

But I don't even have to do that to be guilty of idolatry. If I worship and serve an ideology other than the true God, then I am guilty of idolatry. So Paul says idolaters will not inherit the kingdom.

And then he says adulterers. And I think most of us are familiar with what adultery means. Adultery is to have sexual relations with someone that you're not married to while you're married to someone else.

Now, he goes on and he says nor will homosexuals nor sodomites. Now, this is, of course, a very, very heated issue today. In some churches, it's a very controversial issue.

And, of course, we hear so much today about gay rights and, you know, there's so much propaganda out there with the gay agenda and all of these different things. And in some churches, there's even the teaching that homosexuality is perfectly normal behavior and entirely acceptable by God. And, of course, you can see people marching in the gay parades and things like that, declaring through their placards and different things that they were created that way.

Gay is beautiful and so forth. God is gay and, you know, different things like that. Now, what we're dealing with there is a severe deception because right here it's crystal clear.

Now, there are several other passages in the scripture that address this issue also. And when we look with a little more detail next week, we'll go into some of these things a bit more specifically. But I just wanted to emphasize that there are two different things that are being spoken of here.

And actually, the translation, I'm using New King James translation, this isn't really the best translation because it's almost they've mixed the two words up. The first word doesn't really mean homosexual necessarily. It does.

But the first word, the Greek word, actually, believe it or not, meant simply soft. And it came to refer to the effeminate. And it finally became to refer to people involved in homosexual lifestyles.

But even more specifically, it probably refers more to a man who would prostitute himself to either men or women for financial gain. But the word originally meant soft. And we see how, you know, a word can have a certain meaning that has no application to something that it applies to with the modern term gay.

Gay means happy. But yet today, whenever the term gay is used, most people don't think of happy. They think of people involved in homosexual behavior.

So, you see, even back in Greek culture, the word soft came to refer to the effeminate and then was eventually applied to people involved in that. But the next word is translated in my Bible here as sodomite, is actually the more accurate word that refers to homosexual activity. And I think it's interesting because we know, of course, by experience, that not every person involved in homosexual activity is effeminate.

And not every person who has, you know, every male who has maybe, you know, female types of tendencies is a person involved in homosexual behavior. And because of a confusion in this area, there's all kinds of unfortunate things that go on. You know, sometimes a young boy might, some of his mannerisms might be a little more feminine than, you know, some of the other boys.

And so then some of the other kids will start to make reference to him in a derogatory way or refer to him as, you know, being gay or whatever. And then, you know, the child will grow up with this kind of a complex and Satan can use that and things come along. But we know, as we just observe, that there are people who are not effeminate at all, males who are not effeminate at all, who are caught up and involved in homosexuality.

And, of course, there would also be included in this the female aspect of lesbianism. But the word here translated sodomite, the Greek word means literally for a male to have sexual relations with a male. That's a literal meaning of the word.

And the reason I go out of my way to emphasize that is because what you hear from the people with the gay agenda today is that the Bible never really addresses the issue of homosexuality or it never speaks of homosexuality in negative terms. And, you know, quite often you'll hear people say, oh, well, Jesus never addressed it. And this was Paul's hang up.

It was his problem. And he wasn't really talking about what we're doing anyway. He was talking about something else.

You know, these are all just various manifestations of deception, people wanting to live a certain way and try to get biblical support for it. But there could be nothing more clear from the Scriptures that both male prostitution, which is quite often what those pushing the homosexual agenda will say, that the Bible refers to only male prostitution. So, in other words, if I'm not involved with several partners, then I'm okay.

But you see, actually, Paul covers both things, male prostitution and homosexuality. He covers them both in these two words. So, these are all aspects of sexual immorality.

Now he moves on, and I want you to notice that there's a variety of issues here, and they're quite varied. He moves from homosexual behavior to theft, nor thieves. The word is, the Greek word is the word we get the word klepto from or kleptomaniac, somebody who steals, somebody who takes from another, somebody who takes something that does not belong to them.

So, nor thieves, nor covetous, those who are desiring and endeavoring to obtain things that have not been allotted to them. And then he says, nor drunkards. Now, this is another issue that is a hot topic today.

Now, in our modern culture, the person that used to be a drunkard is now an alcoholic. And the distinction is this. A drunkard was somebody who was responsible for the behavior.

An alcoholic is a person who's not responsible for their behavior. An alcoholic is a person who's not responsible for their behavior. An alcoholic is a person who's not responsible for their behavior.

An alcoholic is a person who's not deficiently and actually has a disease, and they are drunken and out of control and so forth, all because of a disease, not because of anything that they themselves are responsible for. But this whole idea of drunkenness being a disease or alcoholism being separate from drunkenness is an idea that's not rooted in the Bible, but it's rooted, of course, in humanistic philosophy. And we need to be wise to these things because Christians can get caught up in the world's theories on these things.

I've met numerous Christians who have bought all kinds of this propaganda. Numerous Christians who would say, oh, well, people probably are born gay, and that's the way God made them, and we need to be compassionate, and we should never say anything. Or, well, this person, they're an alcoholic, and they can't control themselves.

They have no power. They're sick, and we need to, you know, this is all deception, and it's all delusion, and it's all clearly contrary to the teaching of Scripture. And the great tragedy is it keeps people who could be liberated, it keeps them in bondage to sin and eventually destroys them.

There are many drunkards today who need to simply face the fact that they're in the condition they're in because at some point in time they chose to move in that direction. Now, you see, this is how, when the psychologist comes in and tries to prove his case that these people must have either been made this way

or they're diseased, what they often use is the fact that the person doesn't like what they're doing and would like to stop what they're doing but can't. So, they say, you see, this is proof that this person is not responsible for what they're doing because they want to stop but they can't.

But, you see, what that is actually proof of is the bondage of sin and the power of sin over a man. But this is a reality. A man does not start out in that position.

You see, when you take your first drink, that first drink does not have that power over you. But the more frequently you drink, the more power the drink has over you. Till you come finally, in some cases, to a point where that has such power over you that you no longer have the power to cease from doing it.

And you've become bound to it. That is what the Bible calls bondage to sin. You see? But we are being told all kinds of different things today.

Basically, what the modern humanist agenda wants to do is to do away with everything that the Bible refers to as sin. And take the responsibility off of people for their behavior. And in doing so, it's a very subtle tactic of Satan to keep a person from ever admitting their own guilt and from finally ever being forgiven.

Because, you see, if I will never take responsibility for my actions and admit I'm wrong, I can never be forgiven. And what's happened, unfortunately, through the influence of psychology on so many people today is that everyone says that their problem is the result of somebody else's effect on their life. It's really not their fault.

And so they go on in this denial of their own responsibility, refusal to take responsibility for their own sinful actions, and try to put it off on everyone else, and subsequently never even come to any kind of ability to be convicted by God. See, the minute somebody says, you're responsible, oh no, I don't want to hear that. But you see, that's the beginning of salvation.

I can't even be saved until I realize I'm lost, and I can't be saved unless I admit I'm a sinner. But what's happened through the influence of this humanistic wisdom, through psychology and different avenues, what's happened is they have taken guilt away from man, which is legitimate because we are guilty, we're sinners, and having taken guilt away from man, man no longer feels responsible or accountable to God, and therefore never seeks forgiveness and finally is never saved. So you see, there's a satanic agenda behind all of this as well.

It's not just a humanistic agenda, behind it all, finally, is Satan wanting to keep people bound in sin, blind to their condition, refusing to acknowledge their own guilt, and ultimately left to perish. We have to resist that. We have to resist those dogmas and those doctrines as Christian people.

That's why we have a Bible. That's why God told us all these things in advance. That's why God told us what sin is and what it's not, so we could know what sin is and how to deal with sin.

I think one of the greatest tragedies today is that there are many people who are bound in sin who truly would like to be liberated from sin in a sense, but yet at the same time they've been told by professional people or others that either what they're doing isn't sin, it isn't wrong, you should just accept it and live that way and you shouldn't feel any guilt about it. They're being told that in some cases or in other cases they're being told you're not responsible for your behavior. There's nothing you can do about it.

You have a disease. You see, all of this is deception. And again, the great tragedy is it keeps people from deliverance.

It keeps them from coming to Christ and being saved. I think of the many people involved in the homosexual lifestyle who want to be liberated, but the propaganda is forced on them that not only should you not want to be liberated, you should rejoice in the fact that this is just the way God made you. But there could be nothing further from the truth.

The Bible certainly doesn't indicate that in any way, shape or form. It indicates just the exact opposite on those things. But you find people getting locked in deeper and deeper and really coming to the point of despair because after all, this is just the way I was made.

Some people accept it and go deeper into it. Other people, you know, can accept it. They're suicidal and things.

It's a very horrid and tragic, tragic thing. But listen to what Paul says in verse 11, and this is what we've always got to remember. This is the reality of the gospel.

And such were some of you. I love this statement. I love this statement.

And such were some of you. This is what the early church was made up of. People who were previously fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners.

That's what the early church was made up of. You know what? That's what every true church is made up of because that is humanity. We're all sinners and our sin just depends on who we are and what our background is.

Our sin takes on a different face. But yet, in reality, we're all sinners separated from God. And notice as you look at this list here, Paul doesn't put one sin above another, exalting one and seeing one is more severe than the other.

They're all linked right there together. And such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. That's the glory of the gospel right there.

Such were some of you. This is what you used to be. But, through the grace of God and through the power of the gospel, you are no longer that.

See, that's the message of the gospel. That's what Christ is able to do. Man can only help people so far.

Once a person goes beyond a line, there's nothing that can humanly be done to help them. In other words, a person can become so bound in sin that there's nothing humanly that can be done to deliver them from sin. Nothing that can be done.

But, a man can never go so far that Christ can't deliver him from the power of sin. That's the glory of the gospel. And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord.

And so all of us, I'm sure to some degree, can relate to the list here and we can all probably identify with the fact that such were some of us. But, that's the big distinction. What we were and what we now are.

And we might not have gone to the bottom of the moral pit. But yet, if we know our Bibles well enough, we understand that whether I'm the picture of virtue in society or I'm the person living on the street, there isn't any distinction that God makes between men who are sinners. The man who is the pillar of virtue in society is just as much as lost as the man who's sleeping out on the street.

So drunk that he doesn't even know where he is. You see, there's no distinction between the prime minister, all men of sin, and come short of the glory of God. And the gospel of Jesus Christ is that we were all at one time sinners, but through Christ we can all be saved.

Isn't that wonderful? And that is not only what we've experienced, but remember, that's the message that we have for other people. Oh, but Satan has got all of his devices. He's got all of his smoke screens.

He's got all of his propaganda machinery out there trying to convince everybody that nothing can be done for them. They're not responsible for their actions or they were born this way or whatever. But it's all propaganda to keep them bound in their sin and to keep them from eternal life.

And then he comes and he influences the church. And he creeps into the church where people deny the authority of the word of God. And then you have churchmen saying, oh, yes, this is perfectly normal and acceptable.

We should never talk about people living in sin. I remember reading a few years ago when Vicar came out and made that statement. We should never use that terminology, people living in sin.

That makes people feel guilty. And that's the greatest sin today is to make someone feel guilty. Thank God the Holy Spirit does that.

And he can do it even apart from us, can't he? That's the message of the gospel. Such were some of you, but now Christ is able to change. Set free, completely liberate, completely restore to a productive life people whose lives had been destroyed by sin.

And that's what you saw in the early church. Now, verse 12. We'll go a little more rapidly through these next few verses.

Listen, he says, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Now, when we get to chapter eight, Paul is going to deal with the issue of Christian liberty in more detail.

He's just briefly touching on it at this moment because he knows that part of their problem is that they're justifying some of their behavior by retreating into the fact that they have liberty. He knows they're thinking. He knows as he's bringing up some of these things, they're going to say, oh, Paul, he's just a legalist.

Oh, Paul, he just doesn't have the freedom that we have. And he's going to deal with that thoroughly in chapter eight and we'll deal with it thoroughly in chapter eight. But here in verse 12, he just briefly touches on it.

He just brings it up to point out two things for them. Yes, all things are lawful. See, as we go further, we'll find that these people, they were wanting to still participate in pagan festivals and things of that nature.

They were involved still in idolatrous things and they were using Christian liberty as a cloak to be involved in ungodly things. Paul says to him, all things are lawful, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

You see, he reminds them of these two very important things. You have to remember that just because you have liberty to do something doesn't mean you ought to do it because it's not going to help you. And what we want to do as Christians is we want to do everything in our power to help ourselves be more pleasing to God.

Also, we must remember that our liberty, if not kept in check, can lead us into bondage. The irony of Western culture is that we're so set on freedom that Western culture has become extremely bound. People in this society are in bondage, but yet they will talk about their freedom.

You know, you hear about free thinkers and that's a really important thing. I'm a free thinker. In other words, I'm not influenced by anyone except myself.

That's really the essence of free thinking. And you find people talking about the freedom they came out from under the yoke of the Judeo-Christian God and all the bondage that it entailed. And now I'm free.

But you see, they're not free. They have to keep drinking. They have to keep taking the drug.

They have to seek more and more fulfillment through sexual activity. And they can't stop. You see, they're bound.

Liberty left unchecked will lead to bondage. Paul reminds me of that. He says, foods for the stomach.

This is the liberty thing he's going to get again to this later. Foods for the stomach, the stomachs for food. But God will destroy both it and them.

Now, the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 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 harlot? Certainly not.

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her for the two, he says, shall become one flesh. But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee sexual immorality.

Every sin that a man does is outside the body. But he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. This is what we'll emphasize in our next study.

Verse 19, or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? Whom you have from God and you are not your own. For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's.

You see, they had forgotten. That, among other things, that when they came to Christ, they relinquished their will. They came under his authority, they were bought with a price and their body was no longer their own.

But they were drifting back into these old forms of behavior. They were getting involved with prostitutes again. Some of the men, apparently.

They were going back to the pagan temples and getting involved in the festivals and things like that. They were suing one another, as we saw earlier. They were going back to those things that Christ had set them free from.

And now Paul gives them this stern warning. But he says to them about sexual immorality. He says that a person who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

And in doing so, he sins directly against God because your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now, of course, the primary application is to Christians. But when it comes to the whole issue of sexuality.

People today will say. Why are you trying to tell me what to do with my body? I'm not hurting anyone else. We're consenting adults or whatever the case.

See, what they fail to realize is this. Their body is not their own. You didn't create your body.

You didn't create yourself. Your body is made by God. It was given to you by God for the glory of God.

And God is the one who sets up the rules about how the body is to be used. You think of the hypocrisy that we see all around us today. Think of the abortion issue, for example.

What is the argument that's put forth by those who advocate abortion? The argument is that no one can tell me what to do with my body. Right? So often we hear that. It's all a matter of liberty.

That's the whole issue. Those who are opposed to abortion, they say, are opposed to liberty. They're trying to tell us what we can do with our bodies.

And, of course, the government will say the same thing. Oh, we can't restrict abortion because that would be interfering with people's privacy. And that would be telling people what to do with their bodies.

Well, you know what? That's hypocrisy. Because every time I get in my car, I have to put on my seatbelt. Who told me that I had to do that? The government told me that I had to do that.

But what if I want my body to be thrown out of my car onto the motorway and run over by someone else's car? Don't I have a right? It's my body. But you see, no, I don't have a right there. I've got to buckle up.

Do you see the hypocrisy in it? It's not a matter of being concerned about people's freedom. That's not the issue. The issue, really, in a lot of these different areas that we've talked about today, the main issue is to overthrow God's standard.

That's what's behind it all. Next week, when we get more into the sexual immorality thing, I want to talk more about the homosexual issue. And I want to bring up the fact that when you're dealing with homosexuality today, you're dealing with, in a sense, two separate things.

You're dealing with individual people who are caught up in a lifestyle that's sinful, that's destroying them, and many of them want out of that. And those are the people that we need to be really sensitive to and we need to seek to minister to. But you're not only dealing with that.

You're dealing also with people who have an agenda. You're dealing with propaganda. You're dealing with people who have already decided against Christ.

And not only have they decided against him, but now they are on a campaign to oppose anything that Christ stands for. And I think that our attitude toward those people inevitably has to be a little different than it is toward those who are truly wanting answers to the dilemma that they find themselves in. And this is where I think, you know, Christians sometimes are so gullible and so unwise in some of the things that they get caught up in.

I'll say this at the risk of being misunderstood, but you know, the whole thing with AIDS Day. Everybody gets your little red ribbon and wears it around. I have a problem with AIDS Day.

And the problem I have with AIDS Day is not the hemophiliac who contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion or the poor, you know, child who got it through, you know, other ways or maybe some of the people in the African countries and things like that. The problem with AIDS Day is that it's the homosexual agenda that's behind the whole thing and pushing it. And basically you have people who want their own way and they're taking advantage of compassionate people who want to be loving and caring to further their program so they can continue to live according to their lust.

I think as Christians we need to be much wiser when it comes to these things. We need to be much wiser. Again, you know, we have to be wise.

We have to be compassionate. We have to be sensitive. But at the same time, I don't think as a Christian I should be supporting sinful lifestyles.

I need to be aware of what's going on behind the scenes, not just, you know, maybe the pictures of the children in Ethiopia or whatever who are suffering from AIDS. There are many diseases in this world that people are suffering from. And as you probably know, AIDS, although there's so much talk about AIDS, cancer, of course, takes many more lives than AIDS does.

But we don't see the thrust or the push in that area. Why? Because there isn't that agenda behind it. We need to be wise as Christian people.

And we need to have a solid biblical understanding of all these things and again, going back as we close, going back to this one thing. God is the one who determines what a man is to do or not to do with his body. He's the final word on it.

And that, quite frankly, irks some people, doesn't it? That is the problem. Why can't I marry this man, says some man. I love this person.

Well, to put it quite simply, because God said you couldn't. It's as simple as that. Why did he say that? I don't know.

I got a good idea. Some obvious reasons. But, you know, again, the final thing is it's because God said it.

And I think, again, when we're talking about these kinds of issues also, I thought a lot about this in preparation for teaching. I knew I was coming to this chapter and thinking about how I wanted to deal with this. And I think one of the mistakes Christians make also is getting away from the Bible and getting into all kinds of other reasons why we shouldn't behave this way and do this and do that.

I agree to some extent that those are valid reasons why we shouldn't behave this way. But that's not the main reason. The main reason is because God said we're not to behave that way.

And I think as Christian people, the wisest thing we could do is know what the scriptures have to say about the issue and just let the scriptures speak for themselves. Because they speak. They're clear.

But for a person caught up in homosexual behavior, theft, drunkenness, whatever the case might be, the message is still the same, isn't it? It's the glorious gospel that whatever you are right now as a sinner, whatever sin is dominating your life, you can be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus. You can be set free. You can become a new person.

That's the glorious message that we have. And that's the message that we need God's help to bring to other people.

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