

WHAT ARE WE LIVING FOR?

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Today's message deals with a key passage of such great significance that it bears repeating.

During our years of ministry, I've preached from it more than any other passage.

Peter said, about certain themes: *"I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them.... I think it is right to refresh your memory.... I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always remember these things."* **2 Pet. 1:12-13**

In our study of 1 Corinthians I couldn't skip over the most important passage in the letter!

So I'm going to repeat some things you've heard me say before ... so YOU won't forget!

"Sex saturated society" Sex flaunts itself in front of us everywhere we look: on TV, on our computer, at school, in the office, in the mall—wherever we look!

It focuses our attention on a perverted view of the body.

Satan loves to hide *lust* behind a label he deceptively calls *"liberty."* While in reality that lust is what really *enslaves!*

"Sexaholics Anonymous" and similar groups are filled with people who are enslaved!

The world's philosophy says: "If it feels good, do it!"

"Satisfy your desires.

Don't let your "hang-ups" keep you from enjoying life."

However there is no JOY at the end of that road!

CONCERNING MISUSE OF THE BODY 6:12-20

God's people at Corinth have been influenced by local attitudes concerning the body; they want the "*freedom*" to use their bodies as they please.

Corinth is famous for paganism and for prostitution of every type. Some people at the church want to live like everybody else.

"Those restrictions and inhibitions are old-fashioned. We know better!"

"We have liberty in Christ!"

Christians in Corinth are being trapped by the spirit of the age.

They develop the same attitudes toward the opposite sex and toward the body.

They're lacking genuine love for one another.

And today?

Despite AIDS and other worries, sexual "liberation" continues.

USA Today: Out of 999 college students from 104 campuses, 60% said they're unwilling to give up sex in spite of AIDS and other threats.

The church, too, is riddled with immorality.

Barna's research shows little difference between people who identify themselves as Christians and the rest of the world.

We continually hear of spiritual leaders of great churches who fall in the trap.

Paul deals with the basic issue: *What are we living for?*

Are we living to satisfy ourselves, or to glorify God?

Has the fact the God has bought us out of our slavery to sin made a difference?

TWO POPULAR CONCEPTS

1) "**I'm free!**" – I can do whatever I wish **12**

Personal liberty *"All things are lawful for me!"* (2X)

N.T. clearly teaches the view of freedom from law

Popular perversion– personal liberty to do whatever we want with our bodies.

2) "Food for the belly" 13

"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food!"

"GOD MADE ME LIKE THIS"– He understands my needs and desires.

This is the world's view. It thinks about personal satisfaction first

Paul's principle: *the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It has a purpose.*

It's the instrument God uses to reveal His glory–NOT to satisfy self.

KEY CONCEPTS

Our body is for the Lord 13b

Our body belongs to Christ 15a

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit 19-20

Paul leads into this topic by describing **the conduct of the unrighteous** 6:9-11

Conduct which blocks entrance into God's kingdom 9-10

While we may have done such things in the past,

In Christ we've been cleansed and separated from them
11

The real issue for us is now clarified:

PRINCIPLE OF LIBERTY 6:12

Because we've been purchased, **we are free**. All restrictions have been removed.

6:12 *^aAll things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.*

All things are lawful

Our righteousness is based on faith—on trusting Christ, not on our works.

What I do doesn't affect my righteousness. I have been made righteous *in Christ*.

Paul's teaching about not giving in to the desires of the flesh isn't a legalistic "Thou shalt not ..." approach.

He enjoys freedom but recognizes that true freedom is accompanied by responsibility.

We enjoy the freshness of liberty, while rejecting the abuses of excess.

Some things are inconsistent with godly living and our righteous position.

Some things aren't profitable for us—they won't work together to uplift us

They won't make me a better person.

Some things will take control of my life.

I won't let myself be controlled by any activity or form of conduct.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF ABUSE 6:13-18—the real issue illustrated

Every blessing God has given to man can be perverted

13a Food => Gluttony

13b-18 Sex => Fornication – And no end of other desires.

The spirit of our age (like Corinth) is captured by the young person who said:

"My sexual needs are just like other needs.

If I get hungry, I drop by McDonald's for a quarterpounder.

If I need sex, I get a date with a willing girl. What's wrong with that?"

That inability to distinguish between "fast food" and "fast sex" has crept into church.

The media has created a me-centered image of contentment.

I'm satisfied when I get what I want – pleasure, sex, drugs, love, money, things, even friends, a loving husband or wife, boy friend or girl friend, etc.

It all revolves around ME, and satisfying my desires.

The frustration with these desires:

1) We never get enough of what we want.

2) When we get it, it never satisfies.

It ends up empty; it doesn't "fill the hole"

Money isn't a cure-all! Our possessions don't satisfy.

Pleasure and sex never satisfy.

So what will? **What's worth living for?**

The theme of the worldly centers on self-indulgence

The body was made for food; therefore, let's eat – enjoy it!

The body was made for sex; therefore, live it up – enjoy it!

"If it feels good, do it!"

While there's truth in saying that the stomach was made for food and food for it.

That's a short-range view.

Stomach and food are both temporary.

On the other hand, it is *never* true that the body was made for *immoral* sex.

God made a sex drive, it's designed to be satisfied *in marriage!*

Trying to find satisfaction in sex apart from marriage never works!

It always leads to a painful conclusion!

Immorality goes against all that God is; and against His purpose for making man.

As God's people, our bodies are designed for Him;
not for a prostitute.

We are to be united with Him; not with a prostitute.

We are to be His temple and glorify Him; not gratify self.

**Paul responds: the body was given to be used for
God—for His glory.**

The principle of self-indulgence ought not to control us.

It's inconceivable that what's been united with Christ could be united with a harlot also.

Under the barrage of contemporary messages, it's easy to accept that purity, or self-control is an unachievable, outdated standard from the past.

**That can only be answered by understanding what GOD
says makes life worth living:**

PROPER USE OF THE BODY 6:19-20

Paul warns us to control our body so God may be glorified in us.

He reveals one of the most important ideas we'll ever learn about godly living:.

Our body has been called to fulfill the role of the O.T. Temple.

It was to glorify God. Therefore, WE should glorify God.
It was to reveal God.

Does our lifestyle reveal Him? Gal. 5:22-23

THREE KEY PRINCIPLES

- 1) While all things are permissible, not everything is beneficial.
- 2) Happiness comes from realizing that we belong to God and He lives in us.
- 3) Live to glorify God rather than to satisfy self.

THREE KEY QUESTIONS

- 1) Is it profitable? 12
- 2) Will it control me? 12

We're to be controlled by the Spirit—Not by desires for personal satisfaction.

- 3) Will it glorify God? 20

**OUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
FOR A PURPOSE:**

TO REVEAL GOD'S GLORY!