

# GOD, SEX AND THE HUMAN BODY

## 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-7:7



Even from a brief look at history it's easy to see that society's attitude towards sex has changed hugely over the years. Who have been some of the "sex symbols" of society over the past 50 years or so (both males and females)?

Along with this, how has society's view and attitude of sex changed over the past 50

With this in mind we're about to take a look at 2 very different 1<sup>st</sup> century views of sex and the human body; a licentious "liberal" (1 Cor 6:12-13) and puritan "ascetic" (1 Cor 7:1) view. You can't get 2 more opposing views than these, yet they co-existed within the one church community. Not hard to see why there was so much conflict within the Corinthian church. Both of these attitudes reflected the current worldly views in which the church lived. In response Paul lays out the right Christian attitude towards sex and the human body. To begin start by asking God for guidance as we look at his word, read 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:7 and then get stuck into the questions below.

In 6:12-13 Paul presents, then corrects, a "liberal" attitude towards sex; "everything is permissible". As simple as this question may sound, how would you summarise this "liberal" view of the life? What are the implications of this view in regards to how they must have lived their lives?

Looking at vs 13, and especially the axiom "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food", what do you think is meant by this axiom? What does this axiom reveal about their attitude towards sex and the human body?

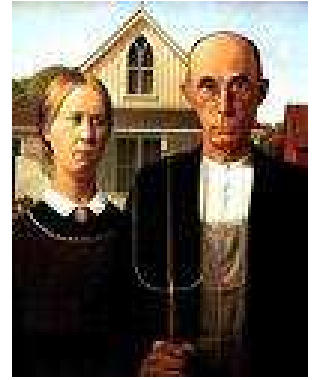


When you take a look at the "liberal"(as above) attitude towards sex, which person do they seemed concerned about? Compare this against Paul's attitude. Who is Paul concerned about? Who does sexual immorality

Remembering back to Ephesians 5:22-33 there are several similarities to today's passage, especially the idea of UNITY. As we engage in sexual immorality we hurt Christ because through faith we are united to him. As vs 15 puts it *our bodies are members of Christ*. This is crucial to understand as it's central to all Christianity. Unity with Christ shapes the way we are to view our bodies and the way we live the Christian life. In regards to sex Paul tells them to FLEE sexual immorality because our their bodies are untied to Christ through the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:3 Paul says there must be not even a HINT of sexual immorality and in 1 Cor 6:18 we're to FLEE immorality. How does this approach to immorality differ to common views today?

Rather than using our Christian freedom to indulge our desires Paul says we are to honour God with our bodies. What are some ways we can do that? How do we honour God with our bodies?

In comparison to the issues of chapter 6 – sexual promiscuity – the issue in **chapter 7** seems to be the opposite -**asceticism**. An ascetic is a person who follows a strict and rigid lifestyle. They take pride in self discipline and in mastering their desires. In chapter 7 these ascetics seem to claim that even though they are married they must resist all urges for sex, hence the quote: *It is good for a man not to marry / have sexual relations with a woman* (take a look at the vs 1 footnotes). For ascetics, to honour God with your body seems to mean having no sexual relationships, even with your wife. Paul clearly disagrees with this view. Why **SHOULD** a husband and wife have sex?



In light of this, how should a married couple view themselves?

Under what situations **ONLY** are a couple to deprive each other of sex and why?

But in the end (ch 7:7) Paul wishes *that all men were as I am*, though he realises they're not. How does Paul help the Corinthians decide whether to marry or not to marry?