

Application: Is the Bible Culturally Conditioned? Pt 2

1Cor 6⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, 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. ¹⁴ And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. ¹⁵ 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! ¹⁶ 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.” ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. ¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 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? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

► Sexuality within the Roman empire reflected the _____ of the empire. Just as they embraced virtually every god, so they embraced virtually every form of sexuality. And the two went together, for temples of the gods were often staffed with _____ of every variety — heterosexual, homosexual, & hermaphrodite.

► _____ is a good example. A Roman colony just 50 miles from Athens, it was charged with being Rome to the world. It was like a mix of San Francisco & Hollywood — wealth, glitz, poverty, pagan temples & sex. The temple of Aphrodite alone had _____ prostitutes, and public prayers were often offered for the gods to send more.

► Such immorality was considered _____. The Roman statesman, Cicero, wrote that youth consorting with prostitutes had long been a “common practice” in keeping with the “custom ... of our ancestors” (*Pro Caelio* 20.48).

► Pederasty (men with boys) was also _____.

► So was _____, which was extremely easy.

► In all these practices, the ancients were imitating their _____. In Homer's Iliad, Zeus, though married to Hera, bragged by name of the goddesses, nymphs, & women he had bedded (not to mention the gods & men).

► Counterintuitively, the culture also embraced _____ of the body through asceticism & celibacy. Like fraternal twins, these extremes of immorality & asceticism looked like opposites, but they sprang from the same womb — the pagan belief that all evil was connected to _____. One extreme said the body is irrelevant, so live it up; the other said the body should be treated harshly.

► Such was the culture into which the gospel of Christ first came. It was so powerful & pervasive that it relentlessly pressured Christians to accommodate & incorporate it. Every problem Paul cites in 1Cor resulted from the culture making _____ into the church. And so we see Paul dealing with both immorality & asceticism.

1Cor 5¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you ... that a man has his father's wife! ... 6¹⁵ Shall I take members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? ... 7¹ Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman ... 3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband ... 5 Do not deprive one another

► In response, Paul argues that:

► 1) Having been made righteous in union with Christ, we must _____ in light of that union. We can no longer _____ in the sins he came to deliver us from (9-11).

Heb 2¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

► 2) The _____ is not evil or irrelevant, and it will not be destroyed or discarded, but raised up in eternal life (12-14).

Gal 2²⁰ [I]t is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

► 3) Both immorality & asceticism are _____ (13,15).

2Tim 2²⁵ [I]f God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

1Tim 4¹ [S]ome will depart from the faith, giving heed to ... doctrines of demons, ...³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.⁴ For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving

Col 2²¹ "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle" ...²³ These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

1Cor 7¹ Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.³ Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.⁵ Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

► 4) _____ is not autonomy — it is not belonging to yourself — but belonging to the One who created us, loved us, and gave himself for us (15, 19-20). To belong to yourself is to be an _____. To belong to Christ is to be a member of God's household.

► 5) God created the sexual union to reflect the spiritual union we were created for with God (16-18). Therefore, sex is only for marriage, and marriage is only for one man and one woman pledged to one another for life. Only then does it reflect the spiritual union between Christ and the Church.

Eph 5³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

► With sexuality, as with spirituality, the Bible and the gospel were not conditioned by the culture but cut across the culture. Love required that Christians speak and live the _____.

1Cor 6¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality ... 10¹⁴ [F]lee from idolatry.