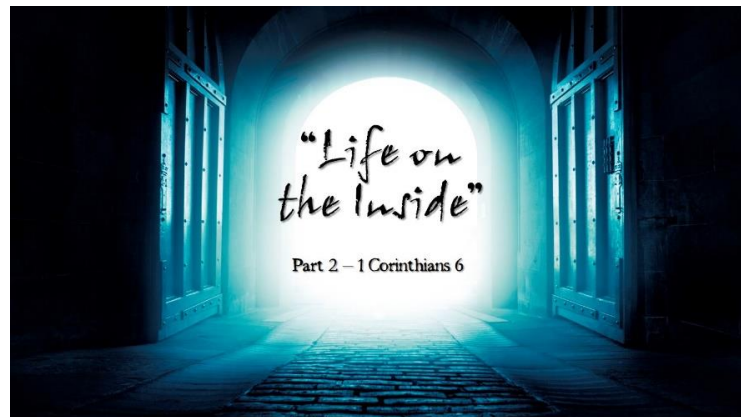


“Life on the Inside” – Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 6 -

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Chapter 5 *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 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? 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? 5 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? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather [let yourselves] be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and [you do] these things [to your] brethren! 9 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.*

Because Satan's onslaught against the greater church has been slow and methodical, the faith generation today is so often wholly unaware that anything is amiss. There is at times, for many of us, a vague feeling that something is not exactly copacetic, but since there is rarely an understanding of historical Christianity or even *Biblical* Christianity, no one knows where the bar is actually supposed to be! Such a state is not reserved just for our generation, it only takes an individual or a church that is not attentive and not prioritized according to the Spirit's leading. The church in Corinth to which Paul is writing was like our modern churches in this respect, wherein they didn't even know they *were* amiss! They didn't realize that they were "off."

Paul however, does not surrender the high ground. He still seeks to intervene into the lives and politics of this church with a bit of a "fix it or blow it up" attitude...one that I personally respect. He continues to coax them back to that daunting passage Romans 12:1 "*...dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?*" Hey Christian, does Christ own all of you? Or are you spending your life relentlessly attempting to cut a deal with God?

Just as then, many people today will follow Christ and a faith lifestyle as long as things are going well for us in the physical earthly realm. However, when things get difficult, how quickly and how often we turn to the world

for respite and resolution. We seek out psychologists to help us through our difficulties, counselors for our marital and financial problems, and lawyers to sue those who fail to respond the way we want.

Oh certainly we cannot expect the **world** to adhere to godly methods and interaction. But Paul's words herein were not for the world. They were for the believer, and moreover for the one who more than owned the t-shirt! The individual who counted himself and herself as being part of the **greater** body and part of a **local** body of Christ! Throughout this letter Paul is...both subtly as well as in times **overtly** declaring that within the family of God, things are **supposed** to be different than the world. Yet sadly, rarely is that the case in our day. I have known some pretty wicked church folks over the years. Ironically they often will read their bible and pray and go to church, but they are not his servant and they have and do hurt so many people around them. They give a hearty "praise the Lord" as they kick you to the curb. If they heard those words they would be quick with a "what about **me**" which is the instant tell of a person's salvation status.

(6:1-2) Apparently the believers there in Corinth had resorted to suing one another, which is not a stretch of the imagination whatsoever. I would bet there was a time in the existence of that church where such a thing would have been unthinkable. Yet here they are, so far from a Christ-lifestyle that, *once again*, they didn't even realize they were amiss.

Throughout this passage Paul keeps asking, "*Do you not **know**?*" Clearly Paul felt that he *should have* been able to expect a different response from them! Despite their lofty ...*some would say arrogant*, mindset, they were behaving like spoiled children. They were ignorant of what Christ had truly done for them, what He had given them, and certainly what He expected of them.

As a pastor, I share in what appears to be a level of frustration in Paul over the childlike behavior he was witnessing. The believers were bickering and divisive, they failed to deal with sin in their midst, and now they had stooped to dealing with each other like the worst of the world does. All of this happened because they failed to remember, every day, that they were supposed to be different...that they are citizens of the kingdom of God.

Paul was reminding them of something that they actually *knew* but were ignoring, and that was that issues of this kind must be handled between them as believers. Paul said that the simplest and most lowly believer filled with the Spirit of God is better to judge and render a wise verdict between brothers, than the sharpest Harvard graduate who is yet part of this world. But that only works when we want *God's* way more than we want *our* way. Because I rarely see even *pastors* dealing with things this way!

(6:3-8) How often, because of such behavior, the church is shamed before the eyes of the world. How often those in the world just shake their heads in disgust. Whenever "I, me, and mine" becomes the ruling factor in an issue, trouble and ungodliness will inevitably go public, much to the embarrassment of the church and the chagrin and snickering of the world. We fail to remember that the world is watching and judging both Christ and Christianity by our actions toward one another. Now all of this is not in any way saying we should have nothing to do with the legal systems, as even Paul in the book of Acts virtually tells us the opposite. The *lawsuit* itself was not the issue as much as the fact that it was a fleshly war between believers that in a previous breath said they loved one another.

James 3:16 "*For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil.*"

We need to acknowledge, and further, *live in* the position that self has no place in the community of believers. If you are hurting others because of self...lashing out because of self...leaving the church because of self...you

are wrong and sinning. A body of believers exists for the glory of God and the edifying of the body as a whole, and if it fails in these pursuits, then what good is it? How can we say we are Spirit filled when our actions are evil?

The reason for this behavior actually goes way back to the beginning of one's involvement in a church and even in Christianity as a whole. Today we "church shop" and effectively choose a church for what it gives *me*, and remain at the church for what it does for *me*, and ultimately leave a church for what it did to *me*. The worst part of this is that many pastors and churches actually feed this self-centered thinking and breed a body of believers focused on their individual rights, self-fulfillment, most of all, feelings and emotions. Of course, none of that is scriptural or kingdom-centered. But it puts a warm body in a pew, and for many pastors, that's where the buck stops!

(6:9-11) Paul goes on in verses 9-11 to explain the root of such practices. He says it all stems from the fact that there were some within the church who believed the Word as *doctrine*, but it failed to become a rule of life, a *practice* of faith. This issue of believers suing each other was but one issue on a vastly wider concern, and that was that the folks from that church *knew* what the Bible said...*knew* what God wanted from them, but when the moment came to "pull the trigger" they refused to follow through!

Paul was making clear the fact that true salvation, true *redemption* will have a concrete and sure manifestation in our lives. Many today receive salvation, *or feign to do so*, yet stay essentially the same person they were before they found the cross of Christ except perhaps with a bit of moralistic polish. Not only should this not be the case, but in reality it *cannot* be the case. The innate transformation of redemption will have a very real effect upon our lives, and that is an undeniable scriptural absolute!

We will *live* differently, and we will *be* different. That is not just a possibility or an option, but an absolute result of being born again and having the Spirit of God in us. It is an absolute fact, and further, it is the living proof that we have actually **been** redeemed!

Paul gives a list of sinful actions in verses 9-10, no doubt not an exhaustive list, but issues that apparently those in Corinth would relate to. All of these on the list are understood by the average man, except maybe "revilers," which means to speak harshly (generally lies) against another. Paul says that those who fit into these categories, will "not inherit the kingdom of God." Not those with simply a past involvement or a repentant stumble, but a *lifestyle* of such. They will not see the kingdom of God in this life or the next.

It doesn't take long to see the reality of this state in someone's life, for lack of peace is hard to hide. There is always an innate and deep sadness that can be seen just past the outward façade of self-confidence and allusions of personal fulfillment. In an effort to grab the "life-bull" by the horns and control the destiny of my happiness, I inevitably destroy myself and any hope of life meaning through the exercise of my own selfish priorities. And it doesn't matter whether you go to church while doing it or living as an atheist. The end is the same.

Paul reminds them that they *used* to be these kinds of people. But now they are theoretically washed, born again, sanctified; set apart for God's exclusive use, and justified; rendered righteous and pure before God. So if that is true, why the worldly action? Are you truly reborn? Then act like it!

(6:12-14) In verses 12-14, Paul ventures into "dangerous territory." He goes where few men will tread: *the area of grace and freedom versus righteous and holy living*. He says here that in God's grace "all things are lawful," meaning his freedom in Christ is extensive and fairly unlimited. However we need to acknowledge that Paul is not suggesting grace overrides doctrine and scripture. Paul isn't saying its okay to kill someone or have

illicit sex and then claim we are under grace. You might think that such an extreme is a crazy notion, but there are plenty of people attempting this line of defense every day.

First, we must say that our freedom is indeed far-reaching, and we are certainly given a great deal of wiggle room here. Romans 14:14 says “*I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*” That doesn’t mean I get to personally decide what is sin and what is not. Yet often Christianity is viewed by the world as restrictive and stifling to individual liberty and freedom. Yet Paul seems to consider himself free beyond anyone in the so-called liberty of the world’s system. Please note again that Paul is no doubt addressing issues not dealt with specifically in scripture: *areas of Christian liberty and conscience*. He is not usurping scriptural directives and mandates. He is not in any way negating the written Word, or the directives of God presented therein. And let us be reminded specifically *who* Paul is addressing in this cluster of chapters, and that is the believing and confessing body of Christ, not the novice or the “newby.”

The two qualifiers on the subject of personal liberty are:

1) *Is it helpful and/or good? (KJV - expedient)* Meaning, does what I do affect others positively, especially those in the body of Christ?

2) *Does it cause me to come under bondage to something? (Idolatry)* We are free, but the question is: what do we do with this freedom? Live like hell while seeking heaven? Hardly! The key is: In all things, do I seek to bring glory to God? 1Co 10:31 “*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*” Am I involved in idolatry (i.e. in bondage to something else other than God?)

Please note what verse 13 says at the end, the “Lord for the body.” Not just the *soul*, not just the *mind*, but for our *bodies* too! This means we are to *live God out in our bodies too*; in action, in service, and in holiness. It’s been said that a believer’s position is to, “Love God and do what you want.” Such a statement troubles some people, but it is apparently those who *want* to sin and live contrary to the pursuits of Christ! For when a person is truly in love with God, all that he “wants” to do ultimately is to please God and he places the kingdom of God at the highest priority and power.

God is not only interested in your hearts and minds, but also in your bodies, your actions, and what you do with them. Christianity is not just about going to church, singing songs, and praying. Being a real Christian is actually quite active and moving. Jesus did not come to us “in His heart” or just his mind, but He came *physically*. He did not die just in His heart or mind, He died in the flesh, experiencing real pain, and real death. Serving Jesus and His kingdom, which is what scripture says we were reborn to do, is a *physical, bodily* act. Eph 2:10 “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*”

(6:15-17) In verses 15-17 Paul again reiterates that God owns not only our hearts, our minds, and all the philosophical and esoteric aspects of our lives, but He also owns *our physical bodies*. Such an understanding...or *the lack of such*, has far-reaching implications. Our bodies are “members of,” or “part of” the whole of Christ. This means we are unable to separate ourselves from our bodies, claiming as the Gnostics did in Paul’s day that the body has nothing to do with the faith and it was all just a heart issue. Many people still promote this “convenient” idea today. They believe themselves to be saved, *heart and soul*, but they bodily live in the world and in open sin. One of the ways this occurs, back then in Corinth as well as the real world today, is when the believer becomes involved in sexual sin. We act as if it doesn’t matter, that it’s a small issue, or that God does not see. Yet this passage tells us clearly that Jesus is part of us on the *physical realm*. So wherever we go and whatever we do, we take Jesus along with us and subject Him to our actions, both good and bad!

This specific sin seems to take down more people than any other these days. This happens no doubt because the world promotes such actions relentlessly, and much of the greater church accepts it as an inevitability. Therefore we have seemingly surrendered to this sin and will often attempt to make people spiritually comfortable in it.

Our illicit sexual contact with others is referred to with terminology reminiscent of scriptural marital language: “the two become one flesh.” Such language presents the fact that the actual unity of marriage does not occur in the wedding act, but in the sexual act that follows. In light of this, how many wives or husbands have we *really* had in God’s eyes? Each one broken, each one divorced, each one a living example of the flippant and broken relationship the church *and its members* have with Christ.

Marriage is a picture of Christ’s relationship with His church, one that is to be pure and undefiled. When we ignore this truth, we bring shame upon ourselves and upon Christ. Furthermore, all sexual sin is “premeditated sin,” something the Bible calls “transgression.” The scriptures reserve some extreme language for that topic. (See 1 Jn 3:4-9) When we are joined to the Lord, we are one spirit with Him. Therefore to then commit sexual sin with another is to trample upon that union, and to denigrate the cross of Christ.

(6:18) Please note the careful language Paul uses here. He does not say to “stand strong” against this sin; he doesn’t say “Face it down!” He doesn’t imply we should get as close as we can to it, then “hang tough.” He tells us rather to *run away*. Again Paul in 2 Timothy 2:22 says, “Flee... youthful lusts.”

Throughout scripture, God has made it clear that sin is sin, with no “grading system.” What I mean by that is there are no “little sins” in God’s eyes. There are, however, degrees of earthly and human consequences to different sins. Paul is saying sexual sin is a sin against oneself. This is a sin both to our soul and our body. Proverbs 6:32 “*But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul.*”

(6:19) Our sexual sin defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit by using it for vile purposes. We attempt to justify this sin in every way possible today. We claim, “...but we love each other!” No, ...*you don’t*. That is not real love, not the kind that God promotes. In fact, it is the opposite of the love of another. It is rather a love of self that desires to please itself at the expense of another. I will take from you to please myself. This is worldly lust. This is love of self. Which then therefore ties back to the beginning of this chapter. The chapter then wholly becomes about the celebration of *self* rather than the exaltation of Christ!

We say, “We’re going to get married anyway.” In other words, we *plan* to make that commitment, we *plan* to testify of our union, but for now we are just physical. By doing this we are saying the satisfaction of the flesh gets priority over every aspect of marital unity...every aspect of the spirit. Thus God is not the foundation, *sex is*. Good luck with that.

We say it was an accident. **No, it wasn’t.** You didn’t slip on a banana peel and commit sexual intercourse. It takes time to get there, which means there is plenty of time to turn back. It is a conscious, pre-meditated transgression against God. Satan promotes it because by doing so, he can cancerously tear down and corrupt your soul, the *residence of God*, which is his enemy.

(6:20) For some reason, we cannot grasp the awesome significance of the price paid for what we have. Jesus didn’t loan us a couple of dollars! He *died* a horrible and painful martyr’s death. He was murdered so we might live. When we knowingly sin in such ways against God, we are saying we don’t care what He did. We are saying we love ourselves more, we love sex more than Him. In this act we are therefore, *by definition*, saying we are not Christians; we are not born again.

This is not a judgment call, rather a self-condemnation, a witness and testimony that we do not love Christ first and instead are willing to sell Him out for a few minutes of fleshly gratification. Christ asks *us* to do what *He did for us*. He sacrificed Himself not only *spiritually*, but also *physically*. He seeks our bodies as well as our hearts and souls.

This is the heart of the internal religious and church battleground today. There are those who just want to be Christians in their heads and feel God in their emotions, without giving him their bodies and physical living. We say we love Him, we raise our hands to praise Him in song and prayer, but we are holding back from Him! We want our bodies to ourselves. Thus we do not serve Him; we do not give of ourselves physically. This is not just a sex issue, it is a *body* issue. To whom does **your** body belong?