

# Old New Questions (4): Why Is Sex Outside Marriage Wrong?

---

(1 Corinthians 6:15-20)

## I. Introduction

- A. Our 1<sup>st</sup> Ukraine mission trip ended with a **memorable** party for our new friends
1. **First**, leader lost all money he had collected to pay our bills for the trip.
    - a. Without paying all those bills, we wouldn't be able to leave the country!
    - b. Note: Collecting clothes to leave for the poor to pick up is good idea.
    - c. Laying your own coat (with money) on the same table isn't good idea!
  2. **Second**, we got a lesson on a difference in basic world views at that party
    - a. One of our team (Richard) studied with a young lady for most of trip
      - 1) She was baptized the night before the farewell party with 7-8 others
      - 2) At the party, she offered sleep with him to show her appreciation
    - b. Was this lady's rather naïve ignorance of Christian morality shocking?
    - c. Richard was shocked (*only time quiet*), but it wasn't shocking (*culture*)
  3. She wouldn't know different until she was taught (*ladies did that night*)
- B. So should we be shocked by the sexual immorality so common in our culture?
1. CNN reports of San Diego grad student selling her virginity to pay college
    - a. Australian tycoon has offered \$3.7 for one night with the 22 year old
    - b. Shocking? CNN asks for reactions of other students, one is from OCU  
*This is appalling, but not shocking; it's the direction society has been heading in for a while*
    - c. He's right; what is it about our society today that makes this shocking?
  2. What is shocking is when Christians act just like the culture around them
    - a. Polls suggest 80% see co-habitation w/o marriage as morally acceptable
    - b. And 60% of Christians under 40 also accept cohabitation as "*moral*"
      - 1) Many under-40 Christians see the environment as bigger moral issue
      - 2) Recycling is important, but sexual choices aren't a big moral deal
  3. We been looking at "*Old/New Questions*" everyone once knew the answer
    - a. But the world has changed, and so these old questions are new again
    - b. We looked at "*Why believe the Bible*" and "*Must I be part of a church?*"
    - c. Question today, "*Why is sex outside marriage such a big deal?*"
  4. Like new Ukrainian Christian, people won't know if we don't tell them

- C. Our text in **1 Cor 6** is perfect for our purpose; Corinth was worse than today!
1. Temple of Aphrodite (patron goddess of Corinth) was basically a brothel
    - a. 1000 male and female prostitutes served those who came to worship
      - 1) Historian Strabo argues that the Temple was why Corinth prospered
      - 2) Sea captains routed their ships thru the port of Corinth... to worship
    - b. Corinth was a city; in Greek culture, marriage was for producing children
      - 1) Mistresses were for romance and prostitutes were for sexual needs
      - 2) Pedastry, use of boys for sexual pleasure, was common & accepted
    - c. Rome, no bastion of prudery, saw Corinth as so perverse it coined words
      - 1) *korinthiazomai* (“live like Corinthian”) described a depraved decadence
      - 2) *kointhia kore* (“Corinthian girl”) was simply a synonym for a prostitute
  2. In this Sin City, Paul planted a church, and he called it to absolute holiness
    - a. Paul didn’t reduce requirements because this was sex-saturated Corinth
      - 1) His demands were exactly the same as for a hick hamlet in Galilee
      - 2) His demands are total sexual purity—no premarital/extra-marital sex
    - b. Corinthians had to wonder, “*What’s big deal about sex outside marriage*”
    - c. Paul’s strict teaching on purity in a decadent culture speaks to us today
  3. Paul makes 3 points on place of sex (*I’m borrowing from Greg Boyd here*)

## II. Paul and Sexual Purity (Reading- **1 Corinthians 6:15-20**)

- A. **First**, sexual intercourse creates a “*one flesh*” union between two people
1. Remember when Jesus was asked to comment on divorce (**Matt 19:5-6**)
    - a. The sex act in marriage creates a bond that’s more than just temporary
    - b. The current (*as of last week*) euphemism for casual sex is “*hooking-up*”
      - 1) But Jesus says sex is much more than a physical coupling of bodies
      - 2) Jesus- husband-wife stay “*one flesh*” even when not “*hooking up*”
        - a) Jesus point is divorce is never God’s will. Why? Made them one flesh
        - b) Only exception is if spouse “*hooks up with*” someone other than spouse
    - c. Where did Jesus get this idea that sex creates this one flesh relationship
      - 1) It goes back to first time the first human couple coupled (**Gen 2:24**)
      - 2) Every sexual act since that time cared this deep significance!

2. Paul says “*one flesh*” applies even if you “*hook up*” with prostitute (**6:16**)
    - a. To be joined with a prostitute is to become one flesh with her or him
      - 1) Paul reminds us that that we are one with Christ in spirit (**6:17**)
      - 2) To join with a prostitute is to join the prostitute with Christ!
    - b. What this says is that there is no such thing as casual sex to God
    - c. Something profoundly spiritual happens in sex, even if it is just for fun
  3. BTW, did God have to make sex pleasurable? Or make food taste good?
    - a. He could have could created nutrition and procreation without pleasure
      - 1) He didn’t make sex powerful and pleasant to tempt or torment us
      - 2) He did so to bless us with something that is wonderful and special.
    - b. Christian view of sex doesn’t make it less important but much MORE so!
- B. Second**, sex is the Biblical sign and seal of the sacred covenant of marriage
1. Jewish couples weren’t married until they’d consummated the marriage.
    - a. So Jewish weddings, the vows were exchanged at home of the groom
    - b. The processional was to home of the bride for wedding feast (reception)
      - 1) But the party couldn’t start until bride and groom went to bed
      - 2) It wasn’t really a marriage until the covenant/contract was sealed
      - 3) Personally, I think wedding receptions are awkward enough as is!
    - c. That’s why Paul points back to “*one flesh*” text (**Gen 2:24, 1 Cor 6:16**)
  2. In the Bible, the sign of covenant was considered part of the covenant.
    - a. So to violate or desecrate the sign was to break the covenant itself.
      - 1) Why was God upset Moses didn’t circumcise his sons (**Exo 4:24-25**)
      - 2) It was the sign of God covenant; devalue it is to ignore the covenant
    - b. Why was violating the Sabbath capital offense? *Was a sign of covenant*
  3. Sex outside marriages desecrate and despoils the sign of marriage covenant
    - a. Paul sees sexual sin as being different (not worse) than other sin (**6:18**)
      - 1) I was taught that sex is different because it is harder to repent of
      - 2) It’s so good, it’s hard to see as bad (“*Can’t be wrong if it feels so right*”)
    - b. That is a very good point, but it’s just not really Paul’s point here.
    - c. Sexual sin violates a sacred, foundational covenant with God Himself

C. **Third**, our bodies are filled by God and thus belong to God ([1 Cor 6:19-20](#)).

1. If God lives in your body, then it matters very much what you do with it!
  - a. Our flesh and blood bodies are holy because they the dwelling of God
  - b. Sexual sin desecrates God's temple, like painting graffiti on Temple
    - 1) What if someone carves "*Joe loves Mary*" on the Vietnam Memorial?
    - 2) That is more than vandalism; it's a strike against the country
2. Our body is the dwelling place of God; so it matters what we do with body
  - a. Our bodies are holy because God's very presence makes them holy
    - 1) Sexual sin violates the exclusiveness of our relationship with God
    - 2) It violates the sacredness of God's temple—our bodies are God's
  - b. We're holy because of God's Spirit; sexual purity is one way we show it

### III. Conclusion

- A. In this "*anything goes*" culture that was Corinth, Paul demands sexual purity
  1. God demands absolute fidelity to marriage covenant (even if not married)
    - a. If we are single, that means that we remain virgin before marriage
    - b. If we are married, that means sex (in body and mind) is only for spouse
  2. Paul was certainly not the sexual prude that some suggest that he was
    - a. In [1 Cor 6](#), Paul says that sex is the sacred seal of marriage covenant
    - b. In [1 Cor 7](#), he says to use that seal to **stay sealed** ([1 Cor 7:3-4](#), NLT)
    - c. Proverbs says much the same thing a bit more poetically ([Prov 5:15-20](#))
- B. The irony of the sexual revolution is that it has devalued and denigrated sex
  1. Sex is a commodity used to sell everything from toothpaste to floor wax
    - a. It is so unimportant that it doesn't matter who or what you do it with
    - b. People are legos hooking up and unhooking without any real meaning
  2. Bible sees sex as so sacred, beautiful & holy, it is for just one other person
    - a. It bonds two people a holy covenant, and it continues to bond them
    - b. Why does Bible make a big deal of extramarital sex? *Sex is a big deal!*
  3. The Bible is clear that sex outside of the marriage covenant is a sin
    - a. It is also clear that sex outside of the marriage covenant is only a sin
    - b. God can and will forgive if we seek him in faith and repentance