**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 1-15-2023
Honor God with Your Bod**

Friends, an important truth to remember is that matter matters to God. In other words, the physical is important to God.

From the very beginning, as we look at the Book of Genesis, we see God created this earth and everything in it. And He declares it to be good. And not only this, then He creates humanity as His image bearers and declared them to be very good. This would include the human body of course.

Obviously, beginning with the disobedience of our first parents – Adam and Eve – humanity soon went on a downward spiral in its rebellion against God.

Spiritually, relationally, emotionally, and physically – things became a big mess indeed. But this doesn’t mean that God ceased to care about all those aspects of humanity. God did not give up on His plan for an earthly family. And He didn’t stop caring about every part of us.

So, despite the effects of sin, the human body is still very valuable and important to God. And because we are made in God’s image, matter should matter to people as well.

This was so powerfully seen recently in the tragic but inspiring story of Damar Hamlin. As you probably all know, this man is a gifted football player on the Buffalo Bills.

But in an instant, after experiencing the impact of a tackle he was making, his body began to go into cardiac arrest. And the nation and other nations turned to prayer, turned to the Lord.

People who had never heard of Damar, such as myself, found ourselves crying out to God for His help on this man. Why? Because the body matters. And everybody wanted Damar’s body to be healed and made well. And by the grace of God, Damar is doing much better.

But again, this is just one example of demonstrating that matter should matter to us. We should care about our bodies and the bodies of others. And this is not just true when it comes to injuries and sickness, it is even more true with moral decisions that involve our bodies as well.

 God created our bodies as good and to be used as instruments that honor and glorify Him.

With this in mind, we turn again to this church gone wild in Corinth. Unlike the biblical view of the human body being very important, the pagan culture that was dominant in Corinth held a very different view of the body. And this view of the body was a very low one.

In other words, they didn’t think that the body was very important. They didn’t think that matter really mattered. If the body is going to eventually wear out and die anyway, why not party it up and just live to please the flesh? This was the belief there. And you can see how this would quickly lead to gluttony and drunkenness and sexual immorality.

In fact, in many of the pagan myths about the gods, even the gods themselves just lived to act carnally in these ways. So if it is okay for them, it should be okay for us, was the common view. As long as we can get on their good side by offering certain sacrifices to them.

But as the power of the gospel was poured out over the community of Corinth in the first century, the implications of the gospel would soon be felt. Jesus did not come to earth just to save people spiritually, but He also came to call people to a high view of the body and to live holy and godly lives in their bodies.

So as we turn to the scriptures again, we find Paul presenting a biblical view of the body and why it is so important. Please turn with me to 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

**12“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6%3A12-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28484a)**] 17But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6%3A12-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28485b)**]**

**18Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.**

Or as this message title goes “Honor God with your bod.”

Again, Paul begins this section of his letter by stating a saying that was being circulated amongst the Corinthians, which was, “I have the right to do anything.” That reminds me a bit of the popular saying today, “My body, my choice.”

But Paul counters this argument by telling them that not everything is beneficial. He also says that you are not to be mastered by anything.

Sisters and brothers, this is a very important topic. As Christians, we affirm that it is by grace alone that people are saved. It is not by doing enough good works to earn God’s favor. It is not by trying to live holy enough to please God. No. It is sheer trust in the mercy of God offered to us in and through Jesus Christ.

But Paul is clear that even though it is grace alone that saves us, that does not mean that people should live carnally anymore. It is not beneficial and people are not to be mastered by anything.

What was happening in Corinth revealed that there were some people there that did not yet connect the dots that following Jesus impacts everything.

While the low view of the body was the norm in Corinth, Paul makes it clear that it is not to be the norm for the church. What is done in the body matters, because matter matters to God.

Paul also mentions another saying that some Christians in Corinth were apparently using. This slogan was “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” What this is trying to argue is that God made the body and it is fitting to pursue as much pleasure in the body as one can.

In other words, if it feels good, one should do it. It must be good. If eating all these donuts feels good, why not eat?

If sleeping with whomever I want feels good, why not?

But Paul rebukes this argument strongly. He tells them that **the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**

In other words, the Corinthian Christians were to see their bodies as being devoted to God. One way that they were called to properly worship God was by seeking to be submitted to honoring God with their body.

Do not be gluttons, do not be drunkards, do not be sexually immoral anymore.

Why? Because their body is to be for the Lord.

Paul reminds them that Jesus was physically raised from death and He has a physical body. And likewise, one day they will be physically raised also. Therefore, they were called to honor God with their bod right then and there.

They were to be good stewards of their bodies in every way.

Prostitution was very prevalent in Corinth. With the low view of the body there, this makes a lot of sense.

But following Christ has implications. And one of those implications is choosing a biblical high view of the body. Participating in any of the prostitution going on there would be a big physical indication of a spiritual problem.

Paul goes on to say, **Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6%3A12-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28484a)**] 17But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.**

Paul culminates this instruction by telling the Christians in Corinth to “flee from sexual immorality.” To flee is strong language. It is to run away.

Paul even states that sexual sin is actually sinning against one’s own body. A Christian’s body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Their bodies are called to be holy vessels where the Spirit of God can set up shop.

**Friends, what are the implications for this passage for us today? And it is simply this. In following Jesus, we must choose to honor God with our bod.**

We are called to have a high biblical view of the body and the bodies of others.

The sad truth is that America seems to be looking more and more like pagan Corinth all the time.

Everywhere you and I look, culture is telling us to live carnally. Even a significant number of churches are choosing to promote a low view of the body and even teach that God endorses this. And this just leads to lots of confusion.

The USA is also the biggest creator of pornography. We are to flee from this.

Yes, there is grace and there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. But the body matters, a lot. It matters to God and it should matter to us.

When it comes to sexuality, God does not want His people sinning against our own bodies. **Sex is reserved for one male & one female in marriage. Everything else is not honoring God with our bod.**

We are to honor God with our body no matter what status we are in. Single. Married. Whatever. The Lord calls us to be good stewards. Good stewards in every way. And this includes choosing to offer our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto the Lord.

In Romans 12, Paul states, “I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.”

Yes, we are to be compassionate and loving to all people, but we are never to affirm sin as something that God is pleased with.

Friends, God knows what is best for us. It may not be easy or popular. But honoring God with our body is a beautiful expression of worship to our Creator. May each of us do this well, with the gracious help of our Lord. Amen.

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