

Sex, Body and Soul – Part 3

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In Part 2 we discussed man's body and soul/spirit. To review, God created man with two parts: a body and a soul/spirit. As Christians we spend this life investing in our souls. This is the process of dying to ourselves (e.g. Luke 9:23-24 and John 12:24-25), of being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29), of allowing Jesus to increase as we decrease (John 3:30). Investing in our souls during this earthly life impacts the quality of our souls in eternity.

But what about our bodies? The bible tells us that bodily discipline is of little profit (1 Timothy 4:8). I may be convicted out of stewardship to invest in a healthy earthly body, but a healthy earthly body does not translate into a healthy eternal body. So, how do I invest in my eternal body? The bible teaches us that there is one area in our earthly lives that impacts our eternal bodies: sexual morality.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 is one of the New Testament's foundational passages on sexual morality. In these verses the Apostle Paul teaches the importance of sexual purity, and the connection between morality and our resurrected body. Early in the passage Paul makes a distinction between our temporal and eternal body. Food and the stomach are temporal, and both are perishing (v. 13). But the resurrected body is eternal. That Paul has our resurrected body in mind is made clear when he states that God raised Christ from the dead and He will raise our body up as well (v. 14).

In verses 15-17 Paul goes on to explain the connection between immorality and the resurrected body. The regenerated man is in bodily and spiritual union with Christ. The sex act is a mystical union between man and woman. Establishing this union with anyone other than a husband or wife is prohibited. Because our earthly body is the temple of Christ, to have sex with someone who is not your wife is to defile Christ's temple.

At this point it is probably helpful to define immorality. The Greek word that is translated as “immorality” (NASB) in this passage is *porneuo*. In the context of this passage, I suggest the best definition of this word is “to give one’s self to unlawful sexual intercourse,” a definition taken from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon.

Paul closes out his argument in verses 18-20 by concluding that sexual immorality is a separate class of sin. It is a sin that combines body and soul, a sinful union with another while at the same time being in union with Christ. Therefore it is uniquely disgraceful in the eyes of God. Those who commit sexual immorality sin against their eternal resurrected body. In eternity our resurrected body will be in union with our soul, just as on earth our earthly bodies are in union with our soul. Our behavior in regards to sex in this life, whether good or bad, will impact both body and soul in eternity.

The act of sex is an amazing gift from God. But we can never buy the world’s lie that sex is “just sex.” Sex is a holy act, an act that deserves to be treated with our utmost respect and importance. As husbands, let us lead our wives in such a way that sex can be experienced exactly how God wants us to. As fathers, let us instill in our sons and daughters a desire for sexual purity. There are few greater inheritances we can leave to our children. Let us teach our families the truth about sex. The world is very eager to teach them differently.

Questions For Reflection:

- In your own words, why should we obey God’s commands regarding sexual morality?
- What have you taught your wife and children regarding sexual morality?

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