LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

1 Corinthians 6 :12-20

You are not your own

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 27, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

please open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 6. This is actually our ninth study of the book, the sixth chapter, and we're picking it up in verse 12, and we're going to be making our way through verse 20 tonight. As we kind of get into these last verses of chapter 6, I need to kind of set the stage a little bit here, because these can be challenging verses, I'll just tell you right now, and part of the reason they are challenging is because we are hearing a one-sided conversation. Have you ever been in the room when someone suddenly took a call and they began talking, and you were trying not to listen in, but you were intrigued by what you were hearing, at least on one end of the conversation, and you probably even hoped you could have heard the other side of the conversation to get a little more context? Well, we find ourselves with that same wish here in 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

Paul is talking to the Corinthians, but obviously they're not talking back. We have to depend on what he's saying to give us the context about what he's addressing, and what he's going to be addressing in this chapter are some slogans or beliefs that the believers in Corinth had adopted, and Paul's going to address those from a biblical standpoint, from a truth standpoint, and I think you're going to find them very interesting. But it begins in chapter 6, verse 12, by saying, Now, most English Bibles place that first phrase, all things are lawful for me, in quotation marks, and the reason they do that is because it is believed that that was a slogan that the Corinthians had adopted for some reason, or at least were being influenced by, shall we say. All things are lawful for me. And it goes along with what we kind of learn about the Corinthians in terms of their thought processes concerning some things.

We've already addressed the issue of the fact that they had a man in the fellowship who was having a relationship with his stepmother, and apparently some of the people were fine with it. In other words, they thought, yeah, there's no problem, it's a lawful situation. So they had adopted a statement, all things are lawful for me. Now the reason we believe this was a slogan is because we know that it's not true in a general sense. All things are not lawful for us, we know that there are many things in the Bible, and Paul

addresses many of them, right here in this book, that are unlawful for believers, such as, you know, living a life of sexual immorality, and greediness, and thievery, and deception, and things like that.

These are not lawful. These are not lawful for a believer or for anyone, but again, these letters are addressed to believers. So we know that this isn't a true statement. So this is obviously something that they had adopted. So Paul is responding to this statement, where they say, all things are lawful for me.

He says, yeah, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. Okay, here's the first question that people are going to naturally ask. If the statement, all things are lawful for me, isn't really true, why isn't Paul just coming through the front door and saying, you guys believe all things are lawful for you, but you're wrong. All things are not lawful for you, so get over it, you know, sort of a thing.

Why didn't he just do that? Why did he say, yeah, but? It almost makes it sound like he's accepting their statement. Well, as it pertains to gray areas, it is true. The fact of the matter is, in Christ Jesus, we have great liberty.

You know, even though we know that some things are unlawful for us, that's not to say that believers live under the law, because we don't. We don't live under the law. We live under the leading of the Holy Spirit, okay? We're not to live, we are simply not to live under a set of rules and regulations. We are to live under the leading of the Holy Spirit of God.

But there are a lot of things in the Bible that aren't mentioned. You know, I get emails quite often from believers who want to know if something is okay, and it's usually, well, almost always, it's something that the Bible doesn't address. And one of the things I get a lot of notes about is listening to secular music. Maybe that's even been a question that some of you have asked. Pastor Paul, is it okay for Christians to listen to secular music?

And you know, there are a lot of Christians who have very strong opinions about the answer to that question. And I always answer the same way, and that is with a question. What is the Holy Spirit telling you? Because really, that's the issue. It's a gray area.

Here's the real question. Do Christians have liberty to listen to secular music? Well, in a general response, I would say yes. Christians have liberty. In other words, it's lawful for you to listen to secular music.

Here's the question. Is it helpful? That's what Paul is doing here. He's really covering those areas that are more what we would call gray areas. And he's saying, yeah, in that instance, we do have liberty in Christ.

But here's the question. Is it helpful? And he's not just speaking about helpful for you. He's going to talk a lot in this letter about the things we do, and whether or not they're helpful for someone else. In fact, he's going to talk about our rights as believers.

And he's going to say, you know, you have rights. You have things that are lawful for you to do. You have a right to engage in them, to indulge in them. Here's the question. Is it helpful for your neighbor?

We're going to talk more about that in the coming chapter, so stay tuned on that one. But let's just say for a moment right now, he's addressing the issue of how it affects you personally. Yeah, so listening to secular music is something it is lawful for you to do, but is it helpful for you? And that's the reason I ask the question that I do. When people pose that question to me, is it helpful for you?

What's the Holy Spirit telling you? Usually they will write back and say, well, you know, some of the music I've been listening to doesn't have the most uplifting lyrics, and so the Holy Spirit, frankly, has been convicting me, and there have been some people in my life who've been telling me maybe that's not such a good thing. So I write them back, and I begin to talk to them about what the Holy Spirit is speaking to them about listening to secular music. And again, that's just one example. But I will say things like, you know, hey, if the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart about it, and you don't have peace when you listen to that music, and you feel the conviction of the Spirit, then I think the Holy Spirit is probably talking to you, and you need to listen.

But what I also tell them is this. Be very careful about imposing whatever limitations or prohibitions the Holy Spirit has put on you, and forcing those on the rest of the body of Christ, because that's not right. There may be other people who have the liberty and freedom to listen to secular music and have it not affect them or influence them in any way. And I know some people have a hard time believing that. Some people, there are some who believe, no, it's wrong for everybody.

And honestly, that's something I think we need to kind of stay away from, especially in these gray areas, creating rules and laws for the general populace of believers, just because it's something that the Holy Spirit is challenging us not to do, right? So, all things are lawful for me is their slogan. Paul says, yeah, but not all things are helpful. Again, all things are lawful for me. And this is the next thing that's so important to hear.

But I will not be dominated by anything. When Paul talks about being dominated by something, we're going to apply a modern word to this, okay? Our modern word is addiction, all right? That's the word that We hear a lot. He's addicted to this.

Well, Paul would say he's been dominated by that. There are certain things that are lawful for you to do, but you have to be very careful not to become dominated by those things because it can turn into a habit, which eventually turns into an addiction. I'm gonna talk about something else that's an issue, a big issue in the body of Christ, and that is drinking alcohol. I do get a lot of questions about this as well. And there are, again, many people have very strong feelings about drinking alcohol, Christians drinking alcohol.

Here's the point. You cannot, from a biblical standpoint, say that all drinking of alcohol is forbidden. You simply can't do it. What the Bible very strongly condemns is the abuse of alcohol, which it refers to as drunkenness, okay? That's the biblical term, drunkenness.

Absolute taboo, all right? So you have this issue that comes into play because some Christians will rightly decide, I have liberty to have a glass of wine with dinner occasionally. Well, from a biblical standpoint, I can't condemn that. Now, I will say this. Wine in the Bible is really nothing like the wine that we drink today.

They would mix their wine with water. They would water it down. And it was much, I mean, you would have to drink a whole lot more back in biblical times to become inebriated than you do today. And that's something to keep in mind when you do see the drinking of wine in the Bible, which we do. So you have these people saying, I have liberty, but we have to ask the same question.

Yes, it is lawful for you from a very strict standpoint to, let's say, have a glass of wine with dinner. But Paul says, I will not be dominated by anything. In other words, what Paul's saying is there are things in this life that if we give into them, and so many of us have a propensity to give into things, that they become our master. And so Paul says, you know what? I'm gonna stay away from those things which have the potential of mastering me.

Okay? So, you know, this is one of the decisions that I've made in my life as a pastor. I made the decision very early on that I simply wasn't going to drink ever. And I don't. I don't ever, I have no alcohol in my home.

We don't drink alcohol. And it's not because of a legalistic rule. It's because of wisdom. That's the first part. It's not helpful.

It could easily dominate me. I don't kid myself by thinking that I'm strong enough to never be dominated by something like alcohol. Many better men than I have been dominated by alcohol. And I just don't want to go there. I want to be dominated by the Holy Spirit, you know?

Not by strong drink. So I just don't do it. So if a Christian says to me, but Pastor Paul, fine. That's fine for you. You don't drink great.

But you're not saying to me that I can't have a glass of wine once in a while, right? And that's true. That's, I'm not saying that it is forbidden for you to ever do that. But we're going to talk more about this again in the coming chapters. What about the people in your life?

It may not be good for you. It has the potential to dominate you. You got to be very careful. But what about other people? What about other people in your life who perhaps don't have the freedom that you have?

Maybe they have a family history of drunkenness. Maybe they themselves went through a period of time where they gave in to drunkenness. I know the Bible, or excuse me, I know society calls it alcoholism. That's a word the Bible doesn't know. It's drunkenness.

And maybe they've had a problem with alcohol in the past. Strong drink. And now they're free, but they can't go back there. They don't have the freedom perhaps that you have. And if they see you exercising that freedom, that could be a potential problem.

Now, again, we're going to talk more about this as we get deeper into 1 Corinthians. And we're going to find out that God is pretty sensitive about this matter, this issue of potentially stumbling a brother or a sister in Christ by exercising my liberty when they themselves do not possess that same liberty. We'll talk more about that. There's another statement that the Corinthians, a slogan the Corinthians believed in, and that's in verse 13. And you'll see that that too, in most Bibles is in quotation marks.

It's food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food. Now, it's hard to understand exactly what all they meant by these slogans, okay? Well, the first one is fairly easy. All things are lawful for me. That's self-explanatory.

What they mean by this second one, food for the stomach and the stomach for food, it sounds like, and probably is something like, what we put into our bodies really doesn't make a difference. It's just part of the body. It, and to a large degree, that's true, okay? And that's what Jesus taught, because you see the Jews had taken it to the other extreme. What they put into their bodies, they felt could potentially defile them.

That's why they filtered their water and so forth to keep gnats out of it, because a gnat or an insect was considered an unclean animal, if you will. Jesus debunked that whole belief system by saying, don't you know that when you eat something, it just goes into the body and then it's expelled? And the Bible actually tells us that by saying that, Jesus declared all foods clean, all right? So Jesus made a very powerful statement there about the food laws from the old covenant and so forth. And so Paul says, this is another slogan of yours.

Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food. But Paul says, yeah, right, yeah. And God will destroy both one and the other. And so he is connecting this statement to something going beyond the stomach when he goes on to finish out this verse by saying the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. So this kind of comes down to the physical body, how we treat our physical bodies, how we view our physical bodies as it relates to our Christian lives.

It seems as if the Corinthians had come to a place of disconnecting the physical body from anything spiritual. And Paul is kind of reminding them of some important dynamics as it relates to the physical body. First of all, stop putting such an emphasis on the physical body because ultimately the physical body is gonna go away. Now, yes, God will raise up a new incorruptible body, but that's a different body. This body is gonna be destroyed.

The stomach, food, all those things, he's reminding them these things are temporary, okay? Stop putting such an emphasis on things that are temporary. And then he connects it to the physical act of sex between a man and a woman. And he says, the body is not meant for sexual immorality, the body is meant for the Lord. You and I have been given a physical body.

And yes, one day it's going to expire. It will return to the dust from which it came. And ultimately God will raise up for us a new body. But for now, these are the bodies we've been given. We've been given stewardship of them.

And frankly, we don't always treat them as we should. But the simple reality is this, the body that you have belongs to the Lord. And it was created for him. Yes, you get to live. live in it, you have stewardship of it for this time, but ultimately it belongs to the Lord.

And he's going to make the point in just a moment. Do you not know that your body right now, the very one you have is a temple of the Holy Spirit that makes your body, that makes my body special. And we should consider our bodies as special. And so he goes on in verse 14, if you look with me there, and

God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power, reminding us about the resurrection body that awaits us. Verse 15, do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

This is the first thing he wants to remind them of. Your body is a member of Jesus right now, right now. Because, and he can say that because we're not just a physical body, we're body, soul, and spirit, but even so they're all one in the sense that it's all you. And he says, your body right now is a member of Christ. And so he asks this further question, shall I take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?

Never. And then he says this, or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her, for it is written, the two will become one flesh. Okay, we need to talk about this. Is the apostle Paul saying that if a man hires a prostitute and has sexual relations with her, that he is then married to her? Is that what he's saying in this verse?

No, it is not what he is saying. He is saying, however, that when a man comes together with any woman, whether she be his wife, an acquaintance, or a prostitute, there is a joining that takes place. And we know that even now from a scientific biological standpoint, there is a joining. And what sex is meant for is for marriage, so that a man and a woman come together sexually, and in that coming together become one flesh, and they enjoy that one flesh union. But Paul is connecting this in a slightly different way, and he's asking these important questions that we ought to think about, because he's reminding us that the intention that God created sex for was for a couple to be joined.

And you know, there's nothing more beautiful than a couple being joined through sexual activity. It's beautiful, it's something God created for us to enjoy, and to bless the relationship. So why are we throwing that around like it means nothing? And that's really kind of what he's getting at. Verse 17, but he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

Now, obviously, Paul is making this statement from the context of understanding how our bodies ought to be used. Our bodies are not meant for sexual immorality. They are meant for sex with your spouse. They're not meant for sexual immorality, but they are also meant for the Lord. You were created to use that body for the Lord, okay?

That's the point that he's making. But the implication of verse 17 is absolutely astounding. And you know, I remember the first time I read this verse, I was kind of blown away to be completely honest with you. It really is pretty amazing. When you stop and think of all of the implications of this statement,

because let's read this statement, verse 17 again, but let's forget the immediate context of what Paul is saying to the Corinthians, and let's just take this statement at face value, because we can do that.

Verse 17 again, he who is joined to the Lord, meaning he who has come to Christ, he who has put his faith in Jesus Christ, received the Holy Spirit, right? He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Now, I want you just to think about that statement for a little bit. What does it mean to be made one spirit with the Lord? Boy, that's something you can meditate on and think about for a long time.

This applies to you. If you're a believer today, if you've put your faith in Jesus, received the Holy Spirit indwelling you physically, in your physical body, you are one with the Lord in spirit. Pretty crazy thought, huh? Yeah. So what is the conclusion of all this?

Verse 18, flee from sexual immorality. You know, he's probably thinking of Joseph from the Old Testament in the book of Genesis. You know, that was his response, you'll remember, to Potiphar's wife when she took notice of him and began to try to draw him in to a sexual relationship. Joseph fled. And that's the way we are to respond.

And, you know, the reason Joseph is such an amazing example is he was probably at the height of his sexual drive at that point. And he still ran. He still attempted to flee, you know, when she came at him. So that is our example. Flee from sexual immorality.

He doesn't say flee from sex. That's important too. Again, sex was created to be enjoyed within the context of a marriage between a man and a woman. So flee sexual immorality. This is the Greek word pornea, all right?

And then he says this statement, and we need to be very careful about how we read this statement. And I'm going to explain why in just a moment. He says, every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Now, the way the ESV makes that sound, it makes it sound like Paul is making a statement that every other sin a person commits is outside the body. However, pornea, or sexual immorality, is actually committed against your body.

And that part is absolutely true. But we have to ask some important questions about this, and here's why. The word other in your Bible, take a look in your text. The word other is not in the Greek. English translators put that in there because they wanted the sentence to make sense to you.

They believed Paul was making a statement that every other sin that is committed is committed outside the body, except for sexual immorality, which is committed against the body, the physical body. Right? So

they put the word other in. Well, what happens if you take the word other out and you read it without the word other? Well, it says this.

Every sin a person commits is outside the body. Right? But the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. You see what's going on here? I believe, and I could be wrong.

I will even say that I reserve the right to be wrong. I believe the placing the word other in the text, and by the way, in some of your Bibles, there's a footnote saying that's not in the Greek. I believe putting the word other there is a mistake because what I think the Apostle Paul is doing here is he's exposing yet another one of their false slogans. And that was every sin a person commits is outside the body. Because here's the deal.

That statement is not true. It is not true. There are a lot of other sins that affect the body. Many. Bluttony is a sin and it affects the body.

Drunkenness is a sin and it affects the body. There are many. So I think this was yet another, I think this statement, the word other should not be there because it's not in the Greek. And I think this should be in quotation marks just like the first two statements. that we read in this section.

I think this is something the Corinthians were believing, that every sin that a person commits is outside of the body. In other words, don't worry about it. But Paul is debunking that here and saying, no, the person who sins in sexual immorality sins against their body, and there are other things that sin against your body, too. But that is certainly one of them, and it was one that the Corinthians had to be very cautious about because they were living in a very sexually immoral society. He then has one further question in verse 19.

Or do you not know that your body, here it is, is a temple, not the temple, a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God? You are not your own for you were bought with a price. So glorify God with your body. This whole section has been about how we think about, how we understand our physical bodies, and Paul is debunking a lot of the beliefs that the Corinthians had about sin as it relates to their bodies, and Paul makes these incredibly important statements by reminding us that our bodies were created for the Lord. Now, they were created for other things, too.

In this life, our bodies were created to do hard work, our bodies were created to get us from one place to another, our bodies were created to be enjoyed by our spouse. He's going to talk more about that in the next chapter when we deal with marriage. So our bodies were created for other temporal things as well, to

consume food for energy. They were created that way. But our bodies were also created for the Lord, to give to him, to say, Lord, this is your body.

You've given it to me temporarily to live in, but I am a temple of the Holy Spirit, and I love how Paul says, you are not your own. You know, this is one of the statements that people in the world say all the time when they're protesting, you know, for their rights and so forth. They'll say, it's my body. I can do with it as I wish. Well, you know, as believers, we can't say that.

We can't say that. We can't say, it's my body. I can do with it as I wish. You know, one of the other big questions that I get and have gotten many times over the years is, is it okay for a Christian to have a tattoo? And a lot of people will go back to a passage in Leviticus where the Lord forbade the Israelites to tattoo their bodies.

However, you have to understand something about that passage in Leviticus. In the context of what God was forbidding, it was pagan practices. Because it's not, if you read that passage and read it in its context, you'll find out it's not just tattoos that he forbade. There were other things, cutting their hair a certain way, da-da-da. There were other things, but they were all connected to pagan religious practices.

And ultimately, what God was forbidding was the worship of pagan deities or pagan idols, false gods. So Leviticus really doesn't apply to a Christian getting a tattoo that says, I love Jesus. Okay? I'm not a tattoo fan. I'll just tell you that right now.

I don't, but I also don't and cannot biblically condemn someone who has a tattoo. I just, I can't do it from a biblical standpoint. But when people write to me and ask me, is it okay for a Christian to get a tattoo? This is another one of those gray areas, because again, the passage in Leviticus really doesn't apply. And I will say this to them.

Well, here's what the Bible does say. You are not your own. You were bought at a price. So honor God with your body. And that means is that body isn't yours to do with as you see fit.

So ask your heavenly father, talk to him about it. Get his okay. And if you get his okay, then that's between you and the Lord. And I'm not going to judge because this is truly a gray area, but think it through, pray it through, know what the Lord wants you to do, because he knows what's coming up in your life. He knows whether or not that tattoo is going to be a help to maybe witnessing to others about him, or maybe it's going to be a hindrance and you don't want anything that you do to be a long-term hindrance, right?

It's not your body. I love this statement. You are not your own. You belong to him. You were bought with a price.

We know what that price was, the precious blood of Jesus Christ. So here's the conclusion. So glorify God with your body, however many days, months, years the Lord has left to give you on this earth in that body. Glorify God with your body. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for our time together today in the word. We learn so much every time we dig into the scriptures, and I thank you for the verses that we've covered here today. And I just really pray that you would use these verses to speak to our hearts as we go forward. Help us, Lord, to know how to apply what we've seen here and what we've learned.

And Lord, help us to listen to your Holy Spirit always and to glorify you in our bodies. We ask that you would do this in the authority that is ours. In the name of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.