

THE PHYSICAL BODY

Copyright, J. Michael Strawn

From 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. THE PHYSICAL BODY: A VESSEL OF SENSATIONS OR THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, PART 1

The apostle addresses these terms to those who are Christians. This is not for the world.

#1. The bottom line: "I will not be mastered by anything" (v. 12.) The writer lives in the material world, like all of us. He has wants, needs and appetites. But his trust in God and his faith in the Word of God will not permit this man to be mastered by any material condition.

#2. Paul explains this in terms of the reciprocal. This reciprocal is two things in a 'back and forth' relation. There are reciprocal lines of influence.

#3. "Food is for the stomach" --> "and the stomach is for food" (v. 13.) Their relation is reciprocal. There is just such a reciprocal between "the body" --> and sexual practice. But in this case, there was "immorality" involved (v. 13.) This reciprocal we may safely call *the natural reciprocal*.

#4. We must accept the revealed truth about the natural reciprocal: "But God will do away with both of them" (v. 13.) The universe of sensations is short lived, hauntingly unstable and hardly satiated. The inspired perspective is this: The physical body is not to be reduced to a vessel of momentary sensations.

#5. The natural reciprocal was destroying the churches in Corinth. Wine is for the body --> and the body for wine. Substitute the terms: sex, food, clothes, possessions, medications, money, jobs, etc. That is the natural reciprocal.

#6. Christians are instructed to DISPLACE the natural reciprocal by (a) revealed spiritual understanding and (b) devotion to it. Displacement begins with this: "Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body" (v. 13.) Thus, there is a rival revealed reciprocal.

From 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. The Body: Vessel of Sensations or Temple of the Holy Spirit? Part 2

#1. The natural reciprocal is contradicted by something much greater: the *revealed reciprocal*. "Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body" (v. 13.)

#2. This is nothing less than extraordinary. One's physical body *is invited into a realm of reality beyond itself*. The will of God is *to lift the body above the natural reciprocal*.

#3. The anchor point of the natural reciprocal is fleshly desire. But the anchor point of the revealed is God Himself. This means that the anchor point of the physical body is not of this world, is beyond time and is irreducibly powerful. "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power" (v. 14.)

#4. A question is thereby posed: What do I want? Do I want material gratification, which is the sole interest of the natural reciprocal, or shall I pursue close association with the God who offers transcendence of all material externalities?

#5. We can have one or the other but not both. This is a choice, and *the spiritualization of the mind* becomes important. The natural reciprocal is where we all begin, but through time, revealed truth and faith one is required to move one's reasoning and behavior to the revealed reciprocal.

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!" (v. 15)

#6. The believer's body, mind and soul *belong to Christ*. This is not just an idea. It is not just a narrative. This is *the literal Christian reciprocal*: That is. my body at the complete disposal of Christ.

#7. Behavior flows from one reciprocal or the other.

From 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. The Body: Vessel of Sensations or Temple of the Holy Spirit, Part 3

#1. There are versions of the natural reciprocal. For example, what is called "the socialization of nature." This horror is operating presently. It works like this: Nature is now understood to exist in a reciprocal state with social standards. *This means that effectively nature has been socialized*. This is why a 52-year-old transgender man (born male naturally) can use sanitary facilities marked "Women Only" alongside a 12-year-old girl.

#2. *The Socialization of the Body*. The physical body and the society are now perceived to be related in a reciprocal arrangement. On that premise, same-sex marriage has been legalized, abortion is accepted, and euthanasia has growing approval.

#3. *Socialization of Religion* is always a potential development. Accordingly, the Bible and the church are thought to best be put in a reciprocal with society. This version of the natural reciprocal is today called *political correctness*.

#4. Held in common by all these versions of the natural reciprocal is this: *The body as the vessel of sensation is really the sum of human existence*. That is the pivotal meaning of life.

#5. But verse 20 specifies: "For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." There's no choice, really. It's *service to God over the universe of sensations* .

From 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. THE BODY: VESSEL OF SENSATIONS OR TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, PART 5

#1. How can it be that a "man sins against his own body" (v. 18)? Jesus makes the case that *the mind of a man can sin against his own flesh*. The Lord refers to "immorality" (v. 18) as a kind of *reciprocal sin* : "Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body" (v. 18.)

#2. "But the immoral man" (v. 1) is guilty of desecration of a holy place. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (v. 19) This teaching seals *the revealed reciprocal*. The physical body and the Holy Spirit are *sealed* within a closed reciprocal together as "one spirit with Him" (v. 17.) This is more than a relation; this is a habitation.

#3. "For you have been bought with a price" (v. 20.) That was an historical event, point, fact. The logic is: "Therefore glorify God in your body" (v. 20.) The body is redirected from personal gratification to *a supernatural state of being*. It is a temple of the Almighty. There must be a compatibility of wills. The will of God and the will of the man must be compatible.

#4. God injects Himself into our lives in this most intimate of ways. How unthinkable, that one can be a Christian while the body is outside this reciprocal. By command of Christ Himself and with His personal example confirmed, the body is no longer a mere vessel of sensations.

Think drugs, alcohol, abortion & sex & other things.

We cannot so degrade a holy place.