

Christian Anatomy:
A Spiritual Study of the
Human Body

Focus Youth Worship
20080203

Bad Pick Up Lines

- If I said you had a great body, would you hold it against me?
- Do you believe in love at first sight or should I walk by once more?
- Are you from Tennessee? Because you're the only ten I see.
- I lost my phone number, can I borrow yours?

Bad Pick Up Lines

- Can I have a picture of you? I want to show Santa Claus exactly what I want for Christmas.
- Are your feet tired? Because you've been running through my mind all day.
- Are you a parking ticket, because you've got "fine" written all over you?
- Good thing I renewed my hunting license, because you're a fox.

All time worst pick up line: You don't sweat much for a fat girl?

Bad Ideas about the Human Body



- Judging people by their looks
- Allowing your body's "feeling" to dictate your actions
- Forgetting the emotional & spiritual consequences of a physical relationship
- Leaving God out of the discussion

1. Illustration: 1 bagger or 2 bagger.
2. I'm going to sound like a old fuddy duddy, but we know that we can't give up thinking. Illustration: Mark Melton making out in the hallway. We are repulsed.
3. Some said hookups often left them feeling lousy—especially if they'd suffered beer goggles (in which drunkenness led them to a substandard partner) or if one hookee caught feelings (meaning they became emotionally involved).
4. The physical body is one of God's greatest gifts to humanity. But, in our age of "sexual freedom," the body has been misused and abused. In this passage, the Apostle Paul gives us God's perspective on the human body, sexuality and all.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

The body: The Bible

- What's the Bible saying about vices?
- What's the Bible saying about sinful habits?
- What's the Bible saying about homosexuality?
- What's the Bible saying about salvation?

1. The body: The Bible (vv. 9-11)

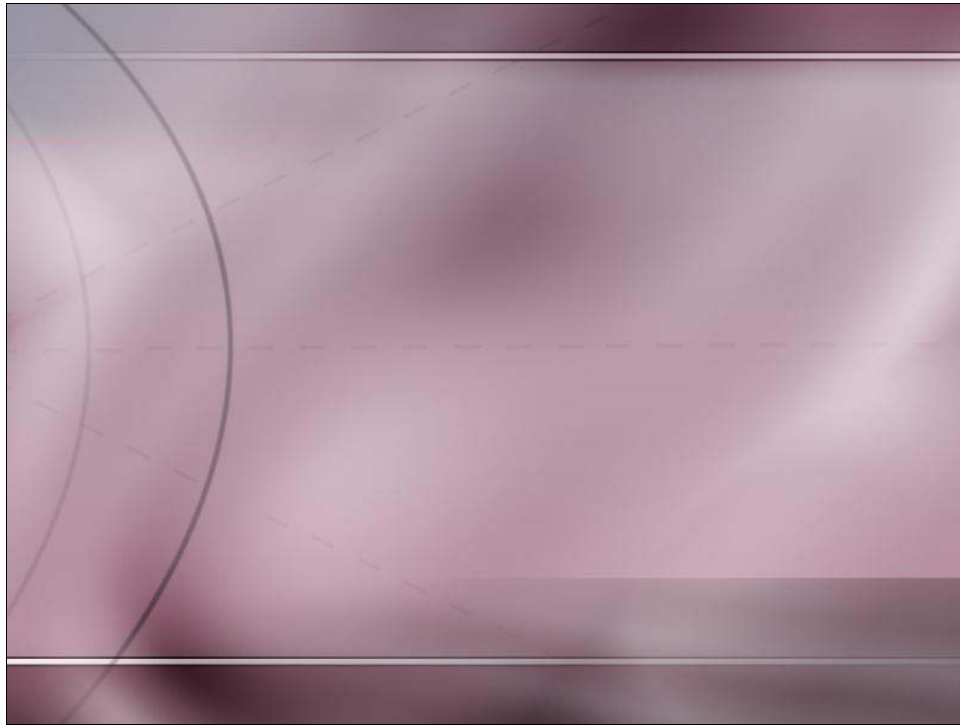
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What does the Bible say? Read 1 Corinthians 6:6-11. To make sure we grasp what Paul is saying here, I pose some questions and answers to which I give a nod to theologian, J I Packer. First: What is the Bible talking about in this vice list? Answer: Lifestyles, regular behavior patterns, habits of mind and action. He has in view not single lapses followed by repentance, forgiveness, and greater watchfulness (with God's help) against recurrence, but ways of life in which some of his readers were set, believing that for Christians there was no harm in them.

Second: What is the Bible saying about these habits? Answer: They are ways of sin that, if not repented of and forsaken, will keep people out of God's kingdom of salvation. Clearly, self-indulgence and self-service, free from self-discipline and self-denial, is the attitude they express, and a lack of moral discernment lies at their heart.

Third: What is the Bible saying about homosexuality? Answer: Those who claim to be Christ's should avoid the practice of same-sex physical connection for orgasm, on the model of heterosexual intercourse. Paul's phrase, "men who practice homosexuality," covers two Greek words for the parties involved in these acts. The first, arsenokoitai, means literally "male-bedders," which seems clear enough. The second, malakoi, is used in many connections to mean "unmanly," "womanish," and "effeminate," and here refers to males matching the woman's part in physical sex. In this context, in which Paul has used two terms for sexual misbehavior, there is really no room for doubt regarding what he has in mind. He must have known, as Christians today know, that some men are sexually drawn to men rather than women, but he is not speaking of inclinations, only of behavior, what has more recently been called acting out. His point is that Christians need to resist these urges, since acting them out cannot please God and will reveal lethal impenitence. Romans 1:26 – Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones - shows that Paul would have spoken similarly about lesbian acting out if he had had reason to mention it here.

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Don't want to come across as a Christian who has it in just for homosexuals. I struggle as a heterosexual: "I want you to know that I am a non-practicing adulterer." Thus he testified to receiving strength from God. With some of the Corinthian Christians, Paul was celebrating the moral empowering of the Holy Spirit in heterosexual terms; with others of the Corinthians, today's homosexuals are called to prove, live out, and celebrate the moral empowering of the Holy Spirit in homosexual terms. J I Packer tells of his friend of 30 years has lived with homosexual desires all his adult life, but remains a faithful husband and father, sexually chaste, through the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the gospel. He is a model in every way. We are all sexually tempted, one way or another, yet we may all tread the path of chastity through the Spirit's enablement, and thereby please God.

Fourth: What is the Bible saying about the gospel? Answer: Those who, as lost sinners, cast themselves in genuine faith on Christ and so receive the Holy Spirit, as all Christians do, find transformation through the transaction. They gain cleansing of conscience (the washing of forgiveness), acceptance with God (justification), and strength to resist and not act out the particular temptations they experience (sanctification).

I Corinthians 6:12-14

- 12 "Everything is permissible for me " -
but not everything is beneficial.
"Everything is permissible for me " -
but I will not be mastered by anything.
- 13 "Food for the stomach and the
stomach for food "– but God will
destroy them both. The body is not
meant for sexual immorality, but for
the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
- 14 By his power God raised the Lord
from the dead, and he will raise us
also.

My body: My responsibility

- Corinthian slogans
 - “Everything is permissible for me”
 - “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food.”

2. My body: My responsibility (vv. 12-14)

12 "Everything is permissible for me "--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me "--but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food "-- but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

The Corinthians were quite open and free about sex. They didn't just talk about it, they flaunted it. The Greeks were members of the most permissive society in history. They freely engaged in fornication, prostitution and homosexuality. But, being the good Greek philosophers as they were they justified their actions, they reasoned, "Everything is permissible for me," and "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food."

The Corinthians believed that "everything is permissible" for the body because they believed in the philosophy of dualism. Greek dualism said that a person was made up of two parts, body and soul. The soul was the beautiful part of a person. It was what was saved and that which went to heaven. The body on the other hand was non-essential, even evil. It was what entrapped the soul and kept it from heaven. So since the body was non-essential and unimportant, a person had the right to do anything he pleased with his body. "Everything is permissible for me." The Corinthians also believed that "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food." Now, this had less to do with food than with sex. So, what the Corinthians meant was "Sex for the body and the body for sex." They reasoned this: since God created humans as sexual beings, God must have meant for us all to enjoy it to the fullest. That's what the body is for, isn't it? Do anything you want with your body because it just doesn't matter.

This second slogan "sex for the body and the body for sex" isn't too far off what our society today stands for. Television, music, magazines, movies are filled with sexual innuendoes. Ads for perfumes, cars, clothes, soap, toothpaste – you name it – they don't care if you believe that their product is good, but they want you to believe that if you use the product, you'll be sexy; you'll be attractive to the opposite sex. This prevalent attitude about sex has had disastrous effects upon our young people: Today they find less value in academic achievements or athletic achievements, or even spiritual achievements, but in sexual achievement. The average university student, experiencing total freedom for the first time in his life, is always looking for a date, always looking for someone to sleep with. Teens, too. Last count 60% of 16-18 year olds have had sexual intercourse and 33% 13-15 year olds have had sex according to a US survey.

My body: My responsibility

- Paul's principles
 - If it's not beneficial; then it's not permissible.
 - If you are not in control, it's not permissible.
 - Sex is meant for the body, but the body is meant for much more.

And I believe that the very basic problem to the pervasive nature of sex in our society is this: We have a wrong understanding of the purpose for sex. That's exactly Paul's diagnosis for the situation in Corinth: the Greek understanding of the body was wrong – the body isn't evil, you can't just do whatever you want with your body – “the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” If you want to play games with your body then you'd better consider God's rules. If we follow the game plan for Christian anatomy and sexuality, we have 3 rules:

Rule One: If it's not beneficial; then it's not permissible. That's in verse 12. In Christian anatomy, what's beneficial to the body is what's going to help spiritually. In Christian anatomy, the Corinthians' sexual indiscretions were merely for worldly pleasure and for immediate gratification. They didn't see that they were keeping themselves from long term spiritual benefits.

Rule Two: If you're not in control, it's not permissible. Again in verse 12, “Everything is permissible to me – but I will not be mastered by anything.” Very simply, the loose living of the Corinthians was out of hand. They were not in control. And quite frankly with such a permissive attitude there's no way anyone could be in control. The sex takes over, the sex actually enslaves the person like an addiction.

Rule Three: Sex is meant for the body, but the body is meant for much much more. The Greeks were out of control in their sexuality because they thought the body was meaningless. Today in our society we are out of control with our sexuality because we think that the body and sex is everything. Neither of these views represent Christian anatomy. Christian anatomy believes that the body is important not meaningless, but also in Christian anatomy, we believe that the body is not all there is. There's a spiritual dimension to the body's existence. Paul writes in verse 14, “By his power God raised the the Lord from the dead and he will raise you also.” God cares deeply about our physical existence. If he didn't he wouldn't have raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Furthermore, our own bodies are destined for more than a sexual purpose, but also for spiritual purpose: our bodies along with our souls will be resurrected unto heaven.

So, Paul is saying to the Corinthians and to us today: If you think that sex is anybody's game, and that anything goes, you're playing a dangerous game. If you think that you are here on earth just to whet your sexual appetite, you're playing for low stakes. You're only playing for an evening or two of passion. Unfortunately for you the stakes are much higher: eternal life or eternal condemnation. Those are the stakes. That's Christian anatomy.

1 Corinthians 6: 15-17

15 Do 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!

16 Do 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." 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

His body, her body: One body

- “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”
- “Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body?”

3. His body, her body: One body (vv. 15-17)

15 Do 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! 16 Do 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." 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

So, Paul having argued for God's perspective on the human body, moves on to the next point which is specific to the Corinthians: Don't go to prostitutes. "Shall I then take members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!" Again, the Corinthians acted out their immoral sexual lives because of their ignorance towards Christian anatomy: They didn't take into account the fact that sexuality is linked with spirituality.

There are two Christian truths that the Corinthians either forgot or ignored. And Paul expresses both in the form of questions: In verse 15, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" Here Paul expresses the Christian truth that there is a spiritual oneness between a Christian and Jesus Christ himself. This oneness is maintained as the believer keeps a holy and righteous life. Now in verse 16, "Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body?" Here Paul adds that in the sexual union of two people, the two will become one flesh, so that there is a spiritual union here also: His body and her body become one body.

The point that Paul is trying to make is this: The union between a man and woman is a spiritual relationship. If that sexual union is immoral, such as a relationship with a prostitute, then it's inconceivable that the spiritual relationship between the Christian and Jesus Christ can be a healthy one.

Now, the argument Paul presents is specific: If you have a relationship with a prostitute, you jeopardize your spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. I think that Paul's argument can be generalized to any immoral sexual relationship: prostitution, premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, hooking up or pornography.

So what's the big deal?" The big deal is that God has no pleasure. You see, I believe there are three dimensions to a sexual relationship: the man's pleasure, the woman's pleasure and God's pleasure. In premarital or extra marital sex, you only have 2 dimensions, the man's and the woman's pleasure, and because God's pleasure is not present, premarital sex is lacking – a person will never be satisfied. The same is true for masturbation. And true fulfillment is in 3 dimensional sex in marriage when his body and her body become one with God's blessing.

1 Corinthians 6: 18-20

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

My body: God's body

- My body is God's body as it is where God chooses to dwell
- My body is God's body as it was bought by the blood of Christ

4. My body: God's body (vv. 18-20)

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Up to now we have established three basic points: One, there is a biblical foundation for human anatomy. Two, God is concerned about the body and three, immoral sexual unions affect our relationship with God. The last point that we will discuss today is made in verses 18 through 20: Our bodies belong to God. My body is God's body.

Verse 19 reads, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" In the Old Testament we find out that the temple building in Jerusalem was where God dwelt and where one met with God. But now by virtue of God's promise to be with us always, we ourselves become the place of meeting. Our bodies hold the Holy Spirit of God. My body is God's body because it is where God chooses to dwell.

My body is God's body also because God owns it. "You are not your own, you were bought at a price." When we become Christians when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we say to God that He owns us. We don't serve ourselves anymore. We serve God with our bodies.

Because our bodies belong to God, we follow his orders and commandments. Paul says, "Flee from sexual immorality." And as if his readers still can't get the point, Paul adds this, "All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." And basically what Paul is saying here is this: sinning is stupid. It's dumb to steal, dumb to kill, dumb to slander because you hurt others. Sins are stupid, but sexual sins are the stupidest, because you sin against yourself. So, flee from sexual immorality. Remember that your body belongs to God. Therefore, honor God with your body.

Questions & Conclusion

- If the woman or man of your dreams offered you a night of passion would you accept? Why or why not? What would you do to resist?
- If you are in love with someone, what are ways of expressing your love besides sex?
- If someone asked you what God thinks of sex, how would you answer? Why do you think that for Christians sex is only for marriage?

Questions & Conclusion

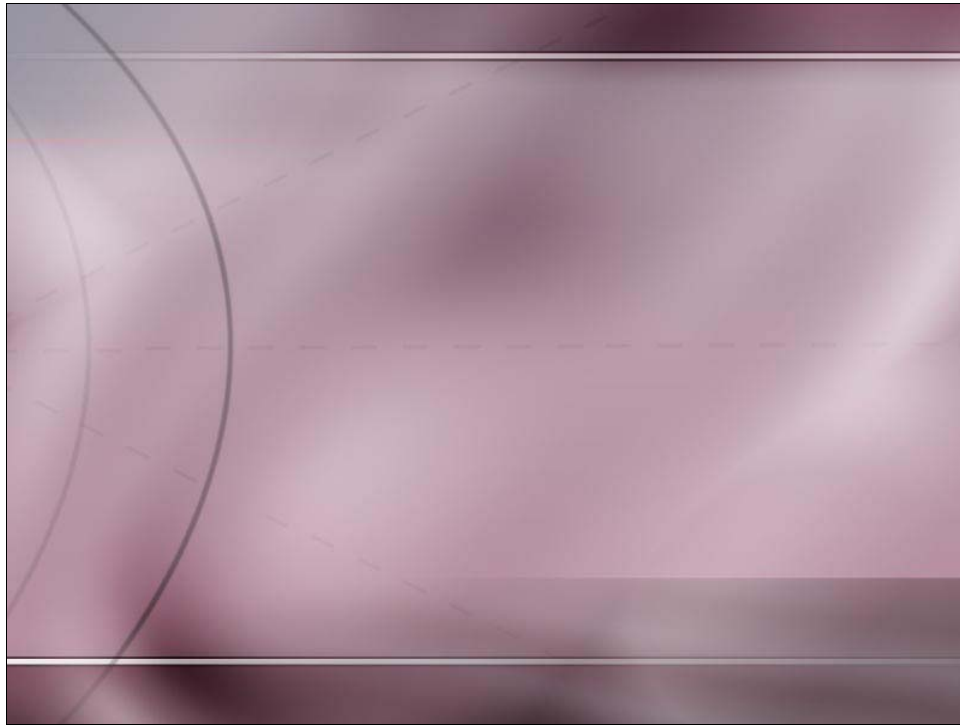
1. If the woman or man of your dreams offered you a night of passion would you accept? Why or why not? If you didn't want to be with them what would you do to resist?
2. If you are in love with someone, what are ways of expressing your love besides sex?
3. If someone asked you what God thinks of sex, how would you answer? Why do you think that for Christians sex is only for marriage?

And it's with this verse, "Honor God with your body," that I conclude. Because this is the central tenet of Christian anatomy, that we in all that we are praise God with our lives. If we're going to honor God with our bodies we need to understand what that means. If we are to understand what "Honor God with our bodies" means, we've got to talk about it like Paul talks about it. It is impossible to cover every aspect of human sexuality in a talk and I haven't today, so my intention this evening is to open the floor for discussion. Let's talk, let's find the place: Sunday school, fellowship, small group, family, one-on-one and let's support each other as we strive to honor God with our bodies.

For those of us who have fallen into sexual immorality and you feel God has condemned, remember this: Paul was writing to sinners. He wrote to those who had fallen into sexual immorality. God's still a God of love. You may still flee from sexual immorality. You may still honor God with your body. But you can't do it by yourself. You need God's help. Pray, confess your sins, make a new start.

You are discovering who you are including your sexuality. I know you spend a lot of your time wondering, "Do people like me?" "Am I attractive to the opposite sex?" I know because I was in school once. I also know you want to find out now. So you test the waters – flirt, date, go to clubs, touch. . . Be careful. It's a sex-obsessed world out there and you may meet up with people that will take you farther than you want to go. I know that I can't stop you from testing the waters. But I can remind you: God created to to be a sexual being; yes, but God also created you to be a spiritual being. Honor God with your bodies by keeping your spiritual commitments: save your body for that special person God will promise to you in marriage.

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The last point is this: beyond sexuality, for all of us we need to remember that we honor God by caring and loving our own bodies. This is actually more difficult to do than it seems. You look at yourself in the mirror every morning and what you see is hard to love. Illustration: dinner with the older folks last night and discussion about medicine and operations. And for me as age sets in, there is less and less to love. As I grow older I notice that I can't run and jump as I used to. I've discovered that I can't get my hair cut the way I like it, because I'm going bald. But the most devastating aspect for me as I grow older, is that I'm losing my eyesight.

Someday you'll feel your body giving out, find hope in verse 14, "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead and he will raise us also." When Christ returns, our bodies will be raised up, our resurrected bodies will be like Christ's, new, perfect, not like our present bodies. And on that day, those who have lost their sight, those who have gone blind, will see God in all his glory. And on that day, those who have lost the use of their legs will stand and will walk and will run to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. And on that day, those who have live in poor health – the pain of cancer, the weaknesses of heart disease– will be healed and refreshed and made whole. I want to see that day! I pray that you want to see that day! So know this: God cares, God cares for our physical well being. He wants the best for our bodies. He will take care of us. And that's the final word on Christian anatomy.