



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Culture Wars | February 23-March 1 | 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Things to Know

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Studying God's Word *In Community*

Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.

Sermon Recap

In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Paul addresses sexual immorality within the church in Corinth. While sexual sin was widespread in the culture, God's design for sex is specific. While the culture says that Christians are legalistic about sex, God's design is not about limiting joy—it is about protecting intimacy, preserving holiness, and reminding us of the one we belong to. Therefore, the life of the Christian should be marked by sexual purity.

We find three truths present in the text:

1. Flee Sexual Immorality

1 Corinthians 6:18

Rather than flirting with sexual sin, Christians are called to flee from it. Flirting with sexual sin means we are intentionally giving space in our lives in order that the sinful desires of the flesh will be gratified. To flee from sexual sin means we not only free from sin, but we flee towards the good and beautiful plans God has for us.

2. You are a Temple of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 6:19

Paul makes clear that sexual immorality has no place in the life of the Christian because the body of the believer is the very temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This means that both are body and our souls are being sanctified; this directly confronts the lies of our culture that argue bodily actions do not affect the soul. There is no such thing as casual or meaningless sexual activity, but rather sexual immorality has unique implications on the soul.

3. You Were Bought at a Price

1 Corinthians 6:20

Because of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, those in Christ have been ransomed from the bondage of sin into spiritual freedom. Christ paid the price for our sin with his own life and death; having been set free in Christ means that our chief aim should be to glorify and obey the one who has redeemed us. Because we have been freed from sin, we should no longer return to the sin that once held us in bondage, but walk in the newness of life Christ has given us.

Discussion Questions

1. What is God's design for sex?
 - a. What constitutes as "sexual immorality?"
2. Why does Paul connect sexual sin uniquely to the body?
3. In what ways does culture promote the idea that our bodies are our own?
4. How does remembering that you were "bought with a price" change the way you think about sexual sin?
5. How can guilt distort obedience? How does grace fuel obedience instead?

Read

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
 - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
 - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
 - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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Scripture

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.
1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

Living on Mission In Community

In an ever increasing hostile culture to truth, we must be devoted to daily and weekly gospel community that studies the Word of God together. The culture around us itches to hear only what it wants to hear (2 Timothy 4:3), but we must proclaim truth to the world. This means that we do not shy away from hard conversations, but are bold to speak on the things that God has clearly revealed.

Here's a Couple of Questions for Spiritual Inventory, Conversation, and Reflection:

- Am I committed to studying God's Word together with other believers?
- Are there areas in my life where I shy away from standing/proclaiming the truth of God's Word?
- Is there an area of my life where culture has influenced me more than God's Word?

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
 2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
 3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*
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Leader Resources - February 23-March 1

Small Group Curriculum - 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

1. Session Overview

Paul writes to the church in Corinth to address a number of issues within the church, including sexual immorality. Corinth was a sexually permissive city shaped by temple worship, prostitution, and a dualistic worldview that separated body and spirit. Paul makes sure readers understand that what the body does and engages in matters physically, emotionally and spiritually. God's design for sex is not about restriction: it is about redeemed intimacy. Sexual holiness flows from identity: we have been bought by Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, and freed to live as His.

2. Opening

Prayer:

“Lord, you are holy. We acknowledge where we fall short of your glory and ask you to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God, we pray that our lives would point to the cross as a model for your good plan of sex and intimacy. Keep us from sin through the power of the indwelling Spirit. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Icebreaker question:

Break into groups of 2-3.

Ask:

Why do you think conversations about sex often feel either awkward or combative in Christian spaces?

3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 out loud.

4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

1. Flee, Don't Flirt

Paul does not say “manage” sexual immorality. He says flee- run away from it as fast as you can. Sin in this area entangles heart, mind, and body.

Theological Insight:

Sexual sin uniquely distorts covenant union and bodily integrity.

Pastoral Insight:

Radical obedience often requires radical boundaries.

2. Remember Who You Are

Your body is a temple. This language would have been shocking in Corinth's sexually permissive culture.

Theological Insight:

God's presence now dwells in His redeemed people.

Pastoral Insight:

Identity-based obedience outlasts fear-based obedience.

3. Live Like You Belong to Him

Contrary to what culture says, "You are not your own" is not a threat—it is security.

Theological Insight:

Redemption establishes ownership through love, not domination.

Pastoral Insight:

Freedom grows where surrender deepens.

5. Discussion Questions

1. In what ways have you (or the culture around us) built identity around desire, relationship status, or attraction?
2. How does the cross transform the way we respond to sexual failure?
3. What false promises does sexual freedom offer?
4. Why do you think God designed sex specifically for covenant marriage?
5. What is one practical step you can take this week to submit more fully to God's Word?
6. In what ways can we pursue deeper intimacy with Christ when sexual desire feels strong?
7. How can singles and married couples both live out this passage faithfully?

6. Application

When we embrace sex and identity as God has defined them:

- Shame loses its grip.
- Autonomy loses its appeal.
- Holiness becomes beautiful.
- Our bodies become instruments of worship.

Prayer:

“Lord, your ways are higher and better than my own. We have tasted and seen that you are good, so help us to always desire you above all else. May we honor you with our bodies in all that we do. Amen.”

8. Memory Verse

“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.” 1 Corinthians 6:18

9. Leader Notes

- Create a space of vulnerability.
- Be prepared that there is probably a lot more going on than meets the eye: pornographic use, past sexual regret, same-sex attraction, sex before marriage, etc.
- Point to the hope, mercy, and grace found in the gospel.
- Lead people to repentance.

