

## 4. The Master's Instructions about Everyday Life

### 4.13 The Christian's attitude to his own body (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

Like everything else we have, our bodies are on trust from God. We are responsible to him for their use or abuse. Self-control is a fruit of God's Holy Spirit. Perhaps there is a spiritual lesson in the greengrocer's sign that says: 'Eat fruit - keep fit.'

The Lord's Day has value both as a day for worship and as a day free from work. The human body has been designed by God with certain inbuilt rhythms that benefit from the twenty-four-hour and seven-day routines. Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11 give us *example* of and *exhortation* to keep one day a week apart for spiritual and physical refreshment.

The concluding words of 1 Corinthians 6 are clear in their command: 'You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.' How do you do this?

*Be discerning in what you do (v.12)*

Not everything is good for you. There are lots of things you *could* do, but you should not do them all.

*Be dominated by God and not by anything or anyone else (vv.12-13)*

Make sure that you control what you do rather than allowing what you do to control you! People say: 'I *can't* get up in the morning,' when it is more accurate to say: 'I *don't* get up,' or, 'I *won't* get up.' If you remember God is always at your early morning appointment, it may help you to make the effort to be there too.

*Be a dwelling place for God's Holy Spirit (v.19)*

The word 'temple' means a shrine or sanctuary, a place set apart for the worship of God. Set yourself apart from the world as a person who is holy before the living God.

### *Avoid disaster by obeying God's word (v.18)*

The word 'flee' in the Greek means 'make it your habit to flee'. If something is bad for you, do not contemplate it or dream about it or play with it. Keep well away from it at all costs.

Sexual intercourse with your God-given husband or wife is perfectly right and proper. Sexual behaviour with anyone else is a serious sin.

Eating all the food you need is perfectly right and proper. Eating all you want may well also be a sin with serious consequences.

In 1 Corinthians 9:27 Paul gives his own testimony. Like an athlete who competes for the crown after strenuous training, he takes captive his own physical body and desires so he can live his Christian life to maximum capacity. The strain endured by Paul is described in 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. He survived by developing a *spiritual stamina* that came from Jesus Christ himself. His own weakness prepared the way for God to work through him.

Give your body as a living sacrifice to God. Do not sacrifice your Christian life by fulfilling mere bodily appetites.

### **Discussion guide for 'the Christian's attitude to his own body'**

1. Discuss why the commercial world spends so much money advertising products to keep our bodies looking young, fit and beautiful, and lean and clean.
2. "... Honour God with your body", 1 Corinthians 6:20. What does this verse tell us about how we, as Christians, should respond to the world's pressure?
3. Read Psalm 139:13-16. What does this tell you about your own person - body, soul and spirit?
4. Jesus taught that our inner beings control what we say and do, see Matthew 12:34-35. How do you understand this together with Galatians 5:22-23, where "self-control" is a "fruit of the (Holy) Spirit"?
5. Discuss real life issues where a God-given desire must still be kept under Holy Spirit given self-control. Consider friendship and sexual

issues. Consider eating and drinking issues. Consider how you dress. Consider issues of physical and mental fitness.

6. Romans 12:1-2 urges Christians to change their lives and lifestyles by letting their renewed mind control everything that goes on. Give examples of how this has happened in your own life.
7. What do you learn from 1 Corinthians 9:27, "I beat my body and make it a slave....."? W.E. Vine's Expository Greek Dictionary says: *hupopiazō* buffeting or striking or bruising - Paul's figuratively "suppressive treatment of his body, in order to keep himself spiritually fit".
8. We can rely on God's grace to help us react as we should to any of life's events, Titus 2:11-14. How does looking ahead to Jesus' return help us handle issues today? Give personal examples if you can.