

The temple is the place God's Spirit dwells, from which He rules and reigns. As believers our bodies have become the temple of God's Holy Spirit. A place where He will be honored.

The church has been consistently counter cultural with respect to our bodies. We represent God's view that sex is not a consumer good but a way of fueling and nurturing a God-ordained covenant between us and our spouse.

We must faithfully represent God to the world in a way that demonstrates both His holiness and His forgiveness.

What are some of the situations you find most challenging to balance both God's holiness and His forgiveness? Do you feel you have only represented one side of God in those situations? Why is it important to present both?

WRAP-UP

Current culture would have us believe that happiness is found in pursuing whatever we feel like doing. But rather than giving us freedom, we become slaves to our desires. Our culture reinforces sex as a way to feel good but misses God's design for intimacy to be part of a covenant relationship. God designed us for relationship with Him and with others. Our body is part of the Body of Christ and belongs to Him. It was not designed for immorality, but to be used in worship of God.

MEMORY VERSE

11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. 12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. - Colossians 3:11-12 NLT

Challenge- Are there desires in your life that you have not yet fully surrendered to God? If so, bring them before Him and receive forgiveness as you seek God's strength in the battle for holiness.

Embodied Holiness- Surrendering Our Desires Hunger for Holiness Week 4

INTRODUCTION

Our sermon series during Lent is focused on Holiness. What does it mean to be holy? It means we are set apart for God in our body, soul, and spirit. But there are times our holiness is compromised when we are tempted to submit and serve our own desires rather than God and His good purposes for us. The natural and the spiritual are at war in us, and we need to be wise as we do battle to embody holiness.

Ice Breaker

Is there anything that, once you start it, you just can't stop- like eating potato chips, or binging a series on Netflix?

Key Passage

12 You say, "I am allowed to do anything"--but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything. 13 You say, "Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food." (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. - 1 Corinthians 6:12-13 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What do you believe about happiness?

The culture we live in tells us a different story about happiness than God does. If we believe the world's definition of happiness, we probably believe that our heart, feelings, or desires should dictate our actions. Essentially this belief tells us that we define what is good (or evil) based on how it makes us feel. We believed this lie beginning in Genesis chapter 3.

What were the three things Eve believed about the fruit? Was what she believed true? Did taking the fruit bring her happiness?

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. - Genesis 3:6 NIV

Eve pursued what she thought would satisfy her, but in doing so she destroyed her relationship with God and brought pain and sorrow to herself and to others.

16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy." - 1 Peter 1:16 NLT

God has a higher and better purpose for you than doing whatever makes you happy. We are to be set apart for Him. The greatest version of ourselves, and the one which brings us true happiness, is the one which comes under the authority, wisdom, and guidance of Jesus.

2. Created for Relationship

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." - Genesis 2:18 NIV

God created us to be in relationship with Him, and in relationship with others. It is natural for us to desire intimacy with another. But this is one area we need to trust God to guide us.

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We tend to justify or rationalize the things we want even if we know it is not God's will for us. This is at the heart of lust which is *epithymēō* in the Greek and means to strongly desire or long for a thing (often things that are forbidden).

What is the rationalization we find in 1 Cor 6:12 and what is the danger in that which Paul warns us about?

Consider a time when you rationalized your own indulgence in something that you knew was wrong. (There are many areas where we do this in addition to sexual temptation- eating and drinking what we shouldn't, or excessive spending.) At some point you knew you were tempted to do wrong and made a choice which led to the rationalization and action you probably regret. What strategy can you use in the future to resist the temptation before you let it dictate your actions? Can you remove yourself from the temptation physically, or speak out loud a prayer or scripture declaring God to be in control of this and call on Him for strength to resist, is there a trusted friend who will be there to support you in the battle against this temptation?

3. Integration of Body and Spirit

15 Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! 16 And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." 17 But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. - 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 NLT

Paul says our bodies weren't meant for immorality but for the Lord. Our culture equates sex with physicality, but the Bible teaches that there is an underlying spiritual element involved.

God designed intimacy to connect us at a soul level. Look at the parallel Paul makes between being joined with a prostitute versus joined to the Lord. How does the cultural norm that "casual sex is satisfying" undermine the truth about the spiritual unity we experience by being joined to the Lord? What kinds of damage result from short-term intimacy being established & broken repeatedly.

18 Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. 19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. - 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 NLT