

1Corinthians 6:12-13 "Food for the Stomach, Stomach for Food"

1 Corinthians 6:12-13 ¹² All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

A couple of questions every Christian should ask himself periodically is, how is my life glorifying God? And, what areas of my life do not glorify God?

Now, I don't mean to suggest that we should go down a checklist to see if we've been naughty or nice. This is more in keeping with the same attitude we should have with prayer, for example, where Paul says to pray without ceasing, which means we should be in constant communion with our God and having a sense of His constant presence in our lives.

And in a similar way we should be aware of our spiritual walk with the Lord so that we can begin to measure our growth in Christ. After all, we are told that "those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son..." (ROM 8:29)

EPH 1:4 "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."

And when it comes right down to it if you want to know what God's will is for your life, this aspect of our ability to faithfully represent Christ in this world is on top of God's list for our lives. That's exactly what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.

1TH 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification..." (NASB)

Even Jesus, during the last days of His life, before going to the cross, prayed to the Father. And one of the very last things He prayed for was that we might be able to represent Him in this world as His ambassadors to the glory of God.

JOH 17:15-16-17 "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

Our sanctification, or our being set apart to be holy unto the Lord, was so important to Jesus that He prayed specifically for you and me that we might be able to walk effectively in our new life in Christ.

You see that prayer before the Father wasn't just for the disciples of His day. It was meant for every believer who would ever live.

JOH 17:20-21 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

It may be subtle when we first read such a passage, but upon closer examination it stands out with crystal clarity. Notice again what Jesus says in that prayer. "May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

This is directly tied to our sanctification, our actual walk with the Lord that stands out in such a way that the world cannot help but take notice that we are one with Christ and the Father. And in that walk people are compelled to consider our message of life in Christ by the very way we follow Christ.

Who wants to listen to a message you hear from someone who isn't willing to walk in the truth of that message themselves?

How believable is it if a political candidate delivers a message of lower taxes and yet his entire voting record on such things is more spending and making laws which create more taxes?

At what point do you label such a person a hypocrite? And at what point does the world label Christians hypocrites who speak of a new life in Christ and yet themselves don't walk as new creatures?

Do you see what Jesus was praying for? He was praying that we might be sanctified in the truth of God's word so that our lives would be conformed to the new life we have in Christ and that the world can taste the fruit of our lives and see that the Lord is good.

But if our lives are not being conformed into Christ's image, or if we're not willing to give up parts of our former lives for Christ, this too will send a message to the world that evidently Jesus doesn't mean that much to us.

And if that is the message we send the world, should it surprise anyone that the world scoffs at Christianity? My wife has been

reading a book which is about the lives of present day martyrs; people who are being persecuted and in many cases being put to death for their faith in Christ.

One of the accounts she shared with me from this book is about a man who was continually tortured by certain guards. But instead of returning evil for evil he purposed to pray for his enemies and to love them instead. One of the guards simply couldn't understand how this prisoner for Christ could act in such a way.

He demonstrated the love of Christ. He proved himself a follower of Christ. His life shined for the Lord as Jesus lived through him. And this guard was compelled to want to know this Jesus who could change a man from the inside out as the hope of eternal life radiated from his very being. The guard became a believer as the Holy Spirit gave him eyes to see.

Does the way we live for Jesus, or not live for Jesus, make a difference? It can make an eternal difference. And this is the message of Paul to these Corinthians.

1CO 6:12 "Everything is permissible for me" - but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me" - but I will not be mastered by anything."

This is on the heels of the passage we saw last week where Paul exhorted the church to consider their past lives outside of Christ and what they used to be, but now that they have life they have been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit.

But what does Paul mean by everything is permissible for me?, or as the NASB and the NKJV puts it, all things are lawful for me? Well, obviously he certainly cannot mean anything goes. In fact, some commentators suggest that this was a slogan for the church in Corinth and that Paul was just using their slogan and now is about to correct it.

Keep in mind that in the ancient Greek world the flesh and the body were seen as tools to get you from point A to point B. In other words, the body was just a vessel to carry your soul to the next world. The important part of you would live on after the body was put in the ground.

And so, consequently, the body was seen as luggage. Some saw the luggage as something which you could throw around, while others saw the luggage as something which had to be tamed.

And so, the two extremes were to deny the body any pleasure so as not to be satisfying that evil part of you, while others saw the body as something to be used in any way you wanted, since it wasn't coming to the next world anyhow.

And since many of these Corinthians were Greeks this philosophy of life was something they grew up in and were now bringing into their experience with Christ. And so, the slogan, all things are lawful was a segue to get to the heart of the matter with these people.

Paul is going to correct their faulty thinking on what it means to be sanctified or set apart for Jesus Christ.

1CO 6:12 "Everything is permissible for me" - but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me" - but I will not be mastered by anything."

"Everything" is not all inclusive. For example, the list Paul gives in verses 9 and 10 could not be included here. He isn't saying that fornication is permissible, or that being an idolater or adulterer, nor a homosexual or thief and so on, is permissible for a child of God.

And yet, there is a sense in which Paul is conveying the idea that these things may be done, ill-advised, by carnal believers, but they could never be construed as being helpful to the cause of Christ.

There is also the sense that in Christ we have been set free from the law, and therefore, we have certain liberties in Christ. But the point Paul is making is that whatever would not promote the purity of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His church is something which is not profitable, no matter how free you see yourself in Christ.

And so, what Paul is trying to do is to get these people not to be so self-absorbed and to be more Christ absorbed where His cause and His life is seen to be the most important thing.

To only have self and its desires as the focal point in our lives is to prove ourselves not to be free, but to actually be slaves of this world and self.

Verse 12.... "but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me" - but I will not be mastered by anything."

The word beneficial in the Greek is a word which means "to collect or contribute in order to help." The obvious point Paul is making is that fornication and so forth cannot help the cause of Christ, but neither can certain things which may seem harmless

enough to us and yet may be a stumbling block to many people in the church, as well as those outside the church.

This doesn't mean we all agree on a list of do's and don'ts, it simply means that we each should weigh the greater good for the gospel so that Christ may be exalted, and not give the opportunity for anyone to be repulsed by our behavior so that the gospel is not even given a chance to be heard.

But now Paul begins to bring to light the personal aspect of our new life in Christ and what that means on a practical level. "I will not be mastered by anything." Again, this is in reference to those things which would dishonor Christ.

The word master in the Greek means to have power or authority over something. And what Paul wants to drive home here for these Corinthians is that the flesh and the sinful nature should not hold that place of power and authority over their lives to where it directs their desires.

Paul had taught these people as he did others that we are free in Christ.

GAL 5:1,13 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and ***do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*** 13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But ***do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature*** (Or the flesh); rather, serve one another in love."

Some of these people were using their freedom in Christ to be self-serving, not serving others. And they also used this freedom as an excuse to sin, thinking, 'that it will be covered anyhow by the blood of Christ, why not just indulge myself?'

Why not? Because it will not be profitable for the kingdom of God and you prove yourself to be ruled by your fleshly appetites, not by the love we should have for Christ. You see, we are set free to serve God, not to sin.

And in this case before us these Corinthians are not serving God, but self. And the reason they are not serving God is because they have not learned to bring this sanctification to bear on their lives as they submit to the Holy Spirit and His word, desiring to please Christ.

It takes discipline to walk after Christ. It takes a commitment to serve the living God. It doesn't come naturally because the flesh

always wants to do its own thing. And yet, being new creatures in Christ we have new desires, and a new power and a new ability to be able to love and serve God in the Spirit.

But, if we will not be mastered by Christ, we will be mastered by something. Paul understood the struggle and the need to commit to going forward with this challenge to glorify Christ with our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1CO 9:25-27 "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

Does that sound like Paul was passive in his pursuit of representing Christ in this world? I don't think so. I don't think it was any easier for Paul, when it came to being mastered by the Lord, than it is for us.

Paul had to struggle with the flesh, but he never hoped that the "feeling" of holiness would somehow jump on him and then walk in that holiness. Holiness was a reality based on the gift of salvation that Christ gave us. He simply took that gift seriously enough to be disciplined to follow after the Lord who gave it to him.

He was not going to let his flesh be his master, not after knowing that his Lord and true Master gave His life to purchase this gift for him.

I mean, notice the imagery and the use of action words Paul uses in different passages when dealing with this struggle.

COL 3:4-5 "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 ***Put to death***, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."

"Put to death" is not a passive approach to our pursuit of faithfully representing Christ in this world.

2TI 2:22 ***Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace***, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Flee the evil desires of youth, pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace. There is a spiritual war going on and unless we want to become a casualty then we need to be involved in this war as we actively pursue our Master who is leading us.

All of these things require choices on our parts. And the choice Paul wants us to make is the godly choice as we consider that we have been delivered from the master of this world who had dominion over our lives, as we chose to go our own way, instead of God's way in Christ.

But now that we are new creatures in Christ we have the power and ability to please the Lord and to be used of Him to His glory. In fact, that's really the point of this entire section of our text.

1 Corinthians 6:13 ¹³ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

Keep in mind the context here. Paul is still talking about our salvation and the way we should live in relationship to this new life in Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

So, when Paul says, that "food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them", he is not talking about the body being some sort of temporary vessel that will one day be disposed of by God in favor of our eternal existence being less than physical, not needing either a stomach or food.

In fact, this is counter to the entire salvific plan of God which has as its ultimate expression a resurrected body. Many of the ancient Greeks felt the body was just a vessel to carry the soul around.

One commentator quotes an ancient Greek philosopher by the name of Epictetus who said, "I am a poor soul shackled to a corpse."

Unfortunately, many Christians have the same attitude about the body as though it's just a necessary evil in their lives. And I can certainly understand why at times. The body grows old, it gets sick, it fails to work the way it was designed to due to any variety of ailments.

But our bodies are not necessary evils, they are not corpses housing our spirits. Our bodies are special vessels to be used by God. You see you can't separate the physical body from the spirit as it's used by God in this world, or the next for that matter.

Remember, we were created in the image of God and that includes our physical bodies. It's true that God is Spirit and has no body, but it is through the body that we express those characteristics of our God.

Remember, that man was created by God from the dust of the earth. In fact, before man received his life from God he was first and foremost flesh. It isn't until God breathed into man the breath of life that he becomes animate and a complete man only at that point.

Therefore, human beings are only human in the full sense of the term when they are both flesh and spirit, which is why Paul's hope is not found in being absent from the body and present with the Lord, even though he acknowledges that that is much better than living in a sin cursed world.

Paul's hope is what he describes as the "hope of Israel."

Acts 28:20 ²⁰ "For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of *the hope of Israel.*"

What is the hope of Israel?

Acts 26:6-8 ⁶ "And now I am standing trial for *the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers*; ⁷ *the promise* to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve *God* night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. ⁸ "Why is it considered incredible among you *people* if **God does raise the dead?**

Acts 24:15 ¹⁵ *having a hope in God*, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be *a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

Acts 13:29-34 ⁹ "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰ "But **God raised Him from the dead;** ³¹ and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. ³² "And **we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,** ³³ that **God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus,** as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.' ³⁴ "As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and* SURE *blessings* OF DAVID.'

So, for Paul, and for that matter for all of the disciples during and after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, it was the physical resurrection of all of God's people that was the culmination of the hope they all longed for with Christ being the first fruits.

So, why in verse 13 of our text, does Paul seem to allude to the physical body as seemingly insignificant to God as the Lord summarily destroys aspects of it that are deemed unnecessary?

1 Corinthians 6:13 ¹³ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

Paul has not reversed his position on the physical body of believers which elsewhere he deems central to the redemptive plan of God found in the resurrection. Nor is he suggesting that the physical resurrection of the bodies of believers will lack a stomach or the use of food in that resurrection body.

He is speaking here of the proper use of the body in this present sin-filled, cursed world. Our present bodies have certain functions from a physiological standpoint, but we who are in Christ also have a certain spiritual function which is to glorify God in our bodies in this present world.

Essentially Paul is saying that the body will pass away since our cursed bodies **will not** continue in their present state for eternity. Our present bodies **are not** for immortality, but that doesn't mean that our present bodies are not for the Lord who will raise our bodies from the dead unto immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:53-57 ⁵³ For *this perishable must put on the imperishable*, and *this mortal must put on immortality*. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, a form of Platonism, that Randy Alcorn identifies as Christoplatonism, has invaded the church to where the physical body that God created has been relegated to an afterthought and is somehow deemed repulsive if such mundane things as eating and drinking in the new earth continue on for human beings in glorified resurrected bodies.

In fact, John MacArthur sums this point up well from his commentary on 1 Corinthians.

“Food and the stomach were created by God for each other. Their relationship is purely biological. It is likely the Corinthians were using this truth to justify sexual immorality [by celebrating] the idea that sex is no different from eating: the stomach was made for food, and the body was made for sex. But Paul stops them short.... he is saying, “but it is also true that that relationship is purely temporal. That biological process has no place in the eternal state.”

I would agree that sex, which is designed for a marital relationship on this earth, will not have a continuity unto the new earth, but that is only because Christ made it clear that it would not. But nowhere in Scripture are we given any indication that the eternal state of the believer’s body will be any less a body as it was on this present earth, minus the curse and sin in its glorified state.

Remember, the context of verse 13 is addressing sinful behavior of these Corinthians as they are presently living out their lives on this earth. This has nothing to do with explaining the eternal state of the resurrected body.

1 Corinthians 6:11-12 ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. ¹² All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

In fact, we get a pretty good glimpse into the eternal state of the resurrected body of believers as we consider the resurrected body of Jesus Christ who conspicuously ate food on several occasions after coming out of the tomb.

Acts 10:40-41 ⁴⁰ "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

Luke 24:39-43 ³⁹ "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; ⁴³ and He took it and ate *it* before them.

John 21:12-13 ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come *and* have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise.

Luke 22:15-16,29-30 ¹⁵ And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ²⁹ and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

To suggest that Jesus was only eating in some metaphorical way is to miss the point of what it means to be human, even a resurrected human being as is Christ. We are not less spiritual because we eat, even in these mortal and corruptible bodies.

And we will be no less human in our glorified bodies as we will then also be eating and drinking with each other and the Lord. Was Adam less spiritual before the fall for eating and drinking? No, in fact he was fulfilling the mandate set upon him by God to eat of any tree of the Garden except one.

If human beings ate before sin why in the world is it repulsive to suggest that we will eat and drink in the Kingdom after we receive our resurrected bodies? which though glorified will still be human bodies, the same body that was sown corruptible and then raised incorruptible.

It is an insult to God's plan of redemption for His people to suggest that we will be anything less than human made in the image of God, and that includes those bodily functions like sleep, exercise, eating and drinking and unless our glorified bodies, after eating, have an alimentary system that is 100% efficient, and it may, we will also defecate just as Adam and Eve presumably did before they fell.

And if that sounds repulsive to you then you denigrate the physical body that God created perfect in the Garden of Eden and the body that will be recreated (resurrected) for the new earth unto the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:13 the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

There is only one body that is not for immortality and that is our present sin-filled cursed body. But because the Lord is for the body, since He created it, it will rise a body to His honor and glory and for our good according to His will.

We will eat and drink in our glorified bodies on the new earth and food will never taste as good now as it will then as our resurrected taste buds will join Christ's at the supper of the Lamb as we will literally eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom.

But in the meantime we are called to holiness to serve God in these bodies.

^{NAU} **Romans 12:1** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.