

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Lecture 17, Paul's Response to Oral Reports, 1 Corinthians 6:7-20

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This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is session 17, Paul's Response to Oral Reports, 1 Corinthians 6:7-20.

We're back now to finish chapter 6. We've been looking at a number of items in this chapter.

Perhaps we should bring our minds back to review a little bit of where we are here. But in chapter 6, verses 1 to 6, where we looked last time, we have this problem of lawsuits among believers. And there's a phrase that you need to see.

It's in verse 3, where Paul says, do you not know? And then he comes back and critiques them. This shows up over and over again through chapter 6. In verse 9, do you not know? Then, in verse 15, do you not know? Then, in verse 19, do you not know? So, throughout this chapter, Paul is bringing the Corinthians in line with teaching that they should know, that perhaps at another time Paul had communicated to them. We already know that we have a lost letter that he had written to them about their relationships with believers and sexual sin and those who were not following God.

And so, throughout this chapter, he keeps coming back to this theme: don't you know, don't you know, don't you know. Then, in verse 7, where we're going to begin today, this very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? So, he comes back and sees the occasion of these problems with the courts as a moral defeat for them.

They should be above and beyond that, but instead, they're entwined in their own world, and with the problems that they have, they're trying to solve them with the world structures rather than the structures of their Christian understandings. Then, in the last part of the chapter, actually 9 through 11, he continues to upbraid them about sexual sins. Then, in verse 12, he continues that theme of sexual immorality that almost dovetails with chapter 5:1. I have the right to do anything, and we'll come back to exactly what that kind of phraseology is later.

On page 79 of notepad number nine, please notice at the bottom of the page number two. Number one, we were looking at the question of the problem of lawsuits. In number two, Paul points out that lawsuits are merely symptomatic of deeper problems, yea, even a moral defect.

A community that believes in harmony should render lawsuits to deal with personal animosity non-existent. The Corinthians, in participating, have by their actions confessed their problem. To need formal litigation between believers in this regard is a confession of moral behavior.

However, we take that earlier context of the lawsuit, whether we go with some and say that it's unpacking what was going on with a man and his stepmother in chapter 5 or whether it's a more general issue of lawsuits, particularly the civil issues of conflict between the Corinthians is sort of irrelevant. Whichever way you go, it's a defeat, it's a defect, it's a moral failure. This moral failure is the inability to operate according to biblical values.

Remember, this command was given within a culture whose structures obviously make it difficult to live biblically. Those structures are counter to the way Christians should resolve their problems and issues between them. Here are some preliminary conclusions at this point. This will be a little repetitive from last time, but here we are at the bottom of the page.

Comparisons between Roman and American courts, for example, American courts, are based more on analogy than identity. They are not the same. You can't take Corinthians 6 *carte blanche* and apply it to issues in a United States system of courts, and that's probably true for the courts where you live as well.

Furthermore, issues in 1 Corinthians probably related to civil rather than criminal law. So, whatever analogy exists, this is the arena, human disputes, not criminal activity. Furthermore, Roman courts operated along the lines of status.

USA courts are designed to be fair and not relate to a status other than the fact that money does buy better defense, of course, or buy a better prosecution. Furthermore, U.S. courts are, by virtue of our society, essential in many ways. For example, to establish disputed property boundaries requires a legal process.

The force is equity, custody of children, integrity, and performance for pay; that is, someone does a job for you but doesn't finish the job. In goods and services and many business ventures, insurance companies, as we mentioned, deal with issues that pertain to you without even your permission. While justice may be influenced by money for skill representation in the American courts, and character is often assaulted as part of the process, it's still not a social status, vexatious litigation context.

So, we have a context in Roman court, and we have issues in our own culture, and we can't use Romans 6, excuse me, 1 Corinthians 6 as a proof text that we should never use adjudication within the American culture. We need to be careful that we

don't misapply this text in a random way. Paul's exhortation that we are better wrong than embarrassing the assembly still has to be given due consideration.

As Garland notes, even pagans value the fact that a wise man sometimes ignores injury. At the same time, we must not assume this is a prescriptive text in light of the different cultures and court systems. What do I mean by that? When we read the Bible, it either describes something to us or prescribes something to us.

There are a lot of descriptive texts in the scriptures that relate to issues that happen in a certain time and place, but relating that is not to be taken as prescribing the same sorts of actions in our own time and place. We have to decide if any given biblical text is descriptive. Is it describing what happened, or is it prescriptive? That is prescribing what we should do now. 1 Corinthians 6 is a descriptive passage.

There are certainly prescriptive elements, and that is, this would rather be wronged than cause injury in the community. Everyone has been there at one time or another, but that doesn't mean that this text should be used to manipulate individuals out of using an adjudicated process to solve certain cultural issues, certain legal issues within the American culture, just because we find it in 1 Corinthians 6. It is not the same thing. So be careful how you decide to use this text.

Don't use it as a club or a crowbar, but use it as an issue of analogy and that we need to be careful with certain aspects if, indeed, the legal system comes our way. Thirdly, Paul appeals to the Christian's position in Christ as a reason for better behavior in 6, 9 through 11. He says in verse 9, here is that phrase again: Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who have sex with men, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

In other words, they can't operate that way and expect God to justify them. And that is what some of you were. Now, that is an extremely important statement.

That is what some of you were, but now you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God. Consequently, Paul was expecting from them a better lifestyle and better decisions than what they were portraying in their relationships with one another. Let's look at just a few of the details here in verses 9 through 11.

Paul gives what's known as a vice list. I've mentioned this to you before, and we'll come back to it just to comment. There are a lot of what we call virtue and vice lists.

These were true outside of the Bible. Plato, other Greek writers had virtue and vice lists. They existed in the time of the Bible.

The Bible has its own virtue and vice list. This is the way you should live, not the way you should live. Probably the most famous virtue vice list is the fruit of the Spirit, is a virtue list for the community to live a certain way.

The works of the flesh in Galatians 5 famous passage, the works of the flesh are a vice list. Believers do not live this way. So virtue, vice.

Now we've got a vice list. He's saying to them that this sort of lifestyle, which was certainly something that Corinthians had imbibed, was not acceptable. To be unrighteous, unrighteous means to violate the revealed will of God.

To do right or not to do right. Sexually immoral, pornoi, idolaters, adulterers, moikoi, homosexuality, and it uses two words for this that we'll notice here in just a moment. And I think probably we should comment on this.

I'm not going to digress. We could do a huge excursion here on the question of homosexuality, but I'm not going to do that. I'm just going to point out a few things and guide you towards someplace where you can get help if you need to study that.

At this point, two terms emerge that are highly debated in current homosexual discussions. They weren't debated in the first century. People knew what they meant.

Note how the English versions interpret these terms. The ESV combines them as a unit while the NIV presents them, presents, represents that there are two terms making the ESV more dynamic on that particular occasion than the NIV. The King James Version reads, nor effeminate nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

Effeminate would take homosexuality to the female characteristics, whereas the abusers of themselves with mankind would be to the male characteristics. The ESV, nor men who practice homosexuality. It levels these two terms into that phrase.

The original NIV, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders. It's sort of like one is progressive, and the other is more common for them. The interesting thing is that the 2011 NIV translated it differently.

We've come over this so many times, and I think you're getting used to this, that it becomes essential when you're using English Bibles that you're constantly comparing some of these major versions. Even the 2011 changed it, and perhaps in a better way, but it actually represents what the original said. The original gave it two things, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders.

Whereas the 2011 says, men who have sex with men. Sort of like the ESV, it took it down to one level. Horsley, who's a commentator on this passage in Corinthians, gives another double situation, neither masturbators nor male prostitutes.

The point is, we've got two terms. They're both talking about the domain of homosexuality with males, and we usually use that word. Lesbians, we use with women, homosexuality.

But when you just say homosexuality, we're typically talking about males. And so we see these terms being used here. Winner notes that the collation of these two terms in light of Roman usage and observes, and now by the way, you can scratch out that Greek word because it's the wrong one, the word that's there is the word for adultery, but it should be *malakoi*, which is the first of the two terms we're talking about, comes, and there's the transliteration of it as you can see, this term comes from the Latin, *malicus*, and may represent a homosexual act that was not, please underline that, not permitted under Roman law, namely the penetration of male Roman citizens.

In this case, Paul prohibits two levels of homosexuality and undermines Roman law permission; that is, the penetration of non-Roman males was allowed in the mores of the elite status. Homosexuality was rampant in the first century, much more than it is even in the American culture today. Over the last decade, homosexual community has gained a lot of political prominence and certain human rights, which may not be wrong.

They're still human beings and they still live in an American culture, which doesn't adjudicate people along those lines, but it's a different thing when you bring it over into the church culture. It is not something that is permissible. That is a consistent biblical teaching all the way from Leviticus 19 through Romans and here in 1 Corinthians.

Winter shows how the first term developed to represent the passive homosexual on pages 1, 16, and 17 in his book after Paul left Corinth and that the coined second term developed from the Septuagint of Leviticus 18 and represented active homosexuality. As you can see, these terms are a major validation project and anyone who's going to study seriously the issues of homosexuality then and now will have to deal with those terms. If that is something that you need to do or you desire to do, then I would suggest on page 81, the most elaborate treatment of homosexual issues in one place these days is with Robert A.J. Gannon.

He wrote a book, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, published by Abington Press. He has a very active website, and if you need to study or need help for any reason with this particular discussion, that's the first place you should go. For a treatment that reflects how some biblical scholars frame this as a choice, there are other books.

Countryman and also Robin Scroggs are two individuals who have more of a positive treatment of homosexuality. Zondervan just also recently published a views book. Interestingly, they would not do that, say, 10 years ago because I had actually proposed to an editor friend of mine to do a views book on this question, but they were not ready for it then.

But here recently, a views book on homosexuality has been published, and I believe Robin Scroggs, I don't have that copy to share with you here I believe he's the one who writes the pro-view. So that's a major issue that's put on the table, but for us at the moment, Paul says such were some of you. So, it's not an approval; it's a recognition of what existed in Roman Corinth, and Paul says you used to be that way, but do you not know you shouldn't, and you actually came out of that in your conversion?

So, there must have been individuals at all levels who had become Christians in the Roman community. Let me just make a comment here. There are two major sexual issues today that are being highly debated in the United States and probably in other places in the world.

The one is all the aspects and levels of homosexuality. That particular subject is so thoroughly treated in scripture and consistently treated as not acceptable in a Judeo-Christian worldview, in a biblical worldview, that it hardly needs to be commented on, but it is something that's highly debated. The teaching in the Bible that is negative toward homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle is a direct teaching.

There is no question about it. Some can try to twist it, but that's all that it is. It's hermeneutical ventriloquism.

But there's a second issue, which is more difficult in many ways. It's called the issue of transgender. This has become probably the most challenging issue in the current debate, and Christians are struggling with this question of transgender.

There is no text per se in scripture like there is with homosexuality to help us here. The Bible never thinks about this question. It thought about transvestites at one point in the Old Testament when it said that a man shall not wear that which pertains, excuse me, the other way around, a woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man in Deuteronomy.

That's a text against transvestitism. However, this issue of transgender was not addressed because it was not something that the church or the Jewish setting had brought to the front enough to be in the Bible. Not that it might not have existed in some places, but certainly not like today with our advanced kinds of medicine and surgeries and so forth.

So, you're going to have to develop implicational, and I think there's plenty of implication of what is God's pattern and creative constructs to answer the issue of transgender. I edited a book with Zondervan a few years ago called *Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. The reason for that title is I gathered authors who had different views or at least a variety of views on what you do when the Bible doesn't give you a proof text for something. What do you do when there's no direct teaching in scripture? Well, you have to use scripture and your biblical worldview to bring together a coherent and cogent teaching about the subject in a coherent way.

That's what has to happen with transgender. Van Hooser, who wrote one of the chapters in that volume from Zondervan, is one of the view books as we call it in the Counterpoint series, *Four Views for Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. Van Hooser treated that in his chapter, so if that's at least one place that I could send you to look at the transgender debate if you need help there.

I would say one more thing here. I don't want to get off on this too far. You know that I do chase a rabbit here and there, as we call it, but I would like to say that when you're dealing with the questions of claims that I was born this way, born homosexual or born a man physically, but I really believe I'm a woman or vice versa.

I think that Christians need to back up for a second and realize that the event in Genesis 3, called the Fall, when Adam and Eve sinned, in a biblical meta-narrative, in a biblical worldview, the Fall changed everything. It's described in Genesis that all of a sudden, instead of having a nice garden, you're going to have weeds and thistles. A woman is going to have horrible problems with childbirth.

That's just a microcosm of the fact that when the Fall took place, it messed up the world. So, it, frankly, is not inconceivable that someone could say, you know, from my earliest days, I had these tendencies because, frankly, you don't have a perfect DNA. Your DNA has been messed up by a sinful world.

In that sense, that's an interesting avenue, and it's an unused avenue, from what I can see in the debates. We need to talk more about how the issues of deviations from a normative biblical worldview exist in the world so frequently, so commonly, it seems. And some people would claim that that's the way they are.

We need to bring that to bear on the discussions. And I would just suggest that you think about how you can do that. The list continues.

Thieves, greedy, drunkards, revilers, swindlers. And yet you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified. No specific order of this triad, justified, should come before sanctified.

But the fact is, it's a redemptive way of saying God became your savior and you became one of God's children in the biblical sense. By the way, I would comment that the Bible likes to use threes. There are lots of places we can look.

Faith, love, and hope. Wash, sanctified, justified. It was a literary pattern, particularly in the New Testament, to use threes as a full statement of something.

I can't digress into that at this point but I just noticed it here. All right, that brings us to verses 12 through 20, which is beginning to wrap up. The other bookend is chapter 5 and verses 1 through 8, particularly or all of chapter 5. And we had sexual problems, lawsuits, sexual issues. So it morphs into that, and it becomes, as Talbert had suggested, and you have them in the middle of page 81, a chiasm, sexual problems, chapter 5, lawsuits, 6.1 to 11, and back to sexual problems in 6.12 to 20.

So, he sees it as bookends around this, and that's the reason why it doesn't shift topics when it goes to 6.12, but it brings it back to reflect upon what they started to talk about in chapter 5. Sorry, I'm very dry today for some reason, not usually dry in Florida, but I need more water. This last paragraph in the unit of chapters 5 and 6 dovetails with the beginning of chapter 5. The content is clearly about illicit sex, but what does this mean in the context? There are several scenarios here. Is the problem, first bullet point, merely a matter of creative rationalism for sexual licentiousness on the part of certain Corinthian men? When they make this statement, I have the right to do anything.

That leads off this last unit. Is that merely some rationalization they're saying that I'm so free as a Christian that I'm free to do things that even the Romans can't do? That's one way to look at it, claiming that all things are lawful for them, using all things are lawful as sort of an out-of-control Christian liberty. Or is the problem, the second bullet, once again tied to the special rationalization of the elite? Those with status and their exercise of the liberty of that status, which has been Winter's line.

Or is the problem, thirdly, a reflection of the incest of the son with his stepmother? All things are lawful; I can do this; I'm a Christian, and I'm free. Or is it a transition paragraph connecting chapters 5 and 6 in some thematic way with the written questions of 7:1, which starts out with sexual issues. Chapter 7 is a huge chapter on sexual issues as well.

And yet 7:1 does seem to break from 5 and 6 because 5 and 6 are about the rumors, 7:1 are the questions, and yet at the same time, the questions most likely were written out of the rumors that Paul had heard earlier. Garland's work often lacks adequate engagement with the reconstructions of Winter, which is my one criticism of Garland. Winter is the one writer who has brought Roman Corinth and the context of Corinth as a Roman colony into full view in the exegesis of 1 Corinthians.

Many of the commentators do not seem to have that understanding. Bruce Winter is a classical scholar and a biblical scholar, and yet his classic background brings him into some areas of knowledge that some New Testament writers, no matter how skilled they are, do not seem to contain. It also could be related in terms of Garland to the timing of publication.

Garland's book, published in 2003, was probably submitted over a year earlier than that particular date; being actually written in the 90s up to that time, it could have been at the end of 2002 since publishers sometimes anticipate. Winter's work then would have been so new it would have been difficult for Garland to have totally taken it into consideration, but it is absent. The moral teaching of the paragraph of 6:12 to 20 transcends historical particularity, some would say, but knowing what historical contexts exist in connecting the details of the text.

And here's one of the problems with reading the Bible and getting context. You know, we talk all the time, and you have to read the Bible in context.

I hear people say that, and they turn right around and don't have a clue what that means. In this course, I'm trying to get you acclimated to context, the context. You've probably heard things about chapters 5 and 6 that you've never heard before because you've never heard about the Roman context.

And yet, at the same time, there is a huge tendency in Christianity to moralize the Bible because you can read these verses and just almost immediately apply them to your own culture, words to your culture, but not context to your culture necessarily. We have to be exceedingly careful that we don't just moralize the text. The text meant something, and we have to get to that in order to have a legitimate answer to what it means in our current settings.

So, what it meant in Paul's time is the issue, not just a generalistic moral meaning that many would tag on it to today. We need some historical particularity. I think winter particularly brings that to many of these passages.

In 6.12, as we look now at the paragraph, Paul's citation and critique of what seems to be a Corinthian slogan. I've given you this time a chart. I should have given you more charts and even made it easier for me because when I'm the talking head, I don't have a class of people sitting out there that we can read the scriptures together and we can lay that stuff out and write it on a board and think through it.

So, I need a little more charts for you, but at least here we have a chart. The ESV, all things are lawful for me. The NIV, original.

Everything is permissible for me since I have 2011 here. I have the right to do anything. I have the right to do anything.

That's an interesting way to put it. There's something else about the 2011 NIV that I want to point out to you. If you'll notice, it says everything is permissible for me in the original NIV.

The 2011 says I have the right to do anything. That's relatively close to everything is permissible. But here's something that's not there and something that's not in the Greek text but has been brought in to help the nuancing of the context.

Listen to this. I have the right to do anything. And that's in quotation marks.

You say. In other words, Paul says to them what they say. Paul says, quote, you say you have the right to do anything or you have the right to do anything.

You say. So the NIV has made it very clear that that's what they say, which means they've taken it as a slogan, which Paul is going to critique. What way is it a slogan? We'll have to talk more about it.

Four times in 6:12, this happens twice in 6:12. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. Paul comes back and says, all things are lawful for me, but Paul comes back.

I will not be enslaved by anything. This happens in 10:23 as well. All things are lawful.

So, this phrase will come back in chapter 10, but not all things are helpful. And you'll see a very similar setup to the one I've given you here. Let's think about this slogan.

I called it an aphoristic slogan, which just means it's a very brief statement. First Corinthians 6:12, all things are lawful for me. 10:23, all things are lawful.

The Greek is just slightly different in those two cases. Nothing, no secrets there. Nothing that unpacked what it means from the Greek.

The verb may be translated. It is lawful or permitted. That's a very common verb to be said in.

For the idea of permit, you can compare Acts and 2 Corinthians—lawful or permitted, not 10 cents worth of difference in that regard. Murphy O'Connor also claims 6:18, every sin that a man commits is outside the body, as a slogan, and that could come into play within the context itself.

So, what's going on with the phrase, all things are lawful? Well, there are two views. There are two ways to see this. First of all, one C. Is Paul quoting and critiquing a

general slogan of freedom that the Corinthians were using as an abstract principle? This would mean that Paul was using the Corinthians maxim as a rhetorical device.

Was there any legitimacy to this phrase, are all things lawful, or are all things permitted? If it's just a generalistic saying that came out of their newfound Christian liberty in certain ways that now wrongly applied to certain sexual domains, that's one way of looking at it, you see. Is it just a general slogan that they were using? How is Paul relating to that slogan? Does he accept the slogan at any level? In this first view, that's a legitimate question. If this is the case, this first view, a general slogan, our tension is to explain how Paul could be so soft with their idea that everything is lawful.

Here again, if you were to take chapter 5, where you've got the stepson with his stepmother, who's an elite person, using this dictum that everything is lawful to justify his actions. And bypass both Roman law and seemingly Christian moral law. If that's the case, it would be assumed that the content of everything is limited to those areas not stipulated by moral precepts.

In other words, there would never be anything such as everything is lawful because everything isn't lawful. Murder is not lawful. Coveting is not lawful.

On and on, you can go with clear negatives and clear imperatives. So, it's not an absolute slogan if it's a slogan at all, but it could be a slogan, a general slogan, in the original context. It would be assumed that the context of everything is limited to areas not stipulated by moral precepts.

And it's clear that we're talking about moral precepts in this context. So, it doesn't work very well, does it? Paul was tempering Christian freedom against loving self-restriction for the good of others. This explanation is common.

In other words, general slogan. It's a common reading among New Testament exegetes. You can look at most of the commentaries and get that sense.

As Garland states, the prevailing view is that the maxim, that is, the slogan, all things are permissible to me, was used by the Corinthian freethinkers to sanction their immoral behavior. Now, they were, it was wrong, but they were still using it as if this is the new Christian way. Garland wisely rejects that view, but it is, and it has been sort of a popular view.

Why has it been popular? I think it's because many, even advanced commentators, are not adequately versed in what Roman Corinth was like. And I'll talk more about that in just a second. Along with this read is the idea that 6.12-20 is Paul's criticism of Corinthian slackness toward consort with prostitutes, however justified in their cultural context.

What would that relate to? Well, a lot of the ancient deities, the gods, Aphrodite, for example, the Baal cult, back in Israel's day, were fertility religions. There was agricultural peace in this ancient world. And individuals who were in that kind of a culture had gods that were gods that related to fertility.

And there were temples and there were religious processes where sex was an act of worship to that deity. Now, this sounds bizarre, but with Baal and with Aphrodite and with others, sex was an act of worship to that god as a prayer to create fertility in relation to crops and whatever you might have as your means of making a living. And so, some have said that this slogan was just related to that, that they were freethinkers and in a culture that was used to going to the temple and having what was considered legitimate sex, even if you were married.

You had a legal wife. It wasn't even viewed as a violation of the legal wife because it was the context of some of that religion. You can imagine how that would influence a cultural setting.

It's hard for us to get our arms around this, but this was very common. It was even more common in ancient Corinth, but in the Corinth of Paul's day, it was still there. Along with this read is the idea of 12 to 20 about these prostitutes.

That would be outside the church setting, but it would be going down to the temple. Some see that because it was well-known before we got better into Roman cities. After reading works, page 83 top, after reading works like Winter, it seems to me that many commentaries on this and probably other parts of the New Testament sometimes reveal a complete lack of knowledge of the Greco-Roman world.

They had a general idea of the Greek world but not so much of the Roman colony and the Roman world. It seems that most New Testament scholars in the evangelical movement naturally gravitate to Jewish backgrounds or Greek backgrounds, but when that dynamic is not present, they default to a surface reading of the text, and they end up with views that may not be the best representation of the text. Occasionally, someone comes along and helps us correct that, and I think Winter has, which brings us to the second view.

Or is Paul denying, by using this aphorism, the validity of the aphorism itself? When they said all things are lawful, Paul said, no, no. His counterpunch, but not all things are this, but not all things are that seems a little soft to be sure, but it is a counterpunch. Now, how could they say, in the culture that we've been thinking about and talking about, that all things are lawful? Well, the elite were prone to a position that they were above the typical ethics, even of that culture, and particularly of the imposition of a new ethic, which Christianity would bring to them.

Winter comments and quotes that the idea must be reflected in the maxim of the secular ethic, that for the elite, all things are permitted. In other words, because of their status, they could do what they pleased. They had no boundaries.

That wasn't true for everybody, but it was true for the elite. Now, here in my notes, I say, an ill-thought-out Pauline paradoxes, exhortation. It's not ill-thought by Paul, it was ill-thought by them.

Be sure you understand what I'm saying there, okay? Paul himself emphatically rejected the aphorism that these things are permitted, which he twice cited with the use of the strong adversative but. An adversative is a conjunction, but there are different ways to say it in Greek, and *Allah* is the strongest way to say it. It's not permitted.

It's not permitted. Just because you have elite social status doesn't give you the liberty you think you had, and that you did have in your former life, that now you're a Christian and better things are thought for you. So, Winter's argument asserts, at the bottom of page 83, there was a small but significantly influential group of the social elite.

That they would have even been referred to in chapters 1 through 4 as the wise rulers among the Corinthian Christians. A number of references I've given them to you here. They were in that context, and this context gets read, but you've got to read it thinking about them.

This group had control of things and viewed themselves as special and as permitted to do things and have freedoms that others did not have. Secondly, the Roman social elite rationalized a two-tier system of ethical behavior. This was grounded in their pre-Christian platonic worldview.

That, quote, the body is said to have ordained for pleasure, and that the immortal soul was unaffected by any such conduct. A platonic worldview separates material and immaterial, and so they had a view that the material did not really affect the immaterial. You might say that's crazy, and our worldview would say yes, it is, but it was natural for them to think that way out of a strong platonic influence, particularly the elite who had been educated in those ways.

Third, persons of social status were permitted. That word permitted, by the way, is the very verb that Paul used, and it's well tested in Greco-Roman literature, permitted this dual ethic after about the age of 18. Now, here's something very important.

At the age of 18, those families of status conferred upon male children the Roman toga virilis to be viral. In our culture, there's a lot of advertisements on TV for things

like Viagra, and it's aimed at seniors who have ceased to be viral, to have a sexual capacity. Well, at 18, the hormones are raging, and at 18, these children were endowed with special status.

On the one hand, this ceremony was a passage to legal adulthood, but on the other, it was a ticket to the sociology of the elite in a certain cultural setting known as the Roman banquet. In this setting, Winter Notes, numerous sources depict these banquets as having three levels of activity: eating, drinking, and lovemaking. Now, if you've read many texts in the Bible and other places, you've heard a lot about eating and drinking, but the lovemaking is something you may not be as familiar with.

Listen to a number of items that Winter Quotes. You may not have this book, so let me bring a number of these things to your attention. These are on pages 90 and 91. Nicholas of Damascus, in his life of Augustus, records that at that age, that is Augustus' age, he was not to be in attendance with the young men as they get drunk, not to remain at drinking parties past evening, nor to have dinner, the eating side, and he abstained from sex just at the time when young men are particularly sexually active.

It's a context of a family, and it's reflecting what was going on as puberty comes and these young men become sexually active. In Athens, when the new adult aged 18, this is a quotation from Xenophon, the new adult aged 18 usually acquired the right to accept invitations to recline, that is a synonym for banquets. He was considered sufficiently mature to cope with sexual advances.

He goes on to say Hercules has reached the ephebic age that is equivalent to receiving the toga, and he had the freedom of choice and must select between the joys of eating, drinking, lovemaking, and edifying toil. In other words, you're going to parties or you're going to work. Cicero wrote of those who argued against the view, it is permitted.

He's using Latin, but notice it is permitted in relation to this slogan we've been looking at. So, there's historical context there. If there is anyone who thinks that youth should be forbidden affairs, that is sexual affairs, even with courtesans, which are the ones who came into the banquets, these were, you could call them professional prostitutes, but they had a certain status in society to serve the elite at the end of those banquets.

He is doubtless eminently astute, but his view is contrary not only to the license of this age but also to the customs and concessions of our ancestors. When was this not a common practice? When was it blamed? When was it forbidden? When, in fact, was it that what is allowed was not allowed? In other words, this is an apology for the acceptance of banquets where sexual activity is expected and normative at the end of the banquet after eating and drinking. It is significant that Plutarch, in his

lecture on listening to lectures, writes to the young Nicanter who had reached adulthood, quote, now that you are no longer subject to authority, that you're an adult instead of a child, having assumed this male toga, which is what we've been talking about, toga virilis, he goes on to explain that young men, as they lay aside the garb of childhood, straightway become full of unruliness, and we know what that means.

So, this problem of fornication in relation to banquets was the norm for that society. Juvenal observes how a youth can learn the scent of gluttony from his father. The Roman convivium, which is the banquet, fostered a degree of decadence associated not only with the pleasures of the palate but also with the pillow.

Roman banquets, which were a part of Roman colonies like Corinth, were common, but access to those banquets was the privilege of the social elite, those who had status. Those banquets were for eating, for drinking, and for love-making. We found ancient cups from that ancient culture, and when you see the bottom of a cup, you see the faces of the gods of wine.

In other words, it's kind of like a truck stop, where you get a cup, and you get to the bottom of the cup, and it's got a picture of something. Well, they had it in the ancient world, too. These Roman banquets were justifications to be absolutely free without boundaries.

And that was the common core for the elite in Corinth. Now listen, when these people confronted this new religion, even though they thought it was an extension of Judaism, and even when they accepted it, how easy do you think it was for them to leave their own habits and patterns? I tell you, right now, that would not have been an easy thing to walk away from because it addresses every sensual aspect of the human being in terms of eating, drinking, and love-making. This was the kind of world they lived in.

And that phrase, all things are permitted, was most likely a justifying phrase for the elite. And it also relates to this banquet question. So, the point was that Paul in no way was accepting the sentiment of the sane.

No, not all things are lawful. Not all things are permitted. There are boundaries.

And there are boundaries of good judgment, and there are moral boundaries. Paul rang the changes in chapters 5 and 6, and then chapter 7 on these issues. He emphatically rejected this slogan.

Witter's argument asserts that there was a, and this is repetitive, but you get the point: there was a small but significantly influential group of the socially elite, the wise among the Corinthian Christians. Secondly, the Roman social elite rationalized

this two-tier system of ethical behavior. And this was grounded in their platonic worldview of material and immaterial.

Thirdly, this toga that was given to children in 18 brought them into these banquets. Eating, drinking, and love-making were the norms of these banquets. Eat to the point of gluttony, drink to the point of horrible drunkenness, and love-making at the end of all of it with professional women.

And the young men were brought in and virtually celebrated in this licentious debauchery. That was part, an acceptable part of Roman Corinth. Witter correlates this Roman banquet background with a number of words and phrases that Paul uses in 6:12 to 20.

So 6:12 to 20, when you first read it, you feel like you're detached from the earlier parts of 5 and 6, but you're not. You're still talking about the mindset of those with status, the elite, who were bifurcating ethics, their ethic, the biblical ethic. They were used to bifurcating things, the material and the immaterial, and they were continuing on in their lifestyles.

And Paul says you've got to quit this. It's not feasible. It's not acceptable.

Juvenal commented, and I think I quoted this to you, a degree of decadence on page 84 at the top, a degree of decadence associated not only with the pleasure of the palate, but also of the pillow in his writing satire. There's another interesting document, Plutarch *Moralia*, number 2, 140, 16. Let me give you an illustration from this about how common this was in their culture.

All right. A young man, who says he's in his early 20s, gets married. He has a lovely wife, and they've had, maybe they've had their first baby.

Has a wonderful life. He has a home. He has the means of producing income, and he and his daddy have a banquet that they go to.

His wife, in this patriarchal society, would like to have said, you can't go, but that would never float. So, she turned a deaf eye to it. Even when they got married, these issues were on the table.

Plutarch makes this comment in paragraph 16. The lawful wives of the Persian kings sit beside them at dinner and eat with them. And these are at banquets.

These banquets, you see the Greeks picked it up from the Persians, brought it back. The Romans picked it up from the Greeks. It's a long tradition of these banquets.

There are books just on these items. They sit at banquets and eat with them. But when the kings wish to be merry and get drunk, they send their wives away.

So, the legal wives departed from the banquet at a certain point and were sent home. They sent their wives away and sent for their music girls and concubines insofar that they are right in what they do because they do not concede any share in their licentiousness and debauchery to their wedded wives. If, therefore, a man in private life who is incontinent and dissolute in regard to his pleasures commits such horrible acts with a paramour or a maidservant, his wedded wife ought not to be indignant or angry, but she should reason that it is in respect for her which leads him to share his debauchery and wantonness with another woman rather than embarrass her.

What kind of logic are we dealing with here? But that was the world of Roman Corinth. That was the mindset. That was a part of these banquets.

We're going to see banquets in chapter 10 again. And by the way, that's where we have the repetition of all things that are permitted. It doesn't come up the same way it comes up here, but it doesn't go away.

There are phrases between 12 and 20 to consider. We've talked only about all the things that are permitted. There's another food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.

That's more than likely another slogan. Paul puts that one down. The body is not meant for sexual immorality.

There is that issue of lovemaking in the banquet. Your bodies are members of Christ, not members of a prostitute. So, it's not the prostitute at the temple we're talking about.

It's these paramours who come in who are dedicated to servicing these men at these banquets. Flee from sexual immorality—sins against his own body.

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now, think about how the community is focused in chapters five to six. It's not just the individuals but the body that has been violated by this social pattern.

They were all used to, but now Paul was saying, you got to walk away from it. You have to walk away from it. Now, that would not be easy for a lot of reasons, not just because of the lust of it, but because business was conducted.

The social elite had power in the city, and when they start walking away from the context of their other powerful individuals because of their Christian ethics, how is

that going to float? Well, you can imagine. It called for sacrifice. It called perhaps for giving up their eliteness and their social status.

It is being shamed by their guilt, as it were, for the sake of the gospel. These are not minor matters, and yet I don't think that we begin to plumb the depths of the stress that was involved here because we have superficially read these texts rather than understanding the Roman colony culture clashing with the Christian culture in this first century. So, my comment near the bottom of page 84, if winter's reconstruction is correct, then 6:12 to 20 has more to do with the banquet than the brothel.

The brothel, if you please, come to the banquet. So that's the slogan. Now, my next point follows this.

I said, Paul's two negotiations. Now, that's probably not the way I want to say it anymore because that would be view one. That would be a view one way of saying it, and at one point in my journey, I was still in that common view.

I've shifted to view two. So, the way I would say it now is Paul's counter-affirmations. He counters the slogan.

He doesn't just try to soften the slogan. I think you can see what I mean now. The answer stanzas to all things are permitted seem calm compared to what this phrase may have meant.

But when one understands how Paul in 6:12 to 20 undermines the philosophical tenets of the dualistic ethic of the elite, it becomes clear that Paul was representing a major, major, major clash in world views. It's not expedient, not beneficial, not profitable, not advantageous at any level. Christian freedom must be limited by regard for others.

Age 85. At the least, Paul is after a change in worldview. You have got to abandon the banquet.

Now, that was clear to them. It doesn't seem as clear to us, and you might say, well, why didn't you say it that way? He didn't need to. They both had a common understanding of Roman Corinth, of the social status, and of eating, drinking, and loving, which was where the banquet applied.

Paul says I will not be enslaved by anything. Paul plays on the sound of the Greek verbs permitted and will not be overpowered. There's a bit of a play.

You can't see that unless you read the Greek and see the X that begins two words. I'm not going to be a victim of the dictum, is what Paul was saying. Now, Paul was a Jew.

Did he have any elite status? As a Roman, you see, his family seems to have had special status in Tarsus. Paul was born free. He didn't obtain it.

He was born free. Did he come from an elite family? That would throw even a deeper wrinkle on this whole context. I'm not going to be a victim to the dictum.

You know, that's a catchy little phrase that you ought to use because maybe not this, but you're constantly confronted with little proverbial statements from people who want you to deviate from your Christian ethics. Just look them in the eye and say, I won't be a victim to your dictum, and move on. So, the critique of the slogan.

Now, Paul goes on to delineate a Christian view of the body. This lecture may go just about 15 minutes longer than what I've been doing, but I want to finish chapter six. I must, but I don't want to just leave you hanging with this last part.

Paul delineates a Christian view of the body in 6:13-20. First of all, 1A, Paul affirms that the authority over the physical body ultimately rests with God's definition of the physical body. Many times, young people are stressed out with sex. We can understand that.

God created us sexual beings, and when those hormones start rushing, and they confront Christian restriction, their first question is, why? Why is it not okay for me to do this? I'm not going to have a baby, they say, or whatever. Why can't I do this? It's just a biological act. Well, there's really only one answer to that.

God has set the boundaries in Judeo-Christian ethics, and when the boundaries have been set, they are not up for negotiation. And no matter how strong the urges may be, our worldview must trump our lust. You see, the word lust is nothing but the word strong desire.

Lust is a powerful emotive kind of a term. Interestingly, in 1 Timothy 3, it says that if any man desires the office of a bishop, he desires good work. It actually uses the word lust there.

The same word is translated as lust in other contexts. If anyone has the strongest of desires, if you lust after being a pastor, well, that's not a good way to say it. Well, it isn't because that's the negative side of that term.

The positive side is merely a strong desire. And so, Paul affirms that the authority of the physical body rests with God, with biblical revelation, with God's definition. God has defined the ethics of sex at every level.

And the Bible, while it may not say a lot about everything, it says enough that the biblical patterns of sexuality are clear. And in our cultures, we don't like that. We want to be liberated from a restrictive scripture.

We say it's past, it's an antique, and so forth and so on. Well, it's an antique that has served us quite well for a long time. So, he delineates a Christian view of the body.

He affirms this authority over the physical body. The lens of Winter's Reconstruction reads these phrases as supporting of reading Paul and criticizing the assumed Roman duality of body and spirit in sexual activities. You can't bifurcate body and spirit, the physical and the immaterial.

We are one person. You can't separate those categories. In reference to food and pornea, pornea is the word for fornication, which is the broadest term for sexual immorality, and correlates with the abuse that those with status practiced in a Roman banquet setting.

There's no duality in the Christian worldview. You can't separate those things as they did. And it was a natural separation out of their worldview, that Roman banquet and the physical and the immaterial.

It's love making a beautiful and mutually pleasurable act, of course. Then how can it ever be wrong? Well, the only answer is that God has revealed the context in which it is either acceptable and beautiful or ugly and out of bounds. Our culture has gone to some pretty low depths.

Human trafficking is so absolutely common across the globe, so violent, so horrible. Abuse of women, rape. College campuses are infected with sexual licentiousness, not just cooperative and consensual, but rape is rampant upon even the best college campuses.

And if not rape, intimidation to be accepted into guilds and various societies requires it. Christians have to stand against that, and we will suffer as we do. Paul's theme of the body in 6:13-20 slams platonic anthropology.

For Paul, the deeds of the body are a window to the soul. This issue was revisited in 1 Corinthians 15. 2a.

Paul describes the status of the sacredness of the body within God's perspective. The Greek structure of 6:15-20 is framed around three questions introduced with the rhetorical device do you not know. I mentioned those to you a moment ago in 6:15-20. 6:15 begins with Do you not know?

6:19, and I've lost the third one in there somewhere, but I've got it in my notes here, okay? Do you not know? The plural form of you throughout this section indicates that Paul is speaking to the church as a unit, although its individual units determine the whole. You see, the pronoun you in Greek can be singular or plural, and in this case, it is a plural you.

He's talking to the community. 1b. The body is sacred in its connection to God.

Paul's response to the two questions of 6:15 that we just started reading. Do you not know, one, that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? In other words, sexual licentiousness. And the answer is no.

Paul responds to those two questions, and he says not only does he say no, he uses the phrase *meganoita*, which means may it never be, may it not be. It's the strongest way of saying no. Two, do you not know the body is violated by wrong connections? 6.16 and following.

There it is. I lost my eyesight on it. Do you not know? 6:16. So, park on those two, those three, do you not know? The body is violated by wrong connections.

Paul applies the marriage idea of two becoming one body to increase the seriousness of sexual sin. I'll talk about this a little more in chapter seven, but have you ever wondered when people get married? The preacher will say that these two shall become one. The Bible says it.

The two shall become one. The preacher will pronounce, now that you are two, you've become one. Well, what happens at that moment? Is there a puff of smoke at the altar and two bodies morph with one body and two heads or something? No, it's a metaphor.

What's it a metaphor for? The metaphor of two shall become one is a metaphor of kinship. When two people get married, they become relatives of each other. They become related.

How do they become related? Primarily through the sexual act of this sharing of seminal fluids. God has decreed that that makes you one with that other person. And so, the sexual sin of fluids being shared with a prostitute or with a paramour of some kind is violating what God designed as two becoming one because you become a part of that other person.

Now, you're a polygamist in that sense. Paul applies the marriage idea of two become one body to increase the seriousness of this sexual sin. The sexual union and its exchange of fluids physically and forensically creates a new union.

Even modern science notes that sex partners are forever affected as a result of this exchange, to say nothing of the spreading of disease. The dictum that every sin a man commits merely reflects the seriousness of sexual union violations. In other words, outside the body, inside the body.

It is a sin that has forensic ramifications. The phrase also supports a non-bifurcating view of material and non-material in Christian thinking. Thirdly, do you not know that your body is the temple of God's spirit? This is another metaphor.

It's a metaphor for sacred space. Just like the Old Testament temple was the place where God dwelt, you are the place where God dwells. You see, when the church comes together, it's not the building that makes the church. It's the people.

We are the temple of God. Individually and corporately so. The Bible actually uses both of those ideas of individual and corporate.

Romans 8, 9 to 11. Christ is in you, the Spirit's in you. 1 Corinthians 3. The church as a whole is the temple of God.

Where we are now, 619, you individually are the temple of God. This metaphor of sacred space is used in numerous places in the New Testament. So, what is the final advice that Paul gives about these sexual sins, the wantonness of the elite in Corinth who have violated at every level of ethics? Well, here it is in verses 18 to 20.

Flee from sexual immorality. Run from it like Joseph did. Joseph had a brown nose.

He created a lot of his problems because he was daddy's favorite, and he used that. You can believe it. Whether the text tells you a lot about it or not, that's human nature. His brothers got angry with him.

He used his privileged position. The father was wrong, Joseph was wrong. But Joseph was a good man.

He had great moral fortitude when he ran from Potiphar's wife. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against your own body because two become one flesh.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are sacred space. You are not your own. You were bought at a price.

Therefore, honor God with your bodies. So, 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 ring the changes on the banquet issue and the elite having special privilege whereby they think

anything's permitted for them, even sexual sins by Christian definition. And Paul says, no, no, no, no, no, you can't do that.

You have got to separate yourself from these cultural aberrations from Christian ethics. It won't be easy, and some of you may be in cultures in various far-flung places on this global earth. You're facing those same kinds of issues in your own cultures and worldviews that legitimate sexual sins. And as a Christian, you cannot participate.

It's not easy to say no, but you need to seek God's help and find the moral courage to be Christian in your context. May God help each of us because, without God's help, we are all moral failures. May God help us, is our prayer in Jesus' name.

This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is session 17, Paul's Response to Oral Reports, 1 Corinthians 6:7-20.