

Dashboard: Physical

Delivered on January 22, 2012

*Text: 1Corinthians 6:12-20*

*Me: Some of you are aware that I was in a pretty scary car accident this past week and was fortunate to walk away with only some minor cuts and bruises. For that I am truly thankful! If you've ever been in a car accident you know that it is a very scary experience and in many cases there are very serious injuries. But, even with the most minor fender benders, the EMT is almost always dispatched to the scene as a precaution for any persons needing medical treatment. My accident was no different. While there were no serious injuries, the Ambulance arrived and I was asked if I needed medical assistance or if I would like a quick check up to make sure that everything was ok. I bet you can guess what my response was. You got it! I declined. Why, you may ask? I could give you the typical manly excuse that all of my limbs were still attached and that there was only a little blood and I have a high tolerance for pain. Or I could tell you that I preferred to see my own physician.*

*But, if I was really honest with you this morning, the fact of the matter is that I am not a huge fan of going to the doctor. Ever hear of white coat syndrome? Yes, it happens to me every time I get my blood pressure checked. I'm not necessarily afraid of hospitals, doctors, nurses, needles, blood, etc. I actually really like my doctor. We always have long conversations about the latest Cross fit exercises and working out. For me, it's the unknown. I can be at the doctor's office for a routine physical and the whole time I'm waiting to receive news that I have only a few months to live. The angst I feel about going to the doctor causes me to avoid them. So, I often treat my body the way some people take care of their vehicles: only bringing it in for necessary repairs. Instead of regular, preventative maintenance, I will sometimes ignore the symptoms looking to WebMD for answers. Sound familiar? Only when something goes really wrong, or when my wife or employer makes me, do I schedule an appointment or the routine checkups. "If it's not broke, don't fix it" seems to be my attitude.*

*I care about my body and physical fitness by eating a healthy diet and working out three to four times per week, but when it comes to medical preventative maintenance I have not been so on top of things. Somehow in my own mind, as a follower of Jesus, I take on an attitude that because God is in total control over all things (AND HE IS) that the decisions I make and the freedoms I exercise when it comes to my physical body don't matter. My egotistical attitude says that I am the master of my own physical body and I can do what I want, therefore I can separate the physical and the spiritual and I am unaffected by my careless behavior.*

*WE: I'm guessing that if we were completely honest this morning, we could all say that at one time or another we have had an attitude that what we do with our physical bodies don't matter. I think that we could find areas where we have done a less than stellar job in keeping up with preventative maintenance. You may not have the same fear as me when it comes to the doctor or hospitals, but maybe for you there's a different area. If you are a Christ follower, you may have fallen into the trap of thinking that these earthly bodies are merely temporary and that because God is in control of the*

*world, then what I do with my natural body will not matter. The choices and decisions about what I do in and with my body will not have any effect on what God has purposed for me in this world. Even if you're not a follower of Jesus you may partially share this view. In your view, there is nothing beyond the natural and so your motto is "live free and die." For some, you ignore your nutritional health and physical fitness and indulge in so many unhealthy pleasures that it has finally caught up with you and now you are facing some serious health consequences as it relates to work, relationships, etc (not just talking about weight control or uncontrollable medical conditions). Some of us are so consumed with work that we have failed to make time for rest and relaxation. And unfortunately for some, we have not kept ourselves sexually pure and have come under the weight, pressure, consequences and guilt of that.*

*On the other end of the spectrum, some of us have been so consumed with the maintenance of our physical bodies that we have failed to check the physical gauge of our lives and how it relates to the spiritual aspect of our lives. And in this area we have become spiritually unhealthy and what we perceive to be our "freedoms in Christ" have actually become our bondage. We have failed to realize that we cannot disconnect the physical from the spiritual and that what we do with our bodies matters.*

*Transition: The Corinthians' misunderstanding of the connection between the physical and the spiritual, among other things, is the basis of Paul's argument. Let's read 1 Corinthians 6:12-14 together.*

*God: Apparently, some of the men within the Corinthian church were arguing for their right to join themselves with prostitutes. You may recall from our 1 Corinthian series this past summer that the sexual sins, particularly as it related to prostitution, seemed to be at the top of their "vice" list, as evidenced by their pagan practices, shrines and temple of the prostitutes in the commerce center, and is again confirmed at the beginning of this chapter (6:9). Now, it seems as though some of the believers within the church feel that they have reached such a high spiritual level that they will be unaffected by any questionable behavior that involves their physical bodies.*

*Paul in v. 12 begins his argument by stating their false philosophy and then combating it. The Corinthians argue that because of their high spiritual level they have the freedom and the right to do anything with their physical bodies because the body, in their mind, is only temporary and God will eventually do away with them (ref. "food for the stomach and stomach for food"). The Corinthian philosophy may actually have been a misunderstanding of Paul's teachings of freedom, grace and license and in some ways they are trying to use it against him.*

*In Paul's mind, the Corinthians have a complete misunderstanding of the physical nature and every human being's purpose in creation. What Paul is essentially saying in verse 12 and 13 is that we were not created for ourselves, and in this case for sexual immorality. There is more to the physical nature than just "feeding" it with temporary necessities. Paul says that the "body is meant for the Lord and the Lord for the body." This confirms that there is a spiritual connection and that you cannot separate the physical from the spiritual. You and I were created in the image of God to glorify and make much of the creator in and through worship of him! What we do with our body matters and Paul's challenge is that our perceived "freedoms" may actually be our bondage. We are not to be enslaved by anything even though it seems that we have the right to do so. There are clear ramifications if what we do is not*

*helpful or beneficial towards others and what we do with our bodies may actually affect more than just our “physical shell.”*

*If our perceived rights affect others, and as followers of Jesus, our physical bodies are for the Lord (demonstrated by the power of the resurrection), then what we do with our bodies matters!*

*(v.15-18) Clearly, the Corinthians had a skewed view of freedoms and the physical, spiritual and sexual nature, but from these next few verses Paul points out their even greater misunderstanding of the gospel and conversion from which the sexually immoral behavior is rooted. He says listen, the great work and good news of the Cross reconciled us to God in Jesus. Now, we are “members”, joined in relationship by the Spirit to Christ! The question to the Corinthian men is: how then can you be intimate and joined with Jesus and give yourselves over to a prostitute? Don’t you understand that by joining yourselves to a prostitute you are becoming one body with her and in essence taking away what is in union with Christ? Can you see the conflict here? To make matters worse, Paul says that the sexually immoral person sins not only against God and the other person, but also against his own body.*

*When you and I make the decision to follow Jesus we become joined as one in spirit with him. There is a very real connection between the physical and the spiritual. So, what we do with our bodies matters!*

*Here’s why we must understand what Paul just said: read v. 19-20. Paul just stated that sexual sins are sins against one’s own body and that the physical body matters because it’s united in spirit with Christ. Now, to further his point about the importance of the physical nature, Paul says you are not to sin against your own body because your body is not your own! Jesus paid a high price for every one of us by his physical death and resurrection by the power of God! Jesus didn’t die to redeem our spirit only, but to reconcile our “whole person.” And the Spirit of Christ lives inside every believer as a deposit and guarantee of our inheritance until redemption (Eph. 1:13,14)! The Holy Spirit confirms and seals the purchase of our “entire person” from the slavery of ourselves and sin. We are God’s possession in Christ! Because of that Paul says we are to glorify and honor God in our bodies (v.20).*

*Clearly (in this context) Paul is talking about sexual sin here, but the implication is that God cares about our bodies. And if we cannot separate the physical from the spiritual we should be good stewards of our bodies and glorify, honor and make much of God in every area of our lives, so we can fulfill his kingdom purpose in this world!*

*Transition: The obvious question here is: “Are you glorifying God with your body or are you enslaved by your perceived freedom?”*

*You: (address believers and refer to “Dashboard Check Up insert”) As Paul argued, if our physical bodies are of redemptive, eternal value, are you regularly checking the physical gauge of your dashboard so that everything you do in your body points to God and not yourself? Are you using your body in such a way that honors God so that you are able and capable to fulfill your kingdom purpose in this world? Do you hold the same weight and value of your physical body as your Creator does?*

*Do you follow some of the basic and practical biblical principles regarding health, fitness, rest and sexual purity? What is the one thing that has enslaved you and affected other areas and relationships in your life? Are you aware that you are not alone and that the Holy Spirit living inside of you as proof of your relationship to Jesus also helps you to live a life that honors God? And the real evidence*

*of this honor and glory towards God can be seen through acts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, SELF-CONTROL, etc? (Gal 5) Are you glorifying God with your body so that you can fulfill your kingdom purpose as husband, father, wife, mother, son, daughter, employee, co-worker, student, etc? Are you honoring him in everything you do with your body, knowing that one day your physical body will be raised by God's power consummated with Christ, making all things new and redemption complete? What we do with our bodies matters, so glorify God in your body!*

*Address Unbelievers: Maybe you're in a place where you're a bit unsure about God, Jesus and the bible. Perhaps you would even say that in spite of your skepticism you have a view similar to the Corinthian men in our talk today: that what we do with our bodies really has no affect on our emotions, relationships or spirit (if you think there is one). Even more you might say that you're not sure if there is a physical / spiritual connection and that we "came from dust and will return as "worm food." Some of you may even say in frustration that you care about your physical body, almost to the point of obsession, but don't really see or understand your purpose in this world.*

*Here's the good news of the gospel: God before the beginning of time, knew and formed you and created you for a purpose! We were born into this world separated from our creator and our intended purpose because of one man's rebellion against God. Because of that broken relationship we walk in this earth "full of disobedience towards God the creator and in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of our body and mind, and because of that nature became the wrath of God. But, "God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive" in the physical death, burial and resurrection of his son Jesus. Jesus turned away God's wrath towards us and paid a high price for you and me so that we can be made right with God!*

*This is the good news! Now we are free to walk in the purpose that God has intended for us! Really, this is the freedom that Paul was referring to in the beginning of our story today. That our freedoms are not in ourselves or what we perceive to be fair and right, but rather we are actually free from our perceived freedoms and are free in Christ! We are free from the things that enslaved us and now we can walk in and lean into God's purpose for our lives in this world! And the purpose for all of us is to glorify God! So, what we do in our bodies matters, glorify God in your body!*

*We: Well, just in case you were wondering I visited the doctor the day after my car accident because of my persistent wife and friends...oh yeah, and a phone call from my mom the nurse. Everything checked out okay. But really, the main idea of our talk today impacted me in a very real way. When I saw my wife, kids, friends, this church, coworkers, etc I realized how grateful I am to be alive and to have the opportunity to plug away at the work God has purposed for me. I realize that one day there will be an end to my physical body on this earth, but how foolish would I be to devalue my body and make careless decisions that would make me incapable to walk in that God-given purpose.*

*We are to glorify God with our bodies in every area of our lives so that we may fulfill his kingdom purpose during our time on this earth. I know that it's difficult to change our thinking, but my prayer for all of us today is that God's spirit would change our hearts so we would realize that what we do with our bodies matters!*

