

From Shame to Sin: Christian Sexual Morality

Origins of Christianity

Terms

Asceticism, encratites, stuprum, adulterium, fornication = porneia

Three Directions: Encratite, Libertine, Procreative

First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapters 5-7

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men; not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But rather I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber -- not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that even your own brethren. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

¹Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

²Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own

husband. ³Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

⁴The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. ⁵Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. ⁶But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

⁷For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. ⁸I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. ⁹But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

¹⁰And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: ¹¹But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. ¹²But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

²⁰Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called... ²⁶I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. ²⁷Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. ²⁹But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;