

# Don't You Know?

## Introduction

What we **know** really does matter. Fifteen times in the NT letters the writer asks a question “*Don't you know that...*” Ten of these fifteen come in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and six of those ten are all in chapter 6. Paul wrote this letter to the church at Corinth because he'd heard reports of all sorts of stuff that had been going on, that disturbed him. Even though he has to correct them about many things, 1 Corinthians is a great letter, full of important teaching, encouragement as well as correctives. We can't look at all fifteen times the question ‘*Don't you know that..*’ occurs, so we will focus on just three that come in the sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians and if you have a Bible would you turn there with me.

**Reading:** First let me put it into context. Paul had already raised the matter of immorality in the previous chapter “*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.*” He first tells them specifically how to deal with this issue then gives them very important instructions about the attitude we should have to all the immorality in the world all around us.

*I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world... What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? 1 Cor 5:9-10,12*

Christians are too often known for being disapproving and critical of those in the world who live immoral lives, especially homosexuals. Paul says it is **not our place** to censure how unbelievers live. They are not believers; they don't know the Lord, so how can we expect anything else from them? The world lives in a worldly way, but we are to live differently and should not expect unbelievers to live as if they were believers; it is not our place to criticise or judge the world.

Paul goes on to deal with what believers need to know, that will help us live in this immoral world without being like it. Let's **read from 6:15-20**.

***Don't you know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!***

***Don't you know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."***

***But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.***

***Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.***

In order to counteract temptations to immorality, Paul says three times to these Corinthian believers "*don't' you know that ...*"

1. That our bodies are members of Christ himself
2. That whoever has sex with a prostitute 'becomes one body with her'.
3. That our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Here are three very important things to know. If all believers knew these things they would never even dream of being sexually immoral. So this morning I don't want to talk about immorality – but about the Lord and about our bodies, which are far more important to God than we often realise.

### **What we need to know about our bodies.**

Every human being has a body. God created our bodies as the physical housing for our human spirit. Body and spirit separate when we die. After he went through three hours of hell on the cross Jesus gave up his spirit, he did not then descend into hell but his spirit went straight to his Father and his body was buried. After death we live as disembodied spirits in God's presence, but unlike God and the angels who are pure spirit, we were not designed to be disembodied, and we will not be complete again until Jesus returns and gives us new bodies through which our spirits can express themselves in the new heaven and new earth.

We express our inner thoughts and desires through our bodies. Our thinking involves our spirits and also involves brain function. Some things we will know forever, but many of our memories will die with us when our brains

cease to function. God made us as spiritual and physical beings, perfectly blended into a single whole. But we have a problem. From birth our bodies started out expressing our fallen sinfulness. Our parents tried to teach us and train us to master our bodies, which began with feeding ourselves, with potty training and not poking other children's eyes out!! But the sinful desires of the flesh take the upper hand and our bodies get preconditioned to sinful, selfish and lustful desires and actions.

The Holy Spirit came along and began his work in us. He takes out of us our old stony heart, which is dead to God, and puts in us a new heart and spirit that is alive to God; one that has God's spiritual DNA, one which makes us a child of God. But although we get a new heart and spirit, we don't get an instant *resurrection body metamorphosis*. Our new spirit occupies the same old body. This creates a conflict between the pure godly desire of our new spirits and the earthly desires of our old bodies. So we dedicate our bodies to the Lord, through being baptised in water, which is a vivid enactment of burying our old life and rising again to live a new life in these same old bodies. In baptism our bodies are washed with water, which is the way we commit to using them for God's ways and no longer for sinful worldly ways.

### **1. Members of Christ**

v15 *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!"* The first thing we need to know about our bodies is **they are members of Christ himself**. When we commit ourselves to Christ, we join ourselves to him. We become part of his body, the church. Our bodies along with the bodies of everyone else in our local church are 'members of Christ'. Some people see membership of a local church as something similar to membership of a club or organisation; it seems to have something to do with having our say or with voting rights! But how differently the NT sees being a member of the Body of Christ! Together our bodies make up the means through which Christ is able to express himself on earth.

Earlier in this letter Paul wrote another *"Don't you know that - you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"* He uses the plural 'you'; together our bodies make a temple for God to live in by his Spirit. God's Spirit has no hands but our hands, no voice but our voices, no feet but our feet. Through us he speaks and expresses his life and his love and this is a vital truth that Paul says we so much need to know: **My body is part of**

**Jesus' body on this earth.** So it matters very much how we use our bodies, because we are members of Christ's body, part of Christ himself on earth.

Would Jesus be sexually immoral, or get drunk, or smoke, or grossly overeat, or do drugs or con people, or be bitchy, or get one over on someone else, or behave in any other ungodly way? Whenever we behave like this, we drag Jesus down into our worldliness! Shall we behave like this? "Never!" says Paul.

## **2. One spirit with the Lord**

*"Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh'. But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit."* v 16-17. Paul uses the marriage picture to illustrate the union we have with Christ. Sex is a great gift from God that expresses the oneness that unites a man and his wife after they have given themselves to each other in a lifelong commitment. Sex is about giving fulfilment to our partner, not getting fulfilment for ourselves. It is the cement that glues husband and wife together. But having sex outside of marriage glues us to that person, even if it is a one-off. Sandy and I have had to pray with quite a few people, especially young couples wanting to get married, to disentangle them from having got themselves glued to people with whom they have had sex, but not made a lifelong commitment. Sex is about uniting yourself with another human being and is meant to be a way of expressing mutual lifelong commitment. We reap what we sow, and although we may be forgiven, we may still have to carry the consequences of our sin with us all our lives. (e.g. a child born outside of marriage; family breakups, etc.)

Using this illustration, Paul says that he who unites himself to the Lord becomes one with him in spirit. When we commit ourselves to Christ, it is like getting spiritually married to him. At our baptism we make our vows, "I do, I will". From then on we are spiritually one with him; we are united with him in spirit, and my body is part of His Body.

## **3. Temples of the Holy Spirit**

*"Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body."* v 19-20. The third '*Don't you know that*', that finishes this section has recently hit me very strongly.

Paul brings us back to our bodies, which he says are temples of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we together form a temple of the Holy Spirit but the bodies of every individual believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. A popular teaching is that the Spirit automatically comes to live inside every believer when we 'pray the sinner's prayer'. But is that true? I don't believe this is biblical. Pentecostals and Charismatics teach that receiving the Spirit is a two-stage process – we receive the Spirit to indwell us at conversion and we receive the Spirit to empower us when we are baptised in the Spirit. John Wimber and theologians like Jack Dere and Wayne Grudem seriously question this teaching. They suggest an alternative explanation; we are all baptised in the Spirit at conversion but we all need to unwrap the gift of the Spirit if we didn't do so at our conversion and go on being filled with the Spirit on a daily basis.

Neither the Pentecostal view nor Wimber's view stand up to biblical scrutiny. There is a more accurate biblical alternative. We become believers because the Spirit had already been working in our lives and is with us, alongside us. When we make a commitment to follow Christ and are baptised, he is still with us; he never leaves us or forsakes us. But Jesus promised his disciples more than this. He promised them that the Spirit would anoint them and come right inside them to indwell them, and to fill them just as he did when he came upon Jesus at his baptism. In scripture being baptised in the Spirit is exactly the same as being indwelt by the Spirit, being empowered with the Spirit and being filled with the spirit but none of these is the same as being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We only receive the Spirit once according to the NT not twice; it happened to Jesus at his baptism, to the disciples on the day of Pentecost and after that to all who believed either when they were baptised or when they had hands laid on them. It is not possible for someone to receive the Spirit and not know it. It is a visible and tangible experience of the invisible and intangible Spirit of God coming inside our bodies. He enters into our bodies and fills us with all God's fulness. Not least we will experience great inner assurance, a desire for holiness and probably also speak in languages we have never learned.

Jesus said, "*How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ASK.*" If you believe in Christ but have never asked for and accepted or received the Holy Spirit, then you need to. Every one of the believers at Corinth had consciously received the Spirit, probably after they were baptised. This is why Paul can write to them "*Do you not know that*

*your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.”* They knew they had received the Spirit from God and that he was living inside them.

God created us in the first place, not only that our bodies could be the temples for our own spirits, but so that his Spirit could join with our own spirits and live with us, inside our bodies. Adam and Eve never knew this; they sinned and fell before they could receive God’s Spirit. But through Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, he was able to purchase our bodies at the immense price of his own death, so that our bodies could be dwellings not only for our new spirits but also of his Holy Spirit. The cross dealt with all the negatives, all our sin past present and future; the resurrection obtained new life for us - our new hearts and our new spirits; his ascension enables Jesus to baptise us in his Spirit, pouring out his Spirit on every child of God who ASKS. Jesus is the One who baptises with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Where is God? “God is everywhere”. “God is in heaven”. “God is inside me; he lives within my body”. Brothers and sisters, do we know that God Spirit is inside us? My body belongs to the Lord, he owns it and it is supposed to be filled with God’s Holy Spirit. Inside my body the Holy Spirit and my spirit communicate with one another. I often wake up speaking in tongues. What is that? During the night when my body is asleep, my spirit and the Holy Spirit are having a good old chat while my mind is asleep or dreaming. When I wake up, I just catch the tail end of the conversation.

Being Spirit-filled is about the Holy Spirit inside me telling me things, prompting me to do things and giving me words to say. He leads me and guides me, impressing things upon me and giving us the wisdom to make wise decisions. Do you experience this? It is great to have the Holy Spirit with us, alongside us, but even better to have him right inside our bodies. He encourages us, assures us, witnessing with our spirits that we are beloved children of God and he keeps us from sinning. Do you experience this? He fills us with joy and love and hope and faith, sometimes almost to bursting! He inspires our praise and he empowers our praying. Do you know him like this? He gives us pictures and words for other people and gifts of healing for sick people, words of knowledge and wisdom, recognising unclean spirits and supernatural faith. And he constantly chats with us in an unintelligible prayer language and in our mother tongue.

If you don't know the Spirit like this, you can; all you have to do is ASK and you shall receive the promised Holy Spirit.

Don't be content with just speaking a few words in tongues – he comes to us with full assurance, with holiness and with power and with his all kinds of manifestations, such as prophecy and healing and pictures and tongues. Press in to **all** the Spirit has for you; make sure your body is filled and filled again and again with all the fulness of God. It is his temple, let him have full control of it. Worship him, in and with your body. Honouring him with your body, because our bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit and we have been united in spirit with the Lord. Knowing this should be surely enough to keep us miles away from sexual immorality and all other sins of the flesh.

Where is God? He is here, in this room this morning, not because this is a church, a holy place, nor just because God is everywhere, but because this morning every one of us who has received the Spirit, brought God into this building. Together we are Christ's body and he works through us to bring his Gospel to our town and to the ends of the earth. How, because we take God with us everywhere we go; and when God is inside us anything can happen.

**Prayer:**

**Response:** Have you received the Spirit? Pray with one another this morning for a fresh infilling of the Spirit, and determine to be filled every morning. Do you know the Spirit is with you, but you have never invited him to take up residence inside you body; you can do so right now; come to the front and we will be delighted to pray with you.

Phil Rogers.