

13. Learning to Function as the Temple of God

In our last topic, we saw that we are to help our children learn to become peacemakers who can help other Christians resolve conflicts between themselves and other Christians. Today, we are going to see how we help our children learn what it means when the Lord says that their bodies are the temple of God. We will see that a clear understanding of what this means will help our children to have a powerful impact as the Lord both works in their lives and through their lives.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, we read, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Paul had been talking in the previous verses about various forms of unrighteousness. As a result, he now reminded the Corinthians of the fact that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. The word that is translated “unrighteous” speaks of all those who are still facing eternal judgment for sin. 2 Peter 2:9 says, “Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.” Here, we see that all that are unjust are still facing the day of judgment.

However, 1 Peter 3:18 also says, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.” Christ was the one who was just because He was without sin. We were all unjust because we were all guilty of sin. As a result, Christ suffered and paid the penalty for our sins so that He might bring us to God. This means that we now stand in the righteousness of Christ because we are in Christ the moment that we repent and place our faith in Christ. As God looks at all believers, He sees the righteousness of Christ blotting out all of our sins so the Father sees us as righteous. However, those who are still unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.

These verses go on to point out that those who are continuing to practice the sins that are mentioned in these verses will not inherit the kingdom of God. Here, we are reminded that once we come to Christ, He gives us new desires and we have the desire to please Christ and want to avoid the sins of the past. We are given the strength to walk to please the Lord as we learn to walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Those who continue to practice the works of the flesh as a pattern of life show that they have not yet placed their faith in Christ.

Some people who place their trust in Christ practiced many or all of these sins before they came to Christ because verse eleven says that such were some of you. However, at the moment any person places their faith in Christ, this verse says that three things happen. First, our sins are washed away. Second, we are sanctified. To be sanctified means *to be set apart from sin and dedicated to God*. Third, we are justified. The word “justified” means that *we are declared righteous and have been set free from the penalty of sin through Christ and the Holy Spirit is now transforming our lives*.

Paul goes on to point out in 1 Corinthians 6:12, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Since Galatians 3:24-25 point out the fact that the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ but once we come to Christ we are no longer under the law, many Corinthians thought that they were free to continue to sin as they chose. However, Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Here, we see that we are not to use our freedom to continue to live in sin. Instead, we are to use our freedom to serve one another in love. We want to help our children realize that all things are not helpful to them in their lives. In fact, when Christians continue to practice certain sins, they can be brought under the power of those sins. Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” We want to help our children understand that the Holy Spirit gives us the power to live a righteous life.

Paul goes on in 1 Corinthians 6:13-17 to say, “Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” Many people today are like the Corinthians and do not relate that what they do with their body affects their relationship with the Lord. They feel that just as they want food for their body that it is all right to practice sexual immorality as well.

As a result, these verses go on to make it very clear that the Lord made our bodies for Himself. Just as God raised the body of Christ from the dead, God will also raise our bodies from the dead. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” Here, we see that the Lord is going to raise our bodies by His power when He comes back for us.

That is why it is important to understand that our bodies are a part of Christ and belong to Him. We are not to use our bodies that belong to Christ for immorality. When God brought Eve to Adam, He said in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” When a person has a sexual relationship with someone outside of marriage, God says that the person has joined their body to the other person. Any person that is a Christian has been joined to the Lord is one spirit with Christ. As a result, both our body and our spirit are joined to the Lord and we are to use both our body and spirit to glorify God. Paul points out that Christians who commit sexual sin profane Christ because we are one with Him.

1 Corinthians 6:18 says, “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body,

but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.” Here, we see that we are to flee every form of sexual immorality. 2 Timothy 2:22 says, “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Here, we see that the way to deal with sexual temptation is to flee from it. The word that is translated “flee” means *to run and escape and to get safely out of danger*. Joseph illustrated exactly what this means in Genesis 39:12 where we read, “That she caught him by his garment, saying, ‘Lie with me.’ But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.” We are reminded that those who commit sexual immorality are actually sinning against their own body. That is why it is important to help our physical and spiritual children understand the consequences of sexual sin.

In contrast, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” Here, we are reminded that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit because He lives within us. In the Old Testament, the temple was built in Jerusalem. One day each year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies. First, he would place blood on the mercy seat as a covering for his own sin. Then, he would go out and get more blood and place it on the mercy seat as a covering for the sins of the people. That was the only time in the year the high priest was even allowed to go into the Holy of Holies to remind the people that God is a holy God.

Now, in the New Testament, we do not have a building where we have to go to meet God once a year. Instead, God chose to put His Holy Spirit in us so that we can be continually in fellowship with God. Our human bodies have become the temple of the Holy Spirit. We want to help our children understand that their bodies are also the temple of the Holy Spirit because God wants to have continual fellowship with them. To sin against our body is to sin against the temple of the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 6:16 says, “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’” God lives in our lives and walks with us.

In order for God to live in our lives, God had to pay a terrible price. That price was not the blood of animals like in the Old Testament. 1 Peter 1:18-19 says, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” The Father had to send His own Son to pay the penalty for our sins with His blood so that His Spirit could live within us. That is why we want to show our children by our own example how to glorify God both with their body and with their spirit because God purchased both with the blood of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to function as the temple of God.