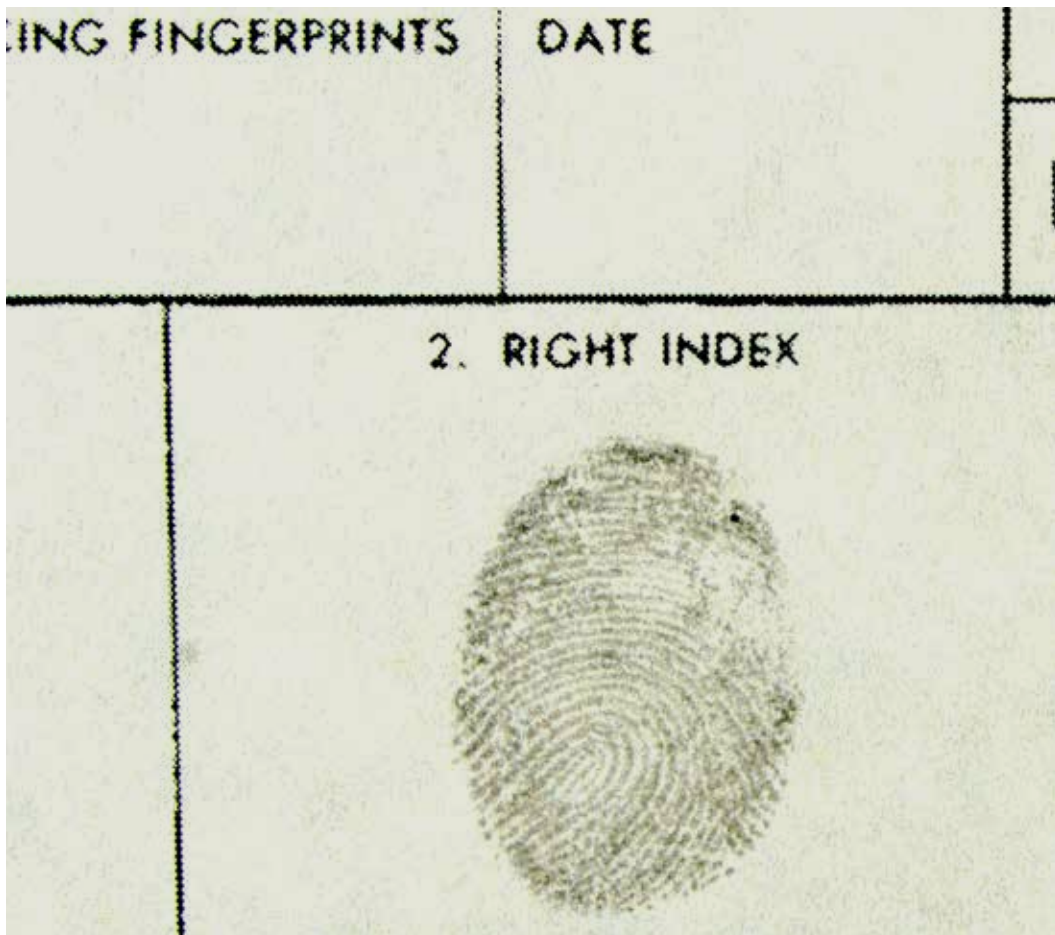


SESSION 5  
Sanctified



**QUESTION 1:**

*What is something about you that is unique?*

## THE POINT

We are set apart in Christ to live holy lives.

## THE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 6:9-20

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Are you familiar with the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*?<sup>1</sup> My children are because my wife and I often read the book to them. In the story, the caterpillar had a hunger that could never be satisfied. But one day everything changed. He no longer crawled on the ground nor did he feel that intense hunger. Instead, he was fulfilled and had wings that enabled him to fly. Then the author revealed that he was never created to remain a caterpillar; he was designed to be a beautiful butterfly.

I felt empathy for this caterpillar and maybe you do too. Like this caterpillar, we were never designed to remain hungry and unfulfilled. Instead, we were designed to live in a relationship with God through the sacrifice of Christ. We were designed to live set apart from the ways of a sinful world; we are set aside to become something greater.

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul sought to help us understand the process of being set apart from the rest of the world. That is what it means to be sanctified.

## 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

**9 Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males,**

**10 no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom.**

**11 And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

**KEY WORDS: God's kingdom** (v. 9)—Whether on earth in the believer's heart or in heaven itself, God's kingdom can best be understood as the spiritual realm over which God reigns or where He rules sovereignly.

**Sanctified** (v. 11)—To be “set apart” for God's special use; therefore, including holy living. Believers should live in a way that sets them apart from the ways of the impure.

**Justified** (v. 11)—To be put in right relation or right standing with God, which only God can make possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the first session (pp. 14-23), we gained an understanding of the word *holy*, a rich word that applies to God who is set apart, separate, and unique from His creation. But God is not the only one who is holy; as His children, we too are to be holy and set apart from the world around us. “But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). To be holy is to be sanctified, and the Christian life is a life of growing in sanctification.

The beauty of being sanctified and set apart in Christ is that we are no longer enslaved to sin as we once were. When we are in Christ, the Father sees us as righteous; we are no longer counted

as unrighteous. Paul listed some specific sins and reminded the Corinthians, “Some of you used to be like this.” It was a humbling reminder that they were justified not by their actions, but because of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Paul was also sending a warning that their lives should no longer look like their old way of living. We are sanctified and set apart from the old way of life. We will only find death in sin, but we find life in Christ. When we come to Christ, everything changes!

Paul used three key words to describe that change:

1. **Washed.** We are washed clean of our sin through faith in Christ. “The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
2. **Sanctified.** We are set apart by God and declared holy. “By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time” (Heb. 10:10).
3. **Justified.** We are considered righteous in the sight of God. The righteousness of Christ is attributed to us. “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).

All this happens at the moment of salvation, the moment we believe and trust in Christ, the One who lived a perfect life, died a sinner’s death to take away our sin, and rose again to give us new life. Justification is a one-time event, but sanctification is a daily process. Our sanctification begins at the moment we are justified, but it continues throughout our lives as we grow more and more like Christ.

#### **QUESTION 2:**

*How would you describe your life before you encountered Christ?*

## 1 Corinthians 6:12-17

**12** “Everything is permissible for me,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me,” but I will not be mastered by anything.

**13** “Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will do away with both of them. However, the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

**14** God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

**15** Don’t you know that your bodies are a part of Christ’s body? So should I take a part of Christ’s body and make it part of a prostitute? Absolutely not!

**16** Don’t you know that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For Scripture says, The two will become one flesh.

**17** But anyone joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Paul reminded the Corinthians not to engage in the old life, because some of their old sins were exactly what they were chasing. We are set free in Christ, but the Corinthians were misinterpreting that freedom. Paul quoted one of their slogans twice—“Everything is permissible for me”—but both times he gave a truth that went against that slogan: “not everything is beneficial” and “I will not be mastered by anything.”

Paul had written to the churches in Galatia: “For freedom, Christ set us free” (Gal. 5:1). He set us free from slavery to sin. We are free *not* to sin, but some in the Corinthian church took that freedom to mean they were free *to* sin. Specifically, some in the Corinthian church were engaging in sexual immorality. Paul referenced a statement the Corinthian believers used in rationalizing their immorality: “‘Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food.’” Eating food is a natural part of life and something to be enjoyed, and they viewed sexual pleasure

## DIGGING DEEPER

### SEXUAL ETHICS

Corinth was portrayed as having a reputation for sexual deviation or sexual immorality. Forms of the Greek root *pornea* (translated *sexual immorality*) occur fourteen times in 1 Corinthians. Paul's major point was that sexual impurity within the church besmirched the glory of God. Paul challenged believers to sexual purity and commanded believers to flee sexual immorality (6:18).

In 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Paul based Christian sexual ethics on the doctrine of the Trinity. Paul connected the Trinity with the human body: God created our

bodies, Christ redeemed the body of believers, and the Holy Spirit indwells embodied believers.

The term *body* occurs eight times in Paul's discussion of sexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Paul used *body* (Greek, *soma*) to refer to the entire person. Paul maintained that the unitive function of sex prohibits sexual immorality (vv. 16-17). Sex is never a mere physical act. Since the bodies of believers are individual members or parts of the body of Christ, Paul strongly denied that a believer can take an individual part of the body of Christ and unite the body of Christ with a prostitute (v. 15).

Mark A Rathel, "Sexual Ethics: Paul's Challenge to the Corinthians," *Biblical Illustrator*, Spring 2018, 26-29.

in the same way. They believed food and sex were intended for their physical bodies and had no bearing on their spiritual lives.

The belief that physical behavior was not relevant to a person's spiritual life came from a heresy called Gnosticism. Adherents to Gnosticism made many attempts to influence Christian thinking and theology. One aspect of this heresy was the idea that the only thing that mattered was the spiritual. Physical matter was not important, which meant a person could do anything physically because it had no bearing on his spiritual life. That view appears to have influenced many in the Corinthian church, but Paul spoke against it. "However, the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" We cannot separate body and spirit. Our physical bodies belong just as much to Christ as our spirits do.

Believers are one with Christ, and marriage is a picture of the

oneness we share with Christ as his church (Eph. 5:22-32). In marriage, a man and woman become one flesh; in the same way, when we become believers, we are joined with the Lord through the Holy Spirit. “Don’t you know that your bodies are a part of Christ’s body?” Consequently, the actions of our body affect our whole being. This truth underscores just how set apart we are from the world. We are not one with the world and its way of thinking; we are one with Christ. Therefore, since we are one with Christ and His Holy Spirit lives within us, our actions should reflect that.

Returning to the analogy of marriage, we recognize the weighty responsibility of living united to a spouse, but a deep joy also accompanies that commitment. A husband’s or wife’s life does not look the same as it did before marriage; spouses are to live for one another. A husband is set apart for his wife, and a wife is set apart for her husband. It’s the same in our relationship with Christ. We are joined to Christ and set apart for His purposes.

### QUESTION 3:

*What are the practical implications of being one with Christ?*

---

## 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

**18 Flee sexual immorality! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.**

**19 Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,**

**20 for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.**

In verses 12-17, Paul stressed that what we do physically—in



this case, sexual sin—does matter. So now he offered a course correction: “Flee sexual immorality!” *Flee* means to run away, not just walk away, from a situation; and don’t take time to think about getting away. Get as far away as possible—and do it immediately!

In fleeing *from* temptation, it is essential to consider what we run *to*. We cannot flee aimlessly from sin, but must run ferociously toward Christ. Paul instructed Timothy, “But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness” (1 Tim. 6:11). We are to pursue the sanctified life.

God is glorified when we pursue the things of God and live sanctified lives. He called us out of our sin to belong to Him and be His own people—He set us apart—and we are not our own.

**“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9**

All of our choices should bring glory to God. To the God who chose us for a royal priesthood and called us out of darkness, we should willingly and joyfully proclaim His honor and glory.

Fleeing sexual immorality and faithfully pursuing righteousness may seem like a challenge, but it is not insurmountable. We never face temptations alone (1 Cor. 10:13). Because we trust and belong to Christ, His Holy Spirit is always right there with us. Each of our bodies “is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God.”

#### **QUESTION 4:**

***What does it mean to call our bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit?***



As we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit, let's remember the price God paid to redeem us and bring us to Himself. We value and take better care of things when we pay a lot for them. We spend months selecting a house and securing a way to buy it. On the other hand, we buy a snack at the convenience store without much thought. On an infinitely greater scale, God chose to purchase us and it cost Him greatly: the death of His Son. We are wise to take special care of what belongs to God: that includes our spirit, soul, and body.

**“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23).**

In submitting to Christ, we submit in both body and spirit. We are set apart—sanctified—in Christ, and our bodies are no longer to be used as vessels for sin. Instead, our bodies are to be vessels to glorify Christ. When we submit to Christ on a daily basis, and let His Holy Spirit fill us, we are well along on the road of sanctification. A sanctified life lived for Christ can do nothing but glorify Him!

#### QUESTION 5:

*What are specific ways Christians can live set apart for God in today's culture?*

### ENGAGE

*Every home accumulates clutter. Our bodies are the Holy Spirit's home. Identify clutter in your life that gets in the way of the Holy Spirit.*

---

## LIVE IT OUT

We were never designed to remain caterpillars. God set us apart for something far greater. As Christ daily transforms us, we must let Him continue the sanctification process in us.

- ▶ **Offer thanks.** Reflect on how your life has changed because of Christ. Thank Him for setting you free from the former way of life. Pray for the Lord to continue His good work.
- ▶ **Memorize.** Memorize 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and repeat it to yourself when you need to flee from temptation. “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.”
- ▶ **Walk alongside others.** Making the daily choice to live a holy life is much easier when you walk alongside other believers. Surround yourself with others who also choose to live their lives for Christ. Your Bible study group is a good place to start.



### END NOTES

1 Eric Carle, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (New York: Philomel Books, 1969).