LESSON SIX

Built Different

"A Disciple Belongs to Christ"

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 6:1–20

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples reflect God, so all areas of life are lived under the authority of Jesus.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Discipleship Distinctive: Lordship

GROUP TIME

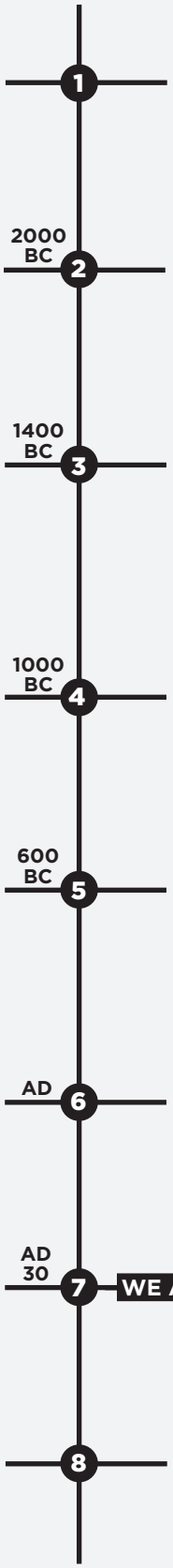
5 minutes	**Welcome**
5–10 minutes	**Attention Grabber**
10 minutes	**Story / Context**
25 minutes	**Discussion**
5–10 minutes	**Closing & Prayer**

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Rooted Week 2** – Pray for the fall Rooted session. Pray for people to stay committed after week 1 and return for week 2. This week, participants are reading about who God is. Ask the Spirit to reveal the holiness of God and move powerfully to continue the discipleship movement within our church.

<u>BEGIN</u> this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer *(Genesis 1-11)*
God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.
+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise *(Genesis 12-50)*
God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation *(Exodus-Deuteronomy)*
Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.
+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King *(Joshua-2 Chronicles)*
God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.
+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise *(Ezra-Nehemiah)*
Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise *(Matthew-John)*
At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.
+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church *(Acts-Jude)*
After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.
+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People *(Revelation)*
The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.
+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: JACKIE ROBINSON

When Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier in 1947, he was not simply trying to make a roster. He was stepping into a moment much larger than baseball. Every at-bat, every stolen base, every insult, every threat, and every response carried the weight of something bigger. Robinson was not only representing himself. He was carrying the hopes of many who wanted to see a lie exposed and a barrier broken.

That did not mean Robinson had no rights, no emotions, or no dignity. It meant his life could not be reduced to whatever he felt in the moment. He had to decide what to do with anger, restraint, strength, pain, and public pressure because his life and choices were part of a larger witness. People who hated him wanted him to lose control. People who supported him needed him to endure. The field became a place where his character, courage, and belonging were clear.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• Why did Jackie Robinson's responses carry more weight than baseball performance alone?
• How can belonging to something larger change the way a person handles their rights, emotions, and choices?

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
Jackie Robinson's story reminds us that belonging to something larger changes how a person lives under pressure. In 1 Corinthians 6:1–20, Paul told the Corinthians that their conflicts, desires, bodies, and choices all belonged under the authority of Jesus. A disciple is built different because they belong to Christ, and that belonging shapes every part of life.

OPTION 2: JOSEPH FLED POTIPHAR'S WIFE (GENESIS 39)

When Joseph was serving in Potiphar's house, he was far from home, far from his family, and far from anyone who knew the promises God had given him. Potiphar's wife repeatedly tried to seduce him, and Joseph had every opportunity to treat the situation as private. He could have told himself that no one would know, that his body was his own, or that his circumstances justified compromise.

But Joseph saw the moment differently. He told her, "My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" Joseph understood that his desires, his body, his position, and his choices were not disconnected from God. Even in a hidden place, he belonged to the Lord.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• What does Joseph's response show about how he viewed his life before God?
• Why do people sometimes separate physical desires from their relationship with God?

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
Joseph refused to treat his body, desires, and hidden choices as separate from God. In 1 Corinthians 6:1–20, Paul called the Corinthians to view every part of life as being under the authority of Jesus. A disciple is built different because they belong to Christ and are called to reflect God in their conflicts, desires, bodies, and choices.

OPTION 3: THE RENTAL CAR

When you rent a car, the keys are in your hand, but the car does not belong to you. You can drive it, use it, and take it where you need to go, but you are not free to treat it however you want. You cannot ignore the agreement, damage the vehicle, or pretend you own it just because you are the one behind the wheel.

That is a helpful picture for the way many people think about life. We assume that because our bodies, desires, choices, money, conflicts, and relationships feel personal, they must belong entirely to us. We may even divide life into sections: Jesus has my worship, my Sunday morning, or my beliefs, but I control my body, my appetites, my anger, my rights, and my private decisions.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What are some areas of life people often think of as "mine to control"?*
- *How might life change if we remembered we belong to Christ in every area?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:
A rental car reminds us that having control in the moment does not mean we are the owner. In 1 Corinthians 6:1–20, Paul told the Corinthians their conflicts, desires, bodies, and choices all belonged under the authority of Jesus. A disciple is built different because they belong to Christ and are called to reflect God in every area of life.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

I. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1–9)
II. Problems in the church (1:10–6:20)
  A. Divisions and factions (1:10–4:21)
  B. Gross immorality (5:1–13)
  C. Litigation before pagan courts (6:1–11)
  D. Fornication with prostitutes (6:12–20)
III. Replies to questions from the Corinthians (7:1–14:40)
  A. Questions about marriage (7:1–40)
  B. Limitations of Christian liberty (8:1–11:1)
  C. Veiling of women in public worship (11:2–16)
  D. Disorderly behavior at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  E. Exercise of spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
IV. The Resurrection of the Body (15:1–58)
  A. Centrality of Christ's resurrection (15:1–20)
  B. Sequence of resurrection events (15:21–28)
  C. The resurrection and suffering (15:29–34)
  D. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49)
  E. The believer's victory over death (15:50–58)
V. Conclusion (16:1–24)
  A. Collection for the believers at Jerusalem (16:1–4)
  B. Paul's plans for visiting Corinth (16:5–9)
  C. Exhortations, instructions, and salutations (16:10–24)[1]

CONTEXT

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul addressed lawsuits among believers and sexual immorality because both reveal the same deeper problem. The Corinthians were acting as though ordinary life could be separated from their identity in Jesus. Paul reminded them that God's people would one day participate in His judgment, so they should be able to handle disputes with wisdom and humility. He also reminded them that their bodies were members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. Christian freedom is not self-rule. They were bought at a price, and therefore they were called to glorify God in everything they did, including with their bodies. Disciples are built different because they belong to Christ and reflect God in every area of life.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Apart from Christ, sinners treat life as though it belongs to them. We use our rights, desires, bodies, and relationships however we want, while remaining under the rule of sin and unable to reflect God as we were created to do. Thinking is often compartmentalized into physical and spiritual, as if the two can be separated.

[1] F. Alan Tomlinson, "1 Corinthians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1811.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Jesus bought us at a price by giving Himself for us. Through His death and resurrection, He cleanses sinners, unites us to Himself, and gives His Spirit to dwell in us. Because we belong to Christ, our bodies and lives are no longer ruled by sin or self. We are freed to glorify God in every part of life. We understand the deeply integrated unity of our physical bodies and spiritual souls.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM: LORDSHIP

We can easily imagine our life in compartments. Jesus belongs in worship, prayer, belief, and church involvement. Conflict belongs to our instincts. Desire belongs to the appetites of our physical existence. The body belongs to personal preference. But Paul would not allow that kind of divided discipleship in 1 Corinthians 6.

To call Jesus "Lord" is to say that no part of life is outside His claim. The Corinthians needed that reminder because they were treating lawsuits, wrongs, sexual desire, and the body as though they could be separated from Christ and His lordship over our whole life, which is a unity of physical and spiritual. Paul brought them back to the truth of who they were: washed, sanctified, justified, joined to Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, and bought at a price.

Lordship is not Jesus taking life from us. It is Jesus restoring life to its proper order. His authority is good because He is good. He teaches us what our rights are for, what our bodies are for, what freedom is for, and what our whole lives are for. Disciples are built different because they do not belong to themselves. They belong to Christ, and that belonging brings every area of life under His wise and gracious rule.

3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

1 Corinthians 6:1–6 Chapter 6 opens with a new problem, though it is closely related to the pride and immaturity Paul had already addressed. Some believers in Corinth were taking legal disputes with other believers before civil courts. The issue was not simply that conflict existed inside the church. Paul was concerned that members of the same Christian community were placing their disputes before judges who did not share the church's allegiance to Christ or its understanding of righteousness.

Paul's language is sharp: "If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?" The word "dare" signals Paul's astonishment. The Corinthians prided themselves on wisdom, yet their actions suggested they did not believe the church had enough wisdom to address ordinary disputes among believers. Their behavior contradicted their identity.

Paul supported his rebuke by appealing to the future role of God's people. He said, "The Lord's people will judge the world" and then added that believers will "judge angels." Paul did not pause to explain all the details of this future judgment. His point was comparative. If believers will participate in such significant judgment in the age to come, then they should be capable of discerning "trivial cases" in the present. Paul was not minimizing the pain of conflict. He was relativizing these disputes in light of the church's future destiny with Christ.

The repeated phrase "Do you not know?" is important in this chapter. Paul used it to remind the Corinthians of truths they should have already understood but were failing to apply. Their problem was not lack of information. They were failing to connect their theology to ordinary life. Their future with Christ should shape the way they handled present conflicts. Furthermore, their existence was an integration of spiritual and physical, yet they were living like the two were separate.

In verse 5, Paul said, "I say this to shame you." This does not contradict his pastoral concern. Paul used shame rhetorically to expose how inappropriate their behavior was for people who claimed wisdom. The Corinthians wanted to be seen as mature, but their lawsuits revealed spiritual inconsistency. Brother was going to law against brother, and this was happening before unbelievers. The public nature of the conflict made the church's failure visible.

1 Corinthians 6:7–8 Paul then moved from the public problem to the deeper moral issue. "The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already." The damage had occurred before the verdict was ever reached. A believer might win the case legally and still participate in a spiritual defeat if the process is driven by pride, retaliation, greed, or public vindication.

Paul's questions, "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" should be read in context. He was not giving a blanket command that Christians must never seek protection from harm or involve legal authorities when serious wrongdoing occurs. His concern here was with believers using lawsuits against one another in a way

that displayed the same competitive, self-protective instincts as the surrounding culture. Paul confronted the assumption that asserting one's rights is always the highest good. Jesus Christ is our example of one who did not seek His own rights and position but rather humbly gave up His rights for the good of others (Philippians 2:5–8).

Verse 8 shows that the issue was not only that some believers were being wronged. Some were doing wrong and cheating fellow believers. Paul's language echoes the ethical concerns that appear in the list that follows. Their disputes were not merely procedural failures. They revealed that some Corinthians were acting unjustly toward members of the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 Paul broadened the issue by warning that "wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God." The warning is direct because Paul was addressing patterns of life that contradict the rule of God. He was not saying believers earn the kingdom through moral achievement. He was saying the kingdom of God and settled rebellion against God do not belong together.

The vice list in verses 9–10 includes sexual, economic, and verbal sins, idolatry, and patterns of addiction or exploitation. This breadth is important. Paul did not isolate one sin as the only concern. He was showing that many forms of life can express resistance to God's reign. The Corinthians needed to see that lawsuits, sexual immorality, greed, and exploitation were not disconnected issues. They were symptoms of lives not being brought under the authority of Christ.

Verse 11 gives the gospel contrast: "And that is what some of you were." Paul did not deny the Corinthians' past. He named it as something from which they have been decisively rescued. The verbs that follow are central: washed, sanctified, justified. "Washed" points to cleansing from sin. "Sanctified" means set apart for God. "Justified" means declared right before God. These are not achievements the Corinthians produced in themselves. They happened "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

This verse is crucial for understanding the whole chapter. Paul's ethical commands are grounded in a changed identity. The Corinthians were not being told to become new by their obedience. They were being told to live in light of what God had already done for them in Christ. Their conduct must now correspond to their new status.

1 Corinthians 6:12–14 In verse 12, Paul appears to quote a Corinthian slogan: "I have the right to do anything." The phrase may reflect a distorted understanding of Christian freedom. Paul responded by qualifying it twice: "not everything is beneficial," and "I will not be mastered by anything." Freedom, Paul taught, was not the ability to do whatever one desires. True freedom is life under Christ rather than under the mastery of sin, appetite, or impulse.

A second slogan appears in verse 13: "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The Corinthians may have been arguing that bodily appetites are temporary and therefore morally insignificant. Just as food satisfies hunger, they may have reasoned, sex satisfies physical desire. This line of thinking is dualistic, creating a divide between physical and spiritual realities. Paul rejected this idea. The body is not morally irrelevant. "The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."

Paul's theology of the body is grounded in the resurrection that builds on creation. God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, and He will also raise believers. This means our physical bodies are part of God's saving purpose. Paul did not treat the body as a temporary shell that can be used however one wishes. The future resurrection gives present significance to embodied life.

1 Corinthians 6:15–17 Paul now developed the implications of union with Christ. "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?" The statement is striking because Paul did not say that only the believer's soul or spirit belongs to Christ. The body is included in Christian identity. What is done with the body is therefore not disconnected from Christ. Stating this again, what is done in the physical realm is not disconnected from the spiritual realm.

Paul applied this directly to sexual immorality: "Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!" The strength of the response shows how seriously Paul viewed the issue. Sexual sin is not merely a private physical act. It involves the body of one who belongs to Christ. This means that it is both a physical and spiritual act.

To support this, Paul quoted Genesis 2:24, that the two will "become one flesh." He used the creation text to show that sexual union has covenantal and personal significance. The Corinthians may have wanted to treat sexual activity as an act with no deeper meaning. Paul insisted that the body participates in union, and that union cannot be separated from discipleship.

Verse 17 provides the contrast: "Whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit." Paul was not denying the importance of the body. He was clarifying the believer's primary union. The Christian belongs to Christ, and that union governs every other union. Sexual ethics, for Paul, flow from Christology and identity.

1 Corinthians 6:18–20 The command in verse 18 is brief and urgent: "Flee from sexual immorality." Paul did not tell the Corinthians to reason with it or manage it carefully. The verb suggests decisive separation from what is dangerous. Given the seriousness of sexual sin and the power of human desire, the proper response is not confidence in oneself but distance from the occasion of sin.

Paul then said the sexually immoral person sins against their own body. This does not mean sexual sin is unforgivable or that it is the only sin involving the body. In context, Paul emphasized that sexual immorality uniquely contradicts the Christian meaning of the body. The body is for the Lord, a member of Christ, and destined for resurrection. To use it for sexual immorality is to act against its design and its redeemed purpose.

Verse 19 introduces temple language: "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit." In chapter 3, Paul described the church corporately as God's temple. Here the focus is on the believer's body. The Holy Spirit, received from God, dwells in the believer. This gives the body sacred significance. The body is not outside the sphere of worship. It is a place where God is to be honored.

The final statement gathers Paul's argument together: "You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." The language of purchase points to Christ's saving work.

Because believers have been bought, they belong to Christ. This is the foundation for Paul's teaching on lawsuits, rights, freedom, sexuality, and the body. Christian discipleship is not self-ownership. It is life under the lordship of the One who redeemed the whole person.

First Corinthians 6 challenges two areas the Corinthians may have separated: public conflict and private bodily conduct. Paul treated both as matters of lordship. The believer's future judgment with Christ, present identity in Christ, union with Christ, indwelling by the Spirit, and purchase by Christ all shape how disciples live now. No area of life is spiritually neutral when a person belongs to Jesus.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:1–20

6 If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before
the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? 2 Or do
you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you
are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3
Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things
of this life! 4 Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you
ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?
5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you
wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6 But instead, one
brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have
been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why
not rather be cheated? 8 Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong,
and you do this to your brothers and sisters. 9 Or do you not know that
wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived:
Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who
have sex with men r10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor
slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is
what some of you were. 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.

12 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is
beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered
by anything. 13 You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for
food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant
for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14
By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise
us also. 15 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! 16 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." d 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in
spirit. e

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are
outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.
19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who
is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20
you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: DISPUTES

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1–8. Who were the Corinthians asking to settle their disputes? Who will judge the world and the angels?

Suggested Response: Paul said some believers were taking disputes with other believers before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people. Through a question, Paul revealed that believers will judge the world, including angels.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: SPIRITUAL STATUS

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11. What sinful life patterns did Paul list? Make a list of them. In contrast, what was the spiritual status of Corinthian believers now?

Suggested Response: Paul listed sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, same-sex sexual behavior, stealing, greed, drunkenness, slander, and swindling. He said some of the Corinthians used to be characterized by these things. But now they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: THE PHYSICAL BODY

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12–20. What did Paul tell the Corinthians the purpose of their bodies was? How is it a contrast from the way their culture thought about a person's body?

Suggested Response: Paul explained that the body is used to glorify God. The things done in the body have an impact on a person's connection in Christ. Paul contrasted the thinking of the Corinthian culture, which considered the acts of the body to be limited to the spiritual realm. There was no connection between the physical realm and the spiritual realm.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CONFLICT

Why did Paul treat the Corinthians' lawsuits against one another as a spiritual problem, not merely a legal problem?

Suggested Response: Paul saw their lawsuits as a spiritual problem because believers belong to Christ and to one another. They were handling conflict as though they had no shared identity, no wisdom from God, and no responsibility to protect the witness of the church. Their desire to win, be vindicated, or protect their rights had become more important than living under the authority of Jesus and working toward unity.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

How did Paul show the Corinthians they were not defined by their lives before salvation?

Suggested Response: Paul reminded the Corinthians that their past sins were real, but they were no longer defined by them. In Christ, they had been cleansed, set apart for God, and declared right with Him. Because God had given them a new identity, they could not keep living as though sin still had authority over them. The grace that saves sinners also brings them under the lordship of Jesus.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: BOTH-AND: SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL BEINGS

Why did Paul say the body is "for the Lord" and that believers are "not their own"?

Suggested Response: Paul wanted the Corinthians to see that their physical body was not spiritually meaningless or morally disconnected from Jesus. Believers are united to Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and bought at a price. The example of the sexual union reaches back to the design of humanity as recorded in Genesis. We are physical and spiritual beings. These two realities cannot be separated. We are a unity, so the physical things we do with our bodies have spiritual implications.

Furthermore, our lives belong to the Lord, which includes our physical bodies. Therefore, we cannot use our bodies according to self-rule, appetite, or cultural permission. The whole person belongs to Christ and is meant to honor God.

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: In 1 Corinthians 6:1–8, Paul confronted believers who were handling conflict without wisdom, humility, or concern for their witness and the unity of believers. How do you usually respond when you feel wronged?

Suggested Response: I may respond by defending myself, fighting back, avoiding the person, replaying the situation in my mind, talking to others about it, or looking for ways to prove I was right. Paul's words remind me that belonging to Christ, not just whether I get the outcome I want, should shape how I handle conflict.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide responses beyond the surface level. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 2: Where are you most tempted to insist on your rights or to get even? Consider Paul's challenge in verse 7, "Why not rather suffer wrong?" Why can we give up temporary wins in light of the bigger picture?

Suggested Response: I may be tempted to insist on my rights in marriage, parenting, work, friendships, church life, online conversations, or situations where I feel misunderstood. There are times when truth and protection matter, but I also need to ask whether my response is being influenced by Jesus's example or by pride, anger, and self-protection.

Paul's challenge is hard! But living in light of eternity means I know that I will ultimately be vindicated and all wrongs will be made right. Jesus did not hold on to status. Instead, He gave up His rights so we could be saved (Philippians 2:5–8). Paul pointed to this by directing the Corinthians to think about the kingdom of God, meaning our eternal inheritance, not just temporary circumstances.

QUESTION 3: In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul reminded the Corinthians that they were washed, sanctified, and justified. What part of your past do you need freedom from?

Suggested Response: I may still live from shame, anger, lust, greed, insecurity, people-pleasing, bitterness, or the need to control. Paul reminded believers that their past was real, but it was not their master. In Christ, God gives a new identity that is the basis for a new way of life, a life lived in freedom.

QUESTION 4: In 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul said, "I have the right to do anything," but "not everything is beneficial." Where in your life are you tempted to overdo something God allows?

Suggested Response: I may need to ask this about entertainment, habits, spending, relationships, food or drink, sexuality, technology, social media, or the way I use my time. Instead of only asking whether something is allowed, I need to ask whether it helps me honor Christ or is my master.

QUESTION 5: Paul said, "I will not be mastered by anything." What desire, habit, or pattern most easily gains control over you?

Suggested Response: I may feel controlled by approval, anger, anxiety, lust, comfort, food, alcohol, spending, entertainment, my phone, work, or the need to be right. Christ's lordship means I do not have to surrender myself to lesser masters. I can bring those patterns into the light and take concrete steps toward freedom.

QUESTION 6: What thoughts do you have about the integrated unity of your physical existence and spiritual life? What is one practical step you can take this week to honor God with your physical existence (body)?

Suggested Response: Responses will vary. The goal is to begin processing the deep connection between our physical existence and spiritual lives. Many people live as if these two aspects of our lives are separated and do not influence each other. Paul connected these two realms when he gave the example of sexual union with a prostitute. He pointed back to Genesis , to how we are created by God's design and that the sexual union is not just a physical thing. It is a physical and spiritual thing—one flesh, which is immediately followed by a comment on nakedness and not being ashamed (Genesis 2:24–25). Furthermore, our bodies no longer belong to ourselves to be used any way we want. We have the Holy Spirit within us, so things done in the physical realm impact our spiritual state. And, we are under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the one who saved us, so He has authority over our lives.

I can flee from a temptation, set a boundary, confess a hidden struggle, change a habit, rest properly, use my body to serve someone, or remove access to something that pulls me away from Christ. Honoring God with my body means treating my physical life as belonging to Jesus.

QUESTION 7: How can our group help one another live every area of life under the lordship of Jesus?

Suggested Response: As a group, we can pray honestly, encourage confession, talk about real-life struggles without pretending, and remind one another that Jesus's authority is good. We can help one another connect faith to conflict, desires, habits, relationships, and the body so no part of life is treated as separate from Christ.

4 CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

A disciple is built different; they do not divide life into physical actions and spiritual actions. A disciple does not divide life into areas Jesus owns and areas they control. The Corinthians needed to learn that belonging to Christ shaped their conflicts, their rights, their desires, and their bodies. Paul's words are clear: "You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." Pay attention this week to the places self-rule feels most natural.

- Where are you handling conflict more by instinct than by the lordship of Jesus?
- What desire, habit, or freedom has started to master you?
- What part of your embodied life needs to be brought more fully under Christ's good authority?

Jesus does not claim part of you in order to leave the rest untouched. He bought you, cleansed you, joined you to Himself, and gave you His Spirit. Because you belong to Him, every part of life can become a place where God is honored.

Let's pray.