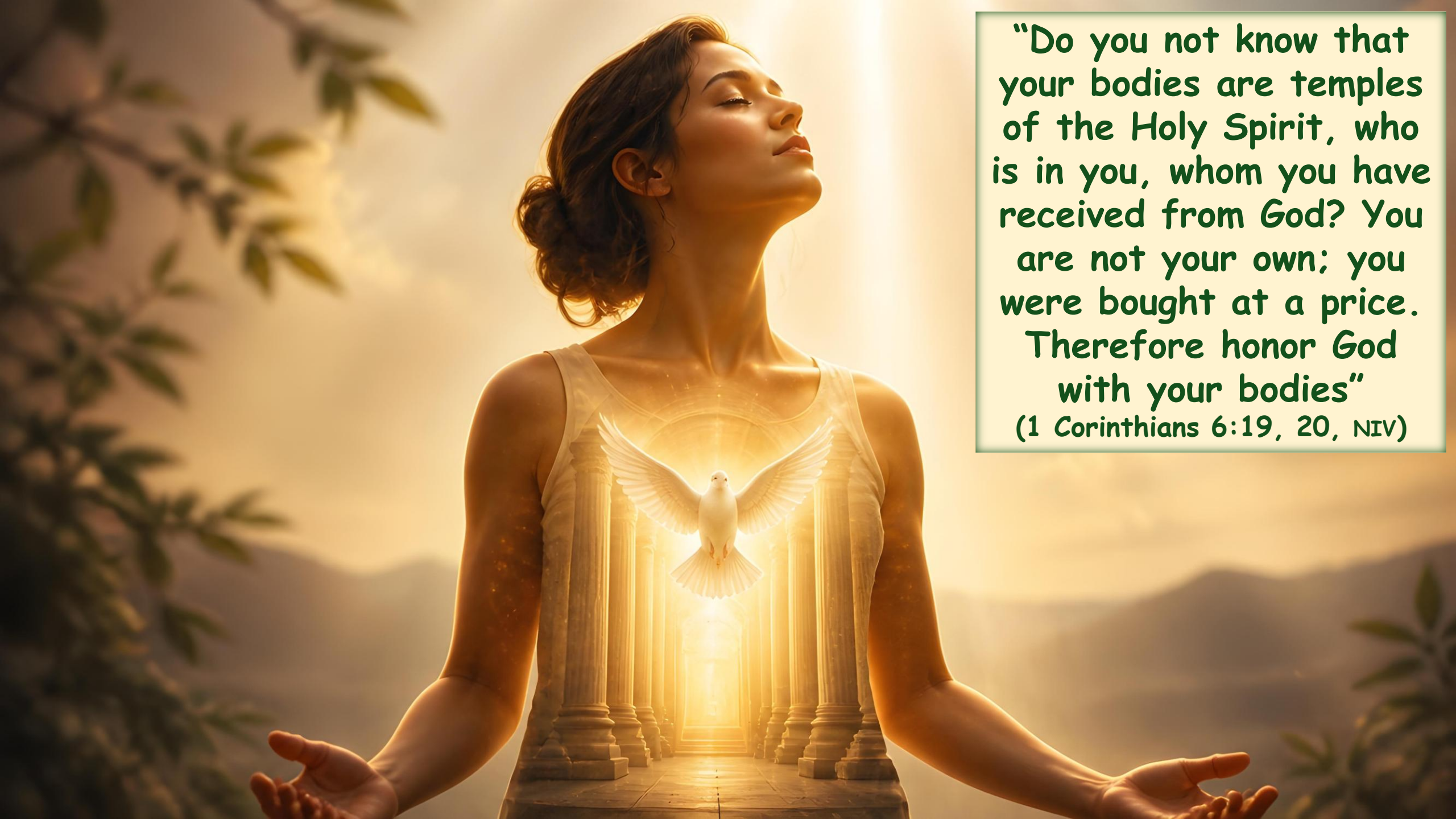


SIN IN THE CHURCH



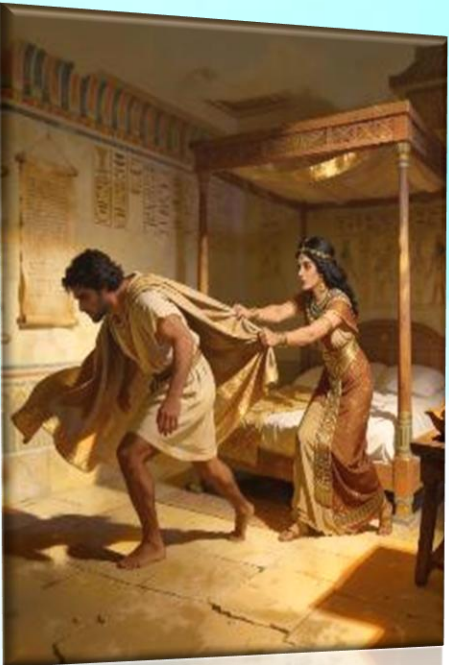


**“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies”
(1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV)**

Paul spends chapters five through seven of 1 Corinthians mainly trying to eradicate a sin that had taken deep root in the church of Corinth: sexual immorality.

This specific sin was compounded by others such as offenses and frauds committed among the brothers themselves, which were brought before the civil courts.

Using clear and direct language, Paul not only points out sin, but also proposes solutions to deal with it, and to prevent falling into it again.



Sin in the church

The consented sin

Eradication of sin

Dealing with internal problems

How to avoid sin in church

Temples of the Holy Spirit

Lawful sexuality

SIN IN THE CHURCH



THE CONSENTED SIN

"And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?" (1 Corinthians 5:2 NIV)

In the church of Corinth there was "sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate" (1 Cor. 5:1 NIV).

The existence of an incestuous relationship within the church was a very serious matter. But the situation was made even worse because, instead of generating repulsion among the members, they were proud to tolerate this sin (1 Cor. 5:2 NIV).



The church was made up primarily of Gentiles. Their own conscience told them that incest should not be tolerated. Moreover, their knowledge of the Scriptures reinforced this idea (Lev. 18:8).

If they were clear that this relationship was sinful... why were they proud of it (1 Cor. 5:6)? Did the family involved have influence in the church? Did they boast of being a church tolerant of sinners? ...?

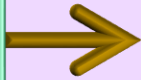
ERADICATION OF SIN

"God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked person from among you." (1 Corinthians 5:13)

The incest case was already "public knowledge" (1 Cor. 5:1 NIV), so urgent measures had to be taken to prevent damage to the church's reputation. What measures should be taken?



To make a judgment that determines, or does not determine, the guilt of the person (1 Cor. 5:3)



Do not associate with the sinner, nor even eat with him, as long as he insists on being considered a member of the church, unwilling to abandon his sin (1 Cor. 5:11)



To expel the sinner and hand him over "to Satan," since, by cherishing this sin, he has voluntarily chosen to put himself under Satan's yoke (1 Cor. 5:2b, 5a, 13b)



Church discipline (regardless of the gravity of the sin) must always have a redemptive purpose. The person's error must be made clear so that they may recognize it, repent, and "be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5).



DEALING WITH INTERNAL PROBLEMS

"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?" (1 Corinthians 6:1 NIV)



After explaining how to resolve sin within the church, Paul rebukes them for not following the correct guidelines and for leaving disputes between believers to secular courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-6). But Paul goes further and attacks the root of the problem.

➔ First, there should be no disagreements among church members (1 Cor. 6:7a) and, of course, members should not wrong or defraud another member (1 Cor. 6:8).

➔ Secondly, brothers must be willing to forgive the offense (1 Cor. 6:7b).

➔ Third, if there is no agreement between the members, the church must judge or mediate between them (1 Cor. 6:2).

Unless it is a criminal matter (Rom. 13:1-5), internal church problems should be resolved internally.



“It is our work to know our special failings and sins, which cause darkness and spiritual feebleness, and quenched our first love. Is it worldliness? Is it selfishness? Is it the love of self-esteem? Is it striving to be first? Is it the sin of sensuality that is intensely active? Is it the sin of the Nicolaitans, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness? Is it the misuse and abuse of great light and opportunities and privileges, making boasted claims to wisdom and religious knowledge, while the life and character are inconsistent and immoral? Whatever it is that has been petted and cultivated until it has become strong and overmastering, make determined efforts to overcome, else you will be lost.”

EGW (Ye Shall Receive Power, December 18)

HOW TO
AVOID SIN IN
CHURCH



TEMPLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**“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”
(1 Corinthians 6:19)**



After addressing the issue of litigation, Paul returns to the main topic: sexual immorality within the church. Why did it exist?



Christians are called to holiness (1 Cor. 6:11), and this should exclude all sin. But some argued that, since their sins had already been forgiven, they could do whatever they wanted with their bodies. That is why Paul clarifies that “the body is not meant for sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:12-13).

His argument: our bodies are members of Christ. We cannot take a member of Christ and unite it with a prostitute or an adulteress (1 Cor. 6:15-18).

Finally, it leads us to reflect on a crucial matter: our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, are not our property, but belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19). God bought us with the precious blood of his Son, so we must glorify God in both our body and our spirit (1 Cor. 6:20).



LAWFUL SEXUALITY

“But because of the widespread sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.” (1 Corinthians 7:2 NIV)



By answering some questions that had been raised by the church in Corinth, Paul helps us to understand how we can flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 7:1).

Basically: married people should enjoy lawful sexuality with their spouse; single people should not have sexual relations with anyone.

Spouses should not refuse to have sexual relations to avoid inciting the other to possible adultery (1 Cor. 7:3-5).

Single people with the gift of continence can take better advantage of opportunities to serve God without limitations from family cares (1 Cor. 7:6-8, 32-34).

Single people without the gift of continence should try to get married to avoid temptations (1 Cor. 7:9).



“In labor for the erring, let every eye be directed to Christ. [...] Let them speak to the erring of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour. Let them encourage the sinner to repent, and believe in Him who can pardon. [...]

Let the repentance of the sinner be accepted by the church with grateful hearts. Let the repenting one be led out from the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith and righteousness. Let his trembling hand be placed in the loving hand of Jesus. Such a remission is ratified in heaven.

EGW (The Desire of Ages, p. 806)