

Mature Audiences Only

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

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Adult Content

The goal is growth to maturity. But the Corinthians were stuck. Instead of becoming spiritually mature followers of Christ, they were acting like spiritual toddlers - or in some cases more like out of control teenagers. So Paul confronts their faulty thinking and the behavior that flowed out of that thinking. In 1 Corinthians 14:20 he puts it like this: *"Stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults."* Adults! This is the Greek word "telios" which means to be truly "mature." That is the goal. It's a goal so important that we should pursue it with every ounce of energy we have! See Colossians 1:28-29 (where the word "perfect" in the NIV is "telios" - Mature). So the question is: what does it really mean to be mature as a follower of Christ? What is it to be "adult" in our thinking and how should that mindset impact our choices and our behavior in daily life?

Mature means finding true freedom in Christ

The Corinthians were big on the theme of "freedom." One of the more popular slogans in Corinth put it like this: "Everything is permissible for me" (1 Corinthians 6:12). It was the exalting of individual choice and personal freedom. For them, freedom meant the right to indulge in any kind of behavior they chose. They thought this was a very "adult" way of approaching life. Children were to be restricted in their behaviors, while being an adult meant the "freedom" to do anything you wanted. Sound familiar? It's a perfect summary of the mindset of our own contemporary society as well.

The freedom the Corinthians spoke of was actually just an illusion. The scripture says: "Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12). The reality is that freedom is more complex than we realize. It is human nature to become dependent on the very things we pursue in the exercise of our personal freedoms. It is a simple truth that there is no real freedom without boundaries. This is true in so many areas of life, including food, alcohol, drugs, gambling, shopping, pornography, and the list goes on and on. The bottom line is: until we submit our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ we cannot find the true meaning of freedom. Maturity means allowing the Lordship of Christ to establish the boundaries that will lead to true freedom in our lives. Maturity means using our freedom to serve Christ and others rather than our own compulsions and drives.

Mature means getting serious about Sex

Sex for the Corinthians was like a game. It was something to engage in for fun, for personal "release", for recreation. So sex was everywhere, but nobody took it very seriously. At Corinth they likened sex to having a good meal. Why not? You have taste buds and a hungry stomach, so go for it! What does it hurt? At Corinth, to indulge your "appetites", for food or for

sex, was the healthy, normal thing to do. It's an outlook that is mirrored today in our own culture. It has led to a culture where sex is everywhere, but at the same time, ironically, sex has become trivialized in people's thinking.

In contrast to this view, scripture has a high view of sex and human sexuality. The clear message of the Bible is that there is an amazing connection between body, soul and spirit in our lives. We cannot separate these components of who we are. Sex is far more than a physical need or "appetite" to be taken care of. God has designed sexual intimacy to be a spiritual, emotional and physical force of bonding between a man and

a woman. The context for this incredible bonding is the marriage union. This is a gift! What a tragedy if we abuse this gift, missing its true meaning and power.

Mature means living for God's glory – Body, Soul, and Spirit

Chapter 6 ends with these words: "you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (6:20). The final word is that maturity means living for God's glory with every part of who you are – body, soul and spirit. This includes your sexuality. It's no good pretending what you do with your physical body doesn't matter as long as you love Christ in your heart. Give yourself fully to the Lord. It's the wise thing to do. It's the mature thing to do. It is the only thing to do if you believe in Jesus and want to follow him, even while living in a fallen world!