

BODIES THAT HONOUR

**“For this is the will of God... that each one of you
know how to control his own body in holiness and honour”.**

– 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 6+7

There are two “honourable estates” that scripture teaches about: celibacy and holy matrimony. Both involve surrendering human sexuality to our Creator and allowing him to direct this aspect of our lives – for our good and his glory.

Those who marry are called to use their bodies to “honour” one another. We can all use our bodies to give a friend a hug of encouragement, or to make a family member a meal. In the marriage relationship, husbands and wives also honour one another with their bodies through sex. This aspect of a believing couple’s relationship isn’t separate from the rest of their relationship. It should be characterized by that same quality of love that is described in 1 Corinthians 13 – patient, kind, not insisting on its own way, and so on. It also means being *faithful* throughout life to this one person to whom the promises of matrimony have been made. For the unmarried, the honourable estate is celibacy, until and unless they marry. The single life is one that can be wholly focused on the broader Church community and the building of God’s kingdom. It comes with its own blessings and challenges.

Human sexuality was made by God and formed part of the creation that he declared “very good”. It has, however, been tarnished by the fall, by human disobedience. Our culture is filled with distractions, temptations and lies which seek to pull us away from these honourable estates. As is the case with all sin, the battle begins in the heart and mind. Believers must “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). In other words, “whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8). And being thus equipped, let Christ be honoured in your body (Philippians 1:20).

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time prayerfully considering whether sexuality is an area of life that you struggle to surrender to God. Are your thoughts, words, and deeds “honourable”? If you need to take some time to repent, then do so, confident that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Close your time of reflection with the following prayer:

O almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (THE COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, BCP PAGE 194)

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1 CORINTHIANS 6+7: **YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN**

6 ¹³The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body...

7 ⁶Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ⁷I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. ⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. ⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. ¹⁰To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife...

³²I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. ³³But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, ³⁴and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. ³⁵I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord... ³⁸So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. ³⁹A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.