

LADIES FRIENDSHIP CONNECTION

LESSON THREE: TEMPLE CARETAKERS HOW TO'S

by Sandy Harber

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:19-20

In November, we discussed our goal of learning to be temple caretakers. We established that our bodies are the dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit, Who literally abides within us, turning our bodies into temples. He communes with our own spirits, which He regenerated (made alive) when we accepted Jesus as our Savior. We know that our bodies are the property of God the Son, Who purchased them with His blood at the crucifixion. Therefore, because of this, we understand that our purpose is to glorify God the Father with our bodies (the physical part of us that connects us to this world) and our spirits (that part of us that connects us with God and His realm).

How can we be good temple caretakers? We already agreed it is important to keep our temple clean and in good repair. But, health and hygiene just touches the surface. We need to go deeper. People are watching us. Believer and unbeliever alike have a picture in their mind of how a "Christian" should behave, based on their individual background and experience. Some expectations are realistic, even based in Scripture, while others are far-fetched and ridiculous. The point is that where you go, what you do, what you say, and who you hang out with is being observed. You are being judged. And so is the God you claim as your own, your brothers and sisters in Christ, and even your local church. Your behavior can draw the unsaved in or drive them away; it can encourage or hinder a fellow believer. How, then, do we decide where we should/should not go, what we should/should not do, see, say, or hear, and who we should/should not spend time with? Obviously, if the Bible says, "do this" or "don't do that" we obey. But when there is no direct command to do or not to do something how do you proceed? Here are ten questions we can ask ourselves, or principles to consider, before engaging our temple in any questionable behavior.

1. Is it expedient? (I Corinthians 6:12a)

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient."

"All things are lawful unto me" was the slogan that the Corinthian believers used to excuse their immorality. They were correct that they were not bound by the Mosaic Law. Jesus' death and resurrection had freed them. They used that freedom to satisfy their fleshly appetites, arguing that only their bodies were involved and not their souls. Paul reminded them that their physical bodies were part of Christ's spiritual Body (v. 15). In joining their physical body to that of a harlot they brought the Body of Christ into an illicit relationship (v. 16). And they committed a sin against their own body, the temple of the Holy Spirit (vv. 18-19).

Paul limited his freedom to do "all things" to do only those things that were "expedient." The dictionary definition of "expedient" is "suitable for delivering a particular end in a given circumstance." That "particular end" is a goal. What is it that you are trying to accomplish? The Corinthian believers were focused on the temporary, physical, earthly desires of the here and now. Paul's focus was on eternal, spiritual, heavenly goals. He limited his activities to those things that would advance his long term goals.

The first step in learning to be good temple caretakers, then, is to identify your goals. For example, learning to be more like Jesus. Or, growing stronger in your faith. Bringing glory to God should be everyone's goal. You can probably think of many more spiritual goals. Note that you can extend this to include physical goals since our purpose is to care for our physical bodies. Maintaining a healthy weight (lose a few pounds) is a good example.

Once you have your goals, apply the expedient principle to your decision making: pursue only those things that advance my spiritual goals.