

LESSON FOUR: 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**

Last month we began discussing some principles to help us make good decisions regarding the care of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Paul had a lot to say on this subject, especially in his first letter to the Corinthian Church. Many Christians had been deceived into believing that what they did with their physical bodies had no impact on their spiritual life. Therefore, they were free to engage in immoral practices as much as they wanted to. Paul pointed out that they were part of the Body of Christ so that they made Jesus a party to their sin (I Corinthians 6:15). Today we want to look at some more principles Paul shared that will aid in making us better temple caretakers:

**2. Will it become a habit? (I Corinthians 6:12b)**

**"... all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."**

There's a second principle in verse 12: maintain discipline and self-control so that I control my body and not the other way around. Paul was warning that there can come a point when the behavior you engage in becomes addictive. You become a slave to it. There's a principle of self-control here. The Corinthian believers indulged their physical desires and made excuses for their sin. Their bodies controlled them and they became slaves to their sin.

The Isthmian Games were held in the vicinity of Corinth every other summer. Paul used the familiar figures of a runner and a boxer to illustrate the need for discipline in the Christian life (I Corinthians 9:24-27). It was important for the athlete to maintain mastery over his own body if he wanted to win. Paul explained that this was true in the spiritual realm as well. He fought against those natural urges constantly so that he would not find himself disqualified (castaway) from serving Jesus and earning rewards in heaven. Caring for our temple requires discipline and self-control.

**3. Is it a stumbling block? I Corinthians 8:9**

**"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling block to them that are weak."**

The Corinthian believers were Gentiles saved out of paganism. They worshipped idols in the temples with all the immorality and drunkenness that accompanied it. The gospel of Christ brought them out of that world. An invitation to participate in a meal served in a pagan temple created a problem for some of them. For the knowledgeable brother an idol was literally nothing (v. 4). It was a piece of stone or wood or metal with no power of its own. But there were those who had a harder time divorcing themselves from pagan beliefs and doctrines. For them eating meat sacrificed to idols and served in the temple was wrong, an affront to the God Who had saved them.

Paul warned the more mature believers not to let their own freedom in Christ become a stumbling block to a weaker brother. A stumbling block referred to a stone block sitting directly in the path of someone who doesn't see it. It hinders their walk and may cause them to fall, bringing that walk to a halt temporarily. The principle of brotherly love applies here. As members of one body, each of us should be looking out for the others. We should put the welfare of our brothers and sisters in Christ ahead of our own. Therefore, we need to be aware of how our actions will impact another believer so that we don't cause them to stumble in their own Christian walk.