

"God's Showcase"
1 Corinthians 6:12-20

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, my wife Jill and I went to a Home and Garden Show. All kinds of companies – landscaping, cabinet, window, patio, and so forth - had displays there. Those displays were very well done and were showcases of the companies that set them up.

Today, I'm going to preach about God's showcase. You can see what that is in the passage I read – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

GOD'S SHOWCASE

Let's start with verse 20. Paul states there that we have been bought with a price. He's referring of course to the death of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that we might be saved and sanctified. In the second part of the verse, Paul tells us what we should do because of that. This is one of the Bible's most important commands. We should glorify God in our body. I came across a paraphrase of verse 20 that goes like this: *"A price has been paid for you. So make your body a showcase of God's greatness."*

That is an accurate paraphrase and it shows us what it means to glorify God in our body. It means to make our body a showcase of God's greatness. You know what a showcase is. The Home and Garden Show that I went to illustrates it well. A showcase is a setting, vehicle, or medium for showing something at its very best. You can see then what Paul is commanding. Make our body a showcase of God's greatness. Make it something that shows Him at His very best.

That is what the Bible commands and we obey by doing four things. Doing four things makes our body a showcase of God's greatness.

LOCATE OUR BODY

The first thing that we must do is locate it.

Most people don't you know. They mis-locate it instead. That

means that they give it a place that it shouldn't have. That place is that they trust and worship it. They idolize it and make it the object of their ultimate concern. They devote most of their time, energy, and effort to how it looks, smells, and feels and how it can be secured and satisfied. They orient their entire self to it.

This mis-location of the body runs the popular culture around us. It explains so many of the things that we experience and see: youth worship, the fear, shame, disgust, and even anger directed at obesity, aging, dying and death, the sexualization of practically everything, abortion, eating disorders, and more. Those things are consequences of a culture and the individuals who make it up mis-locating the body.

To make our body a showcase of God's greatness, we must locate it. That means give it the place it should have. Paul tells us what that place is in verse 15, *"Your bodies are members of Christ,"* and verse 19, *"You are not your own."* Those verses make it clear. We must give up our body to God. We must put Him in total charge of it. First, we put Him in total charge of what we do with it. We do with it what He tells us to do with it. Second, we put Him in total charge of what happens to it. We release to Him all outcomes regarding it like sickness, repulsiveness, aging, and even death.

Take repulsiveness. We men who are aging know what that's about. One of our problems in that regard is that we're losing hair where it is supposed to be and getting it where it isn't supposed to be. I looked in the mirror a few years ago, for instance, and saw a blond hair growing out of my ear – my ear of all places. I also noticed that my hairline was further back than it used to be. What I'm wondering now is "what next?"

Whatever the "what next" might be, I'm not worried about it even if it's Parkinson's disease like my brother, kidney problems like my sister, paralysis like my brother-in-law, heart problems like my other brother-in-law or any other injury or disease. I'm not worried about it because I've located my body. I've given it up to God and put Him in total charge of what happens to it.

One of the keys to locating our body and keeping it located is decisive action. We decide by definite action to locate it and keep it located. In his book Renovation of the Heart, Dallas Willard suggests doing this. Lay face down or face up on our bed. Then explicitly and formally surrender our entire body to God. After that, surrender the specific parts of it to Him from head to foot. Explicitly and formally ask Him to take total charge of our brain, eyes, ears, mouth, shoulders, and so on. Ask Him to fill each one with His purposes and life.

We should do that as often as we think that we need to. That is decisive action. That is how we locate our body and keep it located.

HONOR OUR BODY

There's a second thing that we must do to make our body a showcase of God's greatness. We must honor it.

Sadly, most people don't. They dishonor it instead. To dishonor it means to misuse it. It means to engage it in doing what is wrong. People can misuse their body in two ways.

The first way is to gratify themselves sensually. Paul mentions two kinds of bodily pleasure in this passage. The first is eating in verse 13 and the second is sex in verses 16-18. What he's saying here is that many people exalt bodily pleasures like those to the place of necessity. They then indulge in those pleasures no matter what the cost is to others and them. I knew a man years ago, for instance, who routinely drank a 2-liter Pepsi and ate an 11-ounce bag of potato chips before going to bed. I had an attorney friend who routinely met girls at bars and had one-night stands with them. Those men have made culinary and sexual pleasure a necessity. They indulge in those pleasures no matter what the cost is to others and them.

There's a second way that people can misuse their body. They use it to dominate and control others. They do that in many different contexts and ways. One of those is being sexy. A person presents his or her body in a way that elicits sexual thoughts, feelings, and actions from others.

But being sexy isn't about sex nearly as much as it is about power. It is a way of using the body to dominate and control others. Other ways are power dressing, sarcasm, knowing looks and remarks, overwork, and threatening gestures to name only a few.

Those then are the two ways that people dishonor their body. They use it to gratify themselves sensually and to dominate and control others.

To make our body a showcase of God's greatness, we must honor it. To honor it means two things.

First, we do not engage it in doing what is wrong. You can see that in verse 13. Paul says that our body is not for immorality. He says it even more vividly in verse 15. He asks, *"Should we take the parts of our body and unite them with a prostitute's body?"* That's like asking, *"Should we kick a sleeping baby?"* *"May it never be,"* Paul declares at the end of the verse. We do not use our body to gratify ourselves sensually or to dominate and control others. We do not engage it in doing what is wrong in other words.

To honor our body means a second thing. We do engage it in doing what is right. We use it to carry out the purposes of God for our life and world. We use it to promote the good of Him, others, and ourselves.

Take our face for instance. It is one of the most powerful parts of our body. We can control people with it by giving them "dirty looks." Or we can encourage and uplift them with it by smiling at them. We dishonor our face by engaging it in doing what is wrong like giving dirty looks. We honor it by engaging it in doing what is right like smiling.

It's the same way with all of our body parts. We dishonor them by engaging them in doing what is wrong. We honor them by engaging them in doing what is right.

CARE FOR OUR BODY

We must do a third thing to make our body a showcase of God's greatness – care for it. In verse 19, Paul writes that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit actually inhabits it. Well, just

as God required that His earthly temple in the Old Testament be cared for, so He requires that His bodily temple be cared for. Cared for means that we properly nourish, exercise, and rest our body.

All of us know what happens when we don't. It doesn't function efficiently. So, we struggle physically, which in turn is a real threat. That's because sensual desires and ego demands have far greater power over us through a body that is struggling. When our body is struggling, it moves to the center of our focus and makes its presence more keenly felt. The tendencies to evil that lie in its parts are then able to exert more influence over us.

But a struggling body also affects our mind. Clarity is the ally of spiritual orientation. It makes us aware of what is happening in and around us. Confusion is the enemy of spiritual orientation. It makes us unaware of what is happening in and around us. In that regard, our body functioning efficiently clears our mind. In contrast, it struggling clouds our mind.

You've all experienced what I've just explained. Take not getting enough rest and being tired for instance. How many of you are more easily irritated when you're tired than when you're not? How many of you think less clearly when you're tired than when you're not. I think most if not all of us would raise our hands on both questions.

Caring for our body, and spirituality go hand in hand. We must properly nourish, exercise, and rest our body. Being at the top of our game physically will help us be at the top of your game spiritually.

PLEASE OUR BODY

Making our body a showcase of God's greatness requires that we do a fourth thing. We must please it. We shouldn't exalt bodily pleasures and joys to a place of necessity. But we should embrace and experience those that are legitimate. You can see that in 1 Timothy 4:1-5.

About 15 years ago, a movie had a scene in which Jesus was playing ball. He was leaping around, catching the ball, and jostling others with

His body. Oddly, that scene scandalized many Christians who roundly criticized the movie for including it. I say oddly because I'm sure that Jesus played. There's no doubt in my mind that He embraced and experienced all the legitimate pleasures and joys of His bodily life.

And so should we. I say "should" for good reason. It's because a failure to attain a deeply satisfying bodily life always has a specific effect. It makes sinful actions seem good. And it is precisely there that the strength of temptation lies. Please know this. Cutting ourselves off from the legitimate pleasures and joys of bodily life actually weakens us in our efforts to do what is right.

But the opposite is also true. Embracing and experiencing them actually strengthens us in our efforts to do what is right. Overcoming temptation is normally easier if we're basically happy in our lives. So we should embrace and experience the legitimate pleasures and joys of our bodily life. Doing that will help us see and draw strength from the goodness of doing what is right.

In C.S. Lewis' fictional book [The Screwtape Letters](#), a demon is assigned to keep a man, his "patient", from advancing spiritually. But after his patient experiences the joy of reading a good book and the pleasures of taking a walk in the country, his superior demon chastises him and says this: *"The man who truly and disinterestedly enjoys any one thing in the world, for its own sake, is by that very fact forearmed against some of our subtlest modes of attack."*

That is so true! Pleasing our body, allowing it to experience the legitimate pleasures and joys of life, makes us spiritually and even psychologically stronger.

CONCLUSION

I close this morning with a suggestion. Do something this week. Look at yourself in the mirror. Then ask yourself, *"What do I see?"* Locate, honor, care for, and please your body and I can tell you what you'll see – a showcase of God's greatness.