



Porneia: Hierodules in Corinth: Unrestrained Sexual Behaviors Destroy both Soul & Body, 1 Cor 6:9-11, 13-20; the Destructive Impact on Right Man-Right Woman

- (13) In Corinth it referred to sacral worship in the temple of Aphrodite where the temple prostitutes were referred to as “hierodules”:

Friedrich, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 6:581-82:

πορνεία, (porneia). In cultic prostitution a further distinction must be made between the single act and the permanent state. The former was a national custom in Persia which even daughters of prominent families followed and to which no shame attached. The latter was practiced by the class of hierodules \hī' rō-dūls\ [from the Greek ἱεροδοῦλος, *hierodoulos*: temple slave] whose payment accrued to the goddess. This type of prostitution was widespread in Asia Minor in cults of mother deities; it is also found, however, in Syria and Egypt. Through the Canaanite cults (Baal, Astarte) it penetrated into the religion of Israel. On Greek soil sacral prostitution was generally rejected. It found an entry only in Corinth and Athens, probably through the trading connections of these cities with the Orient. In Corinth especially the temple of Aphrodite, with its 1000 hierodules, was famous.

- (14) In Corinth many believers were continuing to have sexual relations with the prostitutes in the temple which also had the added problem of participating in idolatrous worship of Aphrodite.
- (15) The Greeks of Corinth did not have any cultural restraints against unmarried sex and it was considered as natural as eating and drinking:

Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6:182-83:

πορνεία, (porneia). The main cause of prostitution is the Greek view of life which regards sexual intercourse as just as natural, necessary and justifiable as eating and drinking. Only civil marriage was protected by law and custom. Even the married man was permitted extra-marital intercourse as he pleased so long as he did not violate a civil marriage. On the other hand, all extra-marital intercourse was forbidden to the wife. Towards the practical exercise of free sex relations the judgment of the Greeks was very tolerant, especially in the case of intercourse between young men and harlots. Only excess and over indulgence were censured.

On the other hand, visiting brothels was also regarded as scandalous. This ambivalence of outlook is characteristic of antiquity. Plato tries to solve the problem by compromise. Intercourse with harlots is permissible so long as it takes place in secret and causes no offence. With complete injustice to the wife, who was kept at home, a man sought with the hetaira (ἑταίρα, *hetaira*: one of a class of highly cultivated courtesans in ancient Greece) what he could not find with his wife. Most of them were sought only for reasons of sensual desire.

Sparta and the Doric branch maintained sexual discipline more strongly than Athens, Corinth and the Ionic sphere. It was here, however, that homosexuality developed and this then spread over the whole of Greece and was practiced rather than censured even by notable figures. Lesbianism was much less common. In a fateful way both opened the door to unnatural perversion.

- (16) It is into this environment that Paul delivers his first epistle to the Corinthian church and addresses these perversions as unacceptable behavior for believers:

Ibid. 6:593-94:

πορνεία, (porneia). The concrete directions of Paul bring to the attention of Gentile Christians the incompatibility of πορνεία (*porneia*) and the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 the sexual vices are put next to the chief sin of idolatry.



1 Corinthians 6:9 - Do you not know that those who do not have the imputation of divine righteousness as a result of salvation will not receive the inheritance of the eternal state and thus not possess an escrow account? Do not allow yourselves to be deceived by others to the point of engaging in the behavior of the unbeliever reversionist! The sexually immoral [πόρνος, **pornos: fornicators**], idolaters [ειδωλολάτρης, **eidōlōlatrēs**], adulterers [μοιχός, **moichos**], homosexuals who are submissive sodomites [μαλακός, **malakos**], homosexuals who are assertive sodomites [ἀρσενικοίτης, **arsenokoitēs**],

v. 10 - thieves, the greedy [πλεονέκτης, **pleonektēs: those who have an insatiable lust for the things in context**], drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the eternal state.

v. 11 - Some of you believers once lived this way. But you were washed [ἀπολούω, **apolouō: forgiven of pre-salvation sins at salvation**], you were sanctified [ἀγιάζω, **hagiazō: baptized by the Holy Spirit into union with Christ and positional sanctification**], you are justified [δικαιόω, **dikaioō: possessors of divine righteousness since salvation**] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God.

In the shameful vices of unnatural sex relations, which spread like a plague in the Graeco-Roman world of his day, Paul sees the outworking of a severe judgment of God, Romans 1:18ff.

God's mighty will for the salvation of men is ἁγιασμός (*hagiasmos*: sanctification). This includes sanctification of the body too and thus excludes any acceptance of fornication. The Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:19. Hence he cannot do as he likes with himself. He may not give to a harlot the members which belong to Christ, 1 Corinthians 6:15. A man shames his own body by fornication, 1 Corinthians 6:18. He also brings shame on the body of Christ. Licentiousness is one of the expressions of the σάρξ (*sarx*: flesh, i.e., the sinful nature), Galatians 5:19. It is totally opposed to the work of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:22. Paul realizes that not every one has the gift of continence (celibacy), 1 Corinthians 7:7. As a protection against the evil of fornication the man who does not have it should take the divinely prescribed way of a lawful marriage, 1 Corinthians 7:2.

- (17) With these things in mind we can follow Paul's argument against these perversions which he maintains will destroy the body which is a member of the body of Christ:

1 Corinthians 6:14 - And God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by means of His own power [**at the resurrection our bodies will be united with soul and spirit in the eternal state**].

v. 15 - Do you not know that your bodies keep on being the members of Christ [**baptism of the Holy Spirit: positional truth**]? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a temple prostitute? God forbid!

v. 16 - What? Do you not know that who is joined to a temple prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "The two shall be one flesh" [**Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5**].

v. 17 - But he that is joined forever unto the Lord is one spirit.

v. 18 - Flee fornication! Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he that commits fornication sins against his own body [**sex with an unbeliever is uniting a heathen with a member of the body of Christ**].

v. 19 - Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you keep on having from God, and you are not your own?

v. 20 - For you are bought [**out from the slave market of sin**] with a price [**the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross**]. Therefore, glorify God in your body.



- (18) From Proverbs 6:32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 we learn that premarital sex destroys both the soul and the body. How so?
- (19) The soul is destroyed in the sense that when a person allows emotions associated with sexual desires and passions to influence his volition then he engages in behavior that damages as many as three other people: (1) the woman with whom he has an affair (2) her right man, and (3) his right woman.
- (20) The conscience will convince this person of wrongdoing which will lead to a guilt complex which can only be overcome by means of rebound and continued spiritual growth.
- (21) Yet once experienced, sexual lust becomes insatiable and without the proper outlet of marriage the believer will continue the behavior thus increasing his guilt.
- (22) The body is destroyed literally as a result through the various categories of sexually transmitted diseases and figuratively because of the perversion of the doctrine that the believer's body is a temple for the indwelling of Jesus Christ.
- (23) To become involved in fornication, adultery, or homosexuality is to take the temple of Christ and unite it with a prostitute. This is not the way the Christian is to use his or her body but should use the body to accomplish those things which would glorify the Lord.
- (24) It should be understood at this point that when an unmarried girl or woman willingly submits to the aggression of an unmarried boy or man she has made the decision to become a prostitute and the boy or man has become a rake.
- (25) The trend today is for young people to readily engage in sexual behaviors that satisfy each others passions and desires. In effect they have become libertines. The development of this word needs to be defined.