

# Glorify God with Your Body: An Exegesis on 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and Its Implication for the Christian Life during Pandemic Covid-19

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## *Abstract*

*In the current situation of life which is very difficult because of the pandemic Covid-19 and its consequences, the urgency for Christian to live holy is inevitable. The complexity and the problem of life were also evidence in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. However, the attempt to exegete the certain passage of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians related to the current situation and considered the 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians text as an encouragement for Christians to glorify God with our body has not yet been enough. Thus, it is prominent to ask the question as how Christian should live in this live with their body? This article aims to exegete 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:12-20 and demonstrate that this passage will in truly encourage every Christian to glorify God with their body in this difficult time. The first step is to translate the text directly from the Greek text. The second step is to demonstrate the structure and the exegesis of the text by analysing the grammar with its historical context. The third step which is parallel to the second step is to figure out the theological principles and their practical exhortation. The last step is the conclusion of this research and the application for the current life context. This research will employ the literature study by examine the commentary and journal articles which are relevant to the theme.*

**Keywords:** *Glorify, Body, Christian life, God, Corinthian Church.*

## **Introduction**

Life during this pandemic covid-19 and beyond will be no longer the same as before. The consequence of the pandemic is evidence in the difficulty of life in all aspect, economics, politics, social life, education, medical, and religiosity. Every country is still struggling to overcome not only the pandemic itself but also all the complications of life as the result of this pandemic. Christianity is not immune to this pandemic. The churches services must be conducted online. Many Christians seems to be perplexed by the radical changes because of pandemic Covid-19. In such a situation, although the needs for Christians to conduct the holy life with their body is more necessary than before the realty shows differently. There are Christians who still undermine the seriousness of Covid-19 that they keep on violating the health protocol, conduction a large group of gathering by using the reason of faith. On

many occasions religious people included Christians act irrationally<sup>1</sup> by not willing to be vaccinated, relating this pandemic with the evil attempt to ruin their faith, considering this pandemic as the sign of end times, even undermining the seriousness of this covid-19 thus live carelessly with their body and falling into pornography. In other words, Christian does not glorify God with their body as they supposed to be during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Corinthians may not face the covid-19 pandemic, however, the life in their time was so complex as they were influenced by the secular principles such as the competitiveness among the philosophy teachers that created the division in 1 Corinthians 1-4,<sup>2</sup> the presence of Isthmian games that disoriented the Christian community,<sup>3</sup> it is also recorded that at the subsequent games the president gave multiple civic dinners to those who had Corinthian citizenship<sup>4</sup> which is likely correlated to their claim of right to eat in the idol temple in 1 Corinthians 8:9. The pressure to live according to their worldly companies is so influence their life that they were so distressful as the result is clear with the many problems that Paul addresses in his first epistle to this Corinthians, such as divisions, lawsuit, adultery, head-covering, the problem of gifts, eating the meal, even some seemed to not to believe on resurrection. One of these problems is the misconduct of their body as believers as recorded in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:12-20. Therefore, there the most important question during this hardship is how Christians should glorify God with their body? Particularly in facing this covid-19 pandemic should Christians consume medicine or herbal treatment which may be unnecessary and harm their body? This article will examine the passage of 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 which recorded the misconduct of the Corinthians believer's body for fornication or prostitution and not for glorifying God which is the right conduct of body.

This article will adopt literature study, a qualitative descriptive examination by selecting the relevant commentaries, journal data recently. The examination will include the grammar and syntax of the Greek text. The theological and practical exhortation will be provided in each section of examination. The conclusion and the application particularly during the difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will be provided as the closing of this article.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance Wesley J. Wildman, Joseph Bulbulia, Richard Sosis, and Uffe Schjoedt, "Religion and the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Religion, Brain and Behavior* 10, no.2 (April,2020). Also, Wei Xiong and Xinan Li, "'We Are Children of God': An Ethnography of a Catholic Community in Rural China in the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Religions* 12, no. 6 (2021): 448. Also, Eddie M.W. Tong and Vincent Y.S. Oh, "Gratitude and Adaptive Coping Among Chinese Singaporeans During the Beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 11, (January, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.628937>.

<sup>2</sup> See Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Ethical and Social Influence in Corinth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 36-7.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> See Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 5.

## Translation<sup>5</sup>

**12** All things for me are permitted but not all things are beneficial; all things for me are permitted but not I will be ruled over by anything. **13** the food for the stomach and the stomach for the food, and God will abolish this<sup>6</sup> and also these.<sup>7</sup> And the body not for the prostitute but for the Lord,<sup>8</sup> and the Lord for the body; **14** and God also raised the Lord and he will raise<sup>9</sup> us through the power of him. **15** do you not know<sup>10</sup> that your bodies are members of Christ? Therefore, taking away the members of Christ shall I make (them)<sup>11</sup> members of prostitutes? May it not happened **16** [or] don't you know that he who continues to be<sup>12</sup> joined to the prostitute is one body? For it says, the two will be in one flesh **17** but he who continues to be joined to the Lord is one spirit. **18** Keep fleeing<sup>13</sup> the prostitute. Every sin which when a man makes, is outside the body; but he who keeps practicing prostitute<sup>14</sup> in his own body he keeps sinning. **19** or do you not know that your body [is] a temple of the

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<sup>5</sup> Textual variants are found in v.14, 15, 16, 19, and 20. The only textual variants in v.14 and v.20 will be addressed briefly since they may influence the meaning. Other textual variant will not be discussed since the difference in the meaning of the whole text is considered insignificant. For more discussions about textual variant see Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Publishing House, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> The word "this" refers to "stomach" since both share the same gender and number, the Feminine Singular.

<sup>7</sup> The word "these" refers to "the food" since they share the same gender and number, that is Neuter Plural.

<sup>8</sup> I left the English translation without verb "is" as in the Greek there is none.

<sup>9</sup> The present form "ἐξεγειρεῖ" is found in P<sup>11.46\*</sup> A D\* P 1241<sup>s</sup> pc; The future "ἐξεγειρεῖ" txt P<sup>46c1</sup> a C D<sup>2</sup> Y 33. 1881 m vg sy<sup>h</sup> co; Ir<sup>lat</sup> Tert Meth Ambst; The aorist "ἐξηγειρεν" is found in P<sup>46c2</sup> B 6. 1739 pc it vg<sup>mss</sup>; Ir<sup>lat</sup> v J. Or<sup>1739mg</sup>; P<sup>46</sup> has all three forms, Present (the original, \*), Future (the later, c1), and Aorist (The latest, c2). In term of originality, the present form is the best, but in term of fitting naturally into the text, the future is the best. The meaning of the aorist form is rather difficult, although it can be solved by referring it to the concept of baptism. See Comfort, *New Testament Text*, 495; The Future is chosen here because it displays obviously the contrast with the phrase "God will destroy" in v.12 which is likely the intention of Paul.

<sup>10</sup> This rhetoric question is introduced by "οὐκ" in Greek. The yes answer is expected from such a question. The same is found in v.16 and v.19

<sup>11</sup> The "(them)" does not appear in Greek but is inserted to make clear that Paul is asking whether he should take the members of Christ to make them as members of prostitutes.

<sup>12</sup> The tense of "κολλώμενος" (continue to be joined) is Present Participle passive. The Present emphasizes the on-going action thus this word indicates that the involvement in prostitution is not one-time action.

<sup>13</sup> The translation "Keep fleeing" is to show the emphasis on the ongoing action of the present tense in this particular verb "φευγετε" (the complete parsing is 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, present imperative active of "φευγω")

<sup>14</sup> The tense of "πορνεύων" (who keep practicing prostitute) is Present Participle active. The Present indicates that the conduct of prostitution is an on-going action and not only once. Here the indication is even much more obvious since the word used here "πορνεύων" has the same root with the noun "porneia or pornh".

Holy Spirit [who] is in you who[m] you have from God, and you are not of yourselves? **20** for you were bought of a price; Therefore, glorify God in your body.<sup>15</sup>

This passage, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, is part of oral report which came to Paul. The independency of this passage has been understood as disjunction to other previous units by interpreters.<sup>16</sup> The unity of this passage can be identified by several marks.<sup>17</sup> First, the word "body"<sup>18</sup> in verses 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20, stands as the lexical coherent to bind this passage as one unit. Second, the shift to first person in v.12 indicates the new section is started after v.11. Also v.12 and 13 are related within the setting of the social life, that is the banquet of elites.<sup>19</sup> Third, in terms of 5:1-13, although the word "prostitute / πορνεία" is mentioned in the preceding passage, 5:1-13, here it is different. For Paul, the meaning of "prostitute / πορνεία" is broader than merely incest.<sup>20</sup> Also, in 5:1-13 Paul rebukes the failure of the church of condoning the one who practiced such "prostitute / πορνεία", but in 6:12-20, there isn't any indication of a similar case. Fourth, the theme of the preceding passage (6:1-11) is a lawsuit among believers, while the issue in 6:12-20 is the practice of sexual immorality or prostitute. Fifth, the following section, chapter 7:1 marked with a clear epistolary device ("περι δε" formula) signifies obviously the new section, thus v.20 must be the end of 6:12-20.

### Structure of 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

The two principles behind the prostitute and the counter of Paul:

- 12 All things for me are permitted but not all things are beneficial (principle-counter)  
 All things for me are permitted but not I will be ruled over by anything(principle-counter)
- 13a The food for the stomach and the stomach for food (principle2)
- 13b and God will destroy this and also these (counter)
- 13c The body not for prostitute but for the Lord and the Lord for the body (transition)
- 14 and God also raised the Lord and will raise us through his power (transition)

<sup>15</sup> the addition of "και εν τω πνευματι υμων, ατινα εστιν του θεου" is found in C<sup>3</sup> D<sup>2</sup> Y 1739 mg. 1881 m vg<sup>ms</sup> sy; The existing text is found in P<sup>46</sup> a A B C\* D\* F G 6\*. 33. 81. 1175. 1739\* pc lat co; Ir<sup>lat</sup> Meth; Since the additional version is found in less significant documents as the existing text, thus the additional will not be included, also such an additional phrase does not fit to the whole message of 1 Cor. 6:12-20. See Comfort, *New Testament Text*, 496.

<sup>16</sup> For more discussion see Gordon Fee, *First Corinthians: New International Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 195-6; For attempts to connect this passage with previous ones, see David E. Garland. *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 150-1; Also, Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The Greek Text Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 458.

<sup>17</sup> I rule out the possibility to unite v.12 with 6:1-11, as in Kenneth Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press Academic, 2011), 175-95. His argument is less convincing compared to that of most interpreters.

<sup>18</sup> The Greek word is "swma"; There are eight times of occurrence, include all cases of "swma".

<sup>19</sup> See Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 76-92.

<sup>20</sup> See Fee, *First Corinthians*, 250; The word "porneia" appears 5 times in 6:12-20. Combine with "swma", they confirm the main issue in 6:12-20, the misconduct of the body for the prostitute.

- 15 Do you not know that **(the first theological principle of Paul - First argument)**  
 your bodies are members of Christ?  
 Therefore, taking away the members of Christ, should I make (them)  
 members of prostitutes?  
 May it not happen **(the first practical exhortation)**
- 16 Do you not know that **(the second theological principle of Paul - Second argument)**  
 he who continues to be joined to the prostitute is one body?  
 for it says, the two will be in one flesh
- 17 but he who continues to be joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- 18a Keep fleeing the prostitute. **(the second practical exhortation)**
- 18b Every sin which when a man makes, is outside the body;  
 but he who keeps practicing prostitute in his own body he  
 keeps sinning
- 19 or do you not know that **(the third theological principle of Paul - Third argument)**  
 your body [is] a temple of the Holy Spirit  
 [who] is in you  
 who[m] you have from God,  
 and you are not of yourselves?
- 20 for you were bought of a price;

The conclusion, true attitude in terms of body: Indeed, glorify God in your body.

There are at least three reasons underlying the structure of 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. First, there are principles that underlie the conduct of the prostitute,<sup>21</sup> and Paul counters it directly and briefly because it is not his primary concern. Second, throughout his epistles, Paul makes use of the pattern of Issues-Theological principles-Action (ITA) to deal with the problems in the congregations, because he doesn't address merely the symptom but rectifies the thinking of the Corinthians<sup>22</sup> by providing three theological principles. Third, the real issue in this passage is the misconduct of the body for prostitutes. Paul deals with this very issue by drawing out first, the most general principle (verse 12) adopted by the Corinthians.<sup>23</sup> Then, Paul turns to the specific principle of food and belly (verse 13a,b) and

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<sup>21</sup> Most commentators agree that there are principles behind the conduct of the prostitute of the Corinthians, such as Gordon Fee, *First Corinthians*, 249-53; Richard Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 101-2; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor. "Corinthians Slogan in 1 Cor. 6:12-20." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40, no.3 (1978): 391-6; Bruce Winter. "Gluttony and Immorality at Elitist Banquet: The Background to 1 Corinthians 6:12-20", *Jian Dao Xie Kan: A Journal of Bible & Theology* 7, (1997): 77-90. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 219-29; Jan Lambrecht, "Paul Reasoning in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20." *Ephemeridas Theologicae Lovanienses* 85, no. 4 (2009): 479-86; Denny Burk, "Discerning Corinthians Slogan through Paul's use of the Diatribe in 1 Cor 6:12-20." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18, no.1 (2008): 99-121.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance 1 Cor. 5: 1-13; 6:1-11; 8:1-11:1a; 12:1-14:40; I owe this point to the class of 1 Corinthians of Prof. Jeffrey A. D. Weima proceeded in the Fall 2012.

<sup>23</sup> See n.18 in the following

parallels it with the real issue of the body in verse 13c and 14.<sup>24</sup> These two verses, 13c and 14, thus stand as the transition to the main issue of the body in which Paul provides his three theological principles, and in each principle, an exhortation for the Corinthians to act.<sup>25</sup>

Paul uses three rhetorical questions (verse 15, 16, 19) that function in two ways, to rebuke the Corinthians in their ignorance of what they have known, and to provide the theological principle in each of the rhetorical questions for his arguments.<sup>26</sup> Each rhetorical question consists of a theological principle and true conduct that should be applied. The fact that all the theological principles are about the body in relation to the Lord or God or the Holy Spirit, implies that the body is significant in the Gospel. The misconduct of the body for prostitutes will then defile the gospel, therefore, it must be addressed seriously. Generally, one can see Paul's response to the problem of prostitution in the church of Corinth flows well from the Corinthians' general principle to the specific one, then, to his theological principles (which also flow gradually and stronger) and finally reaches the climax in the conclusive command.

### Two General Principles Behind the Prostitute (v. 12-14)

The principle "all things for me are permitted"<sup>27</sup> has gained a lot of comments from interpreters as it has influenced the Corinthians for their conduct regarding prostitutes. Paul uses it with two verbs, to bring profit (beneficial) and will not be ruled over, to limit this principle which seems to be unlimited.<sup>28</sup> The term "beneficial" likely refers to the beneficial of the church as a whole, where the building of the body of Christ is in mind.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, limiting the slogan with "beneficial", Paul has implicitly urged for the Corinthian church to be aware of the whole community. What Paul means is that this slogan will work only if it brings benefit for the building up of the Corinthian church as a whole. Another word

<sup>24</sup> See the following section "Verse 12-14"

<sup>25</sup> See structure of 1 Cor. 6:12-20.

<sup>26</sup> See Structure of 1 Cor. 6:12-20.

<sup>27</sup> Basically, there are two main views to figure out where this principle belongs to the Corinthians (see for instances Fee, *First Corinthians*, 251. Fee understood it as Corinth's theological slogan to justify going to prostitute; Also, Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Greek Text Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 461; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Corinthian Slogan in 1 Cor. 6:12-20", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40, no.3 (1987): 391-6; Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 76-82. Winter understood it as belongs to the Corinthians with the influence of the Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Platonic view, p. 77-80) or Paul quoted the common principles in Corinth and used it for his purpose to rebuke those who commit prostitution (see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 226-9, who follows J. Becker, *Paul: Apostles to the Gentiles*, trans. by O.C. Dean Jr. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983), B. Dodd, "Paul's Paradigmatic 'I' and 1 Corinthians 6.12." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 18, no. 59 (1995); Garland argued that the practice of going for a prostitute is so common that there is no need for any theological justification in doing it, in *1 Corinthians*, 227. However, whether the slogan is the Corinthians' (which is likely) or Paul cited it for his purpose, most interpreters agree that this slogan "all things for me are permitted" either theologically or sociologically has influenced them of committing prostitution. This agreement is significant to move further to the next statement in v.13.

<sup>28</sup> The adversative particle "avllV" (two times) is a clear mark to make contrast between "all things for are permitted" and "beneficial" and "ruled by anything".

<sup>29</sup> See Fee, who understands this "beneficial" as parallel to 10:23, the "building up" of others, in *First Corinthians*, 252.

"ἐξουσιασθήσομαι"<sup>30</sup> (will be ruled over) is also significant to understand the deeper issue "in his own body he keeps sinning" in verse 18. Perhaps, Paul implicitly means that God alone has authority over the body and not all things, thus, to commit to prostitutes (to be ruled by it) must not be done. The body which has been bought belongs to God (verse 19-20).

The relation of "all things for me is permitted" stands as a justification for hedonistic conduct,<sup>31</sup> and the next slogan "The food for the stomach and the stomach for food" (v.13) lies in the elites' banquet taking place in Corinth.<sup>32</sup> Such a banquet involves eating, drinking, and sexual indulgence.<sup>33</sup> It is likely that Corinthians church members attend such a banquet and take part particularly in prostitution as evidenced in the text.<sup>34</sup> First, the phrase or slogan "the food for the belly and the belly for the food" fits in the situation of a banquet. Second, in verse 13, the phrase "not for prostitute" is inserted between "the body" and "but for the Lord" for emphasis. This emphasis is obvious when the parallel between "the food for the stomach and the stomach for the food" and "the body for the Lord and the Lord for the body" is presented side by side. Third, the two initial arguments of Paul are addressed to the issue of the prostitute.<sup>35</sup> Paul will not raise such an issue and two arguments unless there are wealthy or elite members (or at least one) of the church in Corinth involved in the prostitution in such a banquet.

Using the principles in the context of a banquet<sup>36</sup> which the Corinthian church members are familiar with, Paul makes concurrently a parallel and a sharp contrast between the slogan and his main concern on the issue of the body for prostitutes. The parallel is between "Food for the belly and belly for the food" and "body for the Lord and the Lord for body",<sup>37</sup> while the sharpest contrast is between "God will destroy food and belly" and "God raised Jesus and will raise us". The contrast Paul uses here (v.14) also function as a transition

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<sup>30</sup> The tense of this verb is Aorist passive, while the Present indicative active form is "ἐξουσιαζῶ" (I have authority over). It is difficult to translate the passive literally to English. Paul uses this verb two times in the following chapter 7:4 in the context of marriage. The significant principle is that in the marriage of man and woman where sexual intercourse is involved, a man is the one who has authority over her (his wife) body, and the same is that a woman is the one who has authority over his (her husband) body. This will be helpful to understand verse 18b.

<sup>31</sup> See Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 80-2.

<sup>32</sup> This in turn rules out the argument that some Christians in the Corinthians church who are going to prostitute, as did Fee, *First Corinthians*, 250; The reference of belly as euphemism of sexual organ to ease to draw the relation between eating and sexual immorality as proposed by Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 230, is then resisted as well.

<sup>33</sup> The eating and drinking are done excessively while the sexual indulgence is likely conducted afterwards when they have been drunk and overloaded with food as argued by Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 82-5.

<sup>34</sup> What is not clear is how many of the Corinthian's church continue to practice prostitution. It can be just one, two or several members, but surely it is not all. The five times occurrence of the "porneia" is an additional strong evidence. See n.16.

<sup>35</sup> See "Structure of 1 Corinthians 6:12-20".

<sup>36</sup> Again, whether the principle "food for belly and belly for food" is the Corinthians' slogan (see n.19), the fact is that such a principle has influenced the Corinthians in practicing prostitution. The decision is to point out only the agreeable principle and not address the issue in detail.

<sup>37</sup> See the discussion in the previous paragraph for the function of inserted phrase "not for prostitute". For the parallel, see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 229; also, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 253-4.

to introduce the relation of the body and the Lord which is subsequently followed with the further explication in his arguments concerning body.

In a banquet, the phrase "the food for the belly and the belly for the food", despite of where it belongs, has been used to justify their gluttony. In the context of banquet, it is natural to understand the inseparability of the food and the belly. This means that the food is provided for the sake of the belly, both for the benefit of the belly and to be processed by the belly for the benefit or pleasure of the whole body, physically. But that both will be destroyed by God is the statement Paul used to show and rebuke them of how useless the phrase and their gluttony is. As a reaction to such a phrase, Paul, still in the context of banquet, points to the body as not for the prostitute, but for the Lord.<sup>38</sup>

Concerning the phrase "body for the Lord and the Lord for the body", it is important to notice that this part functions as a transition to Paul's three theological principles that explicates this phrase further. Therefore, a proper understanding must be carefully made for the phrase to avoid an extended meaning which may not be the specific intention of Paul. What Paul means on this phrase should be put at once in the context of the slogan of food and belly and the following phrase "God raised Jesus and will raise us". As both slogans ("food and belly" and "body for the Lord") are parallel, the inseparability of food and belly may perhaps share similar principle to the inseparability of body<sup>39</sup> and the Lord. The meaning is then that the body is bound to the Lord and the resurrection of the Lord is the basis for the raising of the body.<sup>40</sup> The subsequent phrase that consists of both past (God raised Jesus) and eschatological (God will raise us) reference, and all three theological principles confirm this meaning. Such a meaning implies that the practice of prostitution must bring severe consequences that threaten even the gospel.

### **First Theological Principle and Practical Exhortation (v.15)**

Paul uses three rhetorical questions introduced by the phrase "do you not know" with two functions altogether, to expose the theological principle and rebuke their ignorance of such a principle of which they have been informed before.<sup>41</sup> The first argument (theological

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<sup>38</sup> It is not sure from the text that body is for prostitute is the conclusion. See Fee, *First Corinthians*, 255. It is more likely that the body for prostitute points to the justification of their hedonistic conduct within a banquet. Thus "body for prostitute" perhaps is the last slogan used in such a banquet. Paul turns this last slogan by contrast it with the theological significance of the body in relation to the Lord and even God.

<sup>39</sup> It is important to remember that here Paul is addressing the Corinthians who were described as those who have been washed, sanctified, and justified as in 1 Cor. 6:11. Therefore the body here is the body of the believers.

<sup>40</sup> See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 231; also, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 258; To say this phrase as Paul's rejection to the notion that spiritual is above matters as mentioned by Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 458-9, is seemed to be unlikely, since Paul says nothing on the issue of spiritual over matter; A more probable meaning may be that the body is to be beneficial for the Lord. Perhaps the statement of Paul in 1 Cor. 9:27 that he disciplines / torments his body for the sake of Gospel may imply here, although it may not be primary. The imperative to glorify God in body may also be another reference pointing to the beneficial of the body for the Lord.

<sup>41</sup> The expectation of the yes answer from the rhetoric question indicates that the Corinthian Church knew the principle already, thus the reminder of such a principle is an evidence of their ignorance on it; C.H. Kim even argues that the rhetoric question "don't you know..." refers to Paul's



principle) in verse 15 is that the physical bodies of the Corinthians are members or parts of Christ. The inseparable unity of the physical bodies of the Corinthians with Christ is the emphasis here. The first evidence is the word "member" which means literally "part of human body".<sup>42</sup> All parts of human body are supposed to join to each other and not to be taken out. Thus, the physical body of each believer is literally understood by Paul as members united with Christ.<sup>43</sup> The unity with Christ is because the believers have been bought with a price which implicitly refers to the redemption of Christ.<sup>44</sup> The lack of further explanation is because the Corinthian church has known this principle as signified by the question "do you not know ...?". The second evidence of the emphasis on the inseparable unity is the contrast Paul made between "members of Christ" and "member of prostitute" in his rhetorical question. The third evidence is in Paul's answer "μη γενοιτο" (May it not happen) which is a strong negation to the previous rhetorical question.<sup>45</sup> Such a strong negation can appear surely because prostitution is an abhorrent sin in contrast to Christ.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Paul will never break up the members of Christ (the unity of the bodies to Christ) and give it to a prostitute. To conclude the first argument in short is like this: The body physically is a member of Christ as it is united by the redemptive work of Christ, so to take the member of Christ to be a member of prostitute should not even be thinkable. Thus, for Paul, the abhorrence of a practicing prostitute lies not on the physical effect but more on the breaking of the unity with Christ and then bound to the prostitute, as he exposed further in his second theological principle, v.16-17.

### The Second Theological Principle and Practical Exhortation (v. 16-18)

Paul, by starting with the same phrase "do you not know ...?" has once again rebuked them for their ignorance of the theological principle of which they had been informed before. While in the first argument Paul didn't say anything about sin, in his second argument he exposes deeper not only the meaning of being a member of a prostitute in contrast to the unity with Christ in the association to the spirit, but also the fact and effect of the sinful act of prostitution. In the middle of his deeper exposition, Paul inserted his second command, which is stronger, to flee from the prostitute. The stronger force of Paul's

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teaching to the Church, as cited by *Garland, 1 Corinthians*, 200. Thus, the ignorance may be even stronger if the conclusion of Kim is adopted.

<sup>42</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, BAGD, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 501-2. The abbreviation of BAGD will be used in the following note when this resource is referred or cited.

<sup>43</sup> There is no indication that this principle is related to the principle in 1 Cor. 12:12-26. The context of both principles is different. That Paul has both principles in mind is likely correct, but his concern here is about the problem of the physical body that is for the prostitute and distinct to 1 Cor. 12:12-26 which context is to build one another within the church community of Corinth; see Fee, *First Corinthians*, 258.

<sup>44</sup> See 1 Cor. 6:20; Also, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 459. That this unity is related to the resurrection as in Fee, *First Corinthians*, 258 is likely secondary, although it is probable.

<sup>45</sup> BAGD, 158.3a.

<sup>46</sup> This strong negation appears 14 times in Pauline letters, Rom. 3:4, 3:6, 3:31; 6:2, 6:15; 7:7, 7:13; 9:14; 11:1, 11:14; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14; Except for Gal. 6: 14, this strong negation is used to negate two issues which should never be united, as they are contrary to each other (for instance: Rom. 3:4; 6:2; 7:13; 1 Cor. 6:15) or two matters which should be inseparable (Rom. 11:1; Gal. 3:21)

command is obvious from the tense and mood shift of the word, from aorist optative (μη γένοιτο) in the first, which is an answer, to present imperative (φεύγετε)<sup>47</sup> in the second which is a command.

The submission of the body where sexual intercourse is involved is crucial here to understand what Paul means in his second theological principle. The citation of Genesis 2:24<sup>48</sup> by Paul is intended to contrast between the unity of the two bodies in the prostitute (which is identified by the phrase "is one body" in v.16) and the unity with Christ (which is identified by the phrase "is one spirit" in v.17).<sup>49</sup> The contrast is so obvious between "the one body" by a practicing prostitute and the "one spirit" by the works of the Holy Spirit.<sup>50</sup> With such a sharp contrast between body and spirit, the choice for believers can be only one, the Lord. As the consequence, Paul's command to keep fleeing<sup>51</sup> the prostitute in v.18 is a necessity.

Using the sin argument in the preceding statement (v.18b), Paul's command to flee from the prostitute becomes more urgent. A lot of attempts have been made to understanding the phrase "every sin" and "in his own body he keeps sinning".<sup>52</sup> The key to understanding the whole statement lies perhaps in Paul's concern of how ravaging is the sin of prostitution. Fee pointed out right that "Paul's concern is with the final clause, that in sexual immorality a man sins against his own body - which turns out to be his own but not his own."<sup>53</sup> By making an exception to one particular sin from every sin, Paul seems likely to focus on "in his own body he keeps sinning". The understanding of this final clause will perhaps solve specifically the understanding of "every sin"

The word "ἐξουσιάζει"<sup>54</sup> in v.12 as occurs also in 1 Cor. 7:4 is significant in understanding Paul's intention of "in his own body he keeps sinning".<sup>55</sup> In 1 Cor. 7:4, the context of marriage where intercourse perhaps is the key aspect, the man is said to have authority over (ἐξουσιάζει) the body of his wife, and the wife has authority (ἐξουσιάζει) over the body of her husband. The key principle is the subjection of one's own body to the other. For Paul, it is precisely that this key principle is come about in the case of the prostitute. When a believer practices prostitution, the believer intentionally has let the other (the non-believer whom this believer has relation or intercourse) to have authority over his

<sup>47</sup> See n.7 in the translation section.

<sup>48</sup> The citation is precisely from the Septuagint.

<sup>49</sup> Although the structure can be seen as a chiasmic of ABA', it is far better to let the text flow not as chiasmic, since particle "for" prior to the citation of Gen. 2:24 obviously provides the reason for why it can be one body in joining the prostitute.

<sup>50</sup> See Fee, *First Corinthians*, 259. For further discussion on the relational dimension of body, which is less likely in this context, see James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 55-61.

<sup>51</sup> The present tense of this command indicates that the fleeing from prostitute must be done continuously.

<sup>52</sup> Whether this is Corinthians' slogan or Paul construction (see further discussion on Fee, *First Corinthians*, 261-2; The point here is that Paul concerns mainly the ravaged sin of prostitution. If not, he will of course expose more on this clause.

<sup>53</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, 261.

<sup>54</sup> The future passive occurs in v.12; See also n.26.

<sup>55</sup> See Brendan Byrne, "Sinning against One's Own Body: Paul Understanding of the Sexual Relationship in 1 Cor. 6:18" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, no.4 (1983).

body to become one body. The implication of this is the subjection that the believer has sinned in his own body because this believer himself is involved in the relation with the unbeliever. The sin is severe because of two things: the believer has become one body with the prostitute that means the unity with Christ is broken by the believer. The other is that the believer let the spirit of God who is in the believer, to be subjected to the prostitute. These two things make the command of Paul to flee prostitute is much more urgent and crucial.

If the principle of subjection of one's own body to the other in a sexual relationship is understood, the phrase "every sin" will imply that there are no such other sins so serious to let others have authority over one's own body. The seemingly similar sins such as gluttony, drunkenness, and covetousness may not be precisely the same, although these sins are also hideous for Paul. In the context of 1 Corinthians, perhaps it is likely that the phrase "every sin" referred to the so-called vice list Paul has listed out.<sup>56</sup> Therefore to consider the coverage of "every sin" to the broadest sense may not be necessary. By implication, the phrase "every sin" should be considered constructed by Paul.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Third Theological Principle and True Conduct in term of Body (v. 19-20)**

In his third argument, which is the climax, Paul leaves the issue of prostitutes and focuses entirely on the Holy Spirit, God, and Christ. Although the rhetorical question is to rebuke the Corinthians for the last time in this specific issue, the most comfortable theological principle finally appears. By focusing on the Holy Spirit, God, and Christ, Paul moves to a further direction. The construction of the following clause after "do you not know"<sup>58</sup> seems likely to carry an emphasis on the significance of the body which is holy. The two references which address the same thing in one sentence are the evidence.<sup>59</sup> The true concept of the body Paul reminds them is that their body is holy because it is the temple<sup>60</sup> of the Holy Spirit which they had from God and is not theirs. The confirmation that their body is not theirs is found in the subsequent verse 20. The "for" (γὰρ in Greek) provides the reason why they (particularly their bodies) are not theirs, that is because "you have been bought of a price" (v.20). The "... bought of a price" likely points to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The price of the purchase of God's son is worthy to make the believers is God's own. To conclude the third theological principle of Paul briefly and orderly is this: God has bought the believers with the redemptive death of God's son, Jesus Christ, so they are God's own. God unites the believer's body with Christ by giving the Holy Spirit who is from God, to inhabit within their body, thus such an inhabitant turns the bodies of the believers as a temple of the Holy Spirit. By implication, their body is holy. The only way to live their lives

<sup>56</sup> See 1 Cor. 5:11 and 1 Cor. 6:9-10.

<sup>57</sup> See Fee, *First Corinthians*, 262-3.

<sup>58</sup> In this passage, this "do you not know ..." is the third time Paul rebuked them for their ignorance on the principles that the Corinthians have known.

<sup>59</sup> The two references are "your body" and "in you"; The location of "in you" which breaks the unity of the word "the Holy Spirit" indicates such an emphasis. The literally and orderly translation of this clause is "the body of you a temple of the in you Holy Spirit is"

<sup>60</sup> The word "temple" is explicitly referred to the sanctity of the body where the Holy Spirit is within; The meaning of "naoj" may vary from the holy of holy or simply the temple. However, the meaning may be the temple is an imagery of the place, the inhabitant of the presence of God. Thus, the sanctity of a temple (even perhaps in the pagan religion) is a reality. This is likely what Paul may have in mind.

with such a profound theological understanding and privileged status that they have, particularly their body, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit which is a gift from God, is found in the climax com After qualifying shortly the two principles that influence the Corinthians to practice prostitution, Paul focus the most on changing their thinking by rebuking them with three theological principles of which they have been informed, in order to rectify their sinful behaviour. The escalation (from negative to positive) of the three forceful theological principles flows clearly. The first escalation (v.15) is the impossibility of members of Christ to be members of a prostitute and is closed by the exhortation "may it not happen" for the believers to practice prostitution. In the second escalation, Paul elaborates further the principle of unity with Christ and the seriousness of the sin of prostitution as one sins in one's own body. A clear command to keep on fleeing the prostitute is given, but it still does not reach a finality, because merely fleeing a prostitute does not solve the problem. Paul, in the third escalation with a dense Trinitarian theological principle only, exposes the interrelation of the Holy Spirit, God and Christ. Paul culminates this section with the final command for the Corinthians to glorify God in their body. Paul's intention is that the Corinthian church should realize that they are God's own, and the result is to glorify God in their body as the command of Paul "Indeed, glorify God in your body". Such an established and urgent command is then the only exhortation that should be lived by the Corinthian church and not the sinful living. The conclusive command also obviously pointed to a positive way of life for every Christian in terms of their body, to glorify God. In a more specific situation such as during this Covid-19 pandemic, it is prominent for every Christian to live their bodily life in accordance with the government's law and rules, keep strictly the healthy protocol is the best way rather than consume medication or treat the body in a wrong way by consume unnecessary herb or overdosed vitamin that is harmful to the body. Such an act of consuming unnecessary medication is an example of not glorifying God with our body.

### **Conclusive Exhortation**

After qualifying the two principles that influence the Corinthians to practice prostitution, Paul focused the most on changing their thinking by rebuking them with three theological principles of which they have been informed to rectify their sinful behaviours. The escalation (from negative to positive) of the three forceful theological principles flows clearly. The first escalation (v.15) is the impossibility of members of Christ to be members of a prostitute and is closed by the exhortation "may it not happen" for the believers to practice prostitution. In the second escalation, Paul elaborates further the principle of unity with Christ and the seriousness of the sin of prostitution as one sins in one's own body. A clear command to keep on fleeing the prostitute is given, but it still does not reach a finality, because merely fleeing a prostitute does not solve the problem. Paul, in the third escalation with a dense Trinitarian theological principle only, exposes the interrelation of the Holy Spirit, God and Christ. Paul culminates this section with the final command for the Corinthians to glorify God in their body. Paul's intention is that the Corinthian church should realize that they are God's own, and the result is to glorify God in their body.

### **Conclusion and Application**

The conclusion of this article as demonstrated previously is: First, the Corinthians must build up the members of the Church, thus they must beware of living their life holy

before God. They should not justify their sinful behaviours by adopting the wrong principles of life around them. Second: The Corinthians are believers already. They are saved through their faith in Christ and yet the Holy Spirit are in them, thus their body is no longer theirs, it is owned by God. The Corinthians must not undermine or ignore of this prominent theological principle. Third: As their body is owned by God, they must flee from misconducting their body to prostitution or fornication. Instead, they must glorify God with their body by exercising the righteous life observable by others so that they can build up others. The result of conducting their body righteously is the glorification of God.

The application of this passage is this: in terms of individual Christian living during the Covid-19 pandemic, the fact is that a lot of Christians just like the Corinthians have knowledge of theological principles through the catechism in the church or theological class in school or university, but the influence of surrounding principles to behave like those out of the church has made so many Christians ignore their theological principles and choose to look for the self-indulgent lifestyle which perhaps is their lifestyle before they convert to Christianity such as the unwilling to be vaccinated, the belief of the wrong treatment of covid-19 that turn to consume unworthy treatment to the body rather than following the government's appeal of keep the healthy protocol in preventing the spread of Covid-19. We may not hear the case of prostitution broadly and publicly as prostitution is illegal in almost every country but the case of pornography which is plentiful in every nation where many Christians also partake in watching or searching for pornography is strong evidence of how we are in a certain degree practicing prostitution. In such cases the principle that Christians are God's own is more than just relevant; it is a necessity that we should consistently sound such a principle of glorifying God with our body. Moreover is of course that following the exhortation that every Christian should glorify God in their body should be witnessed in the high-pressure life as the result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sexual abuse among Christians or Christian families as we may hear throughout the nations is another example of how harmful we are as Christians that we ignore all the principles we have received and do not realize that we keep committing sin. The justification or rationalism after committing "prostitution" by using the legality of law on such an act, has once again made the principle that our body is for the Lord, so it is urgent that we should glorify God in our body to build up others especially during the Covid-19 pandemic which creates a lot of tension within Christianity and the Christians family.

Turning to the church life, the impacts of the pandemic covid-19 are the online service, the problem of miscommunication among the family members and the tension because of the pressure of working load at home, thus such an issue of "prostitution" may even be less heard. Particularly in the church in Indonesia when talking about sex still seems to be taboo, to say the case of prostitution is as if it never happened is not right. That there are many pastors who are involved in sexual immorality is real. The problem in the church that tend to keep such cases under cover has made the restoration of the person almost impossible. This will in turn affect the capability of the church to solve other critical problems.

Particularly in Indonesia and the youth, specifically in the situation during this Covid-19 pandemic, the reluctance to provide the biblical teaching about sexual relationships has raised the problem of pornography among the youth. It is suspected that premarital sexual relationships either with their mate or with a prostitute has increased significantly. With such a condition, the principle that we are God's own should be sounded long before, but the irony is that even until now (as far as I understand) this crucial principle is still not even a priority in many Christians teachings except only on few occasions which is insufficient.

All these show that this crucial issue of fleeing from prostitute and glorifying God in our body along with the awareness that we are God's own, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our body which makes us holy, should be prominently sounded.

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