

**Relationship from
God's Perspective,
1 Corinthians 6-7**

Hennie Swart

Introduction

“A misunderstanding of purpose inevitably leads to abuse.” – Miles Munroe

- This is as true for sex as for anything else.
- We all think about sex, whether we're living with or without it.

1 Corinthians 6

¹²“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

1 Corinthians 6

¹⁶Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷*But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.* ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 6

¹Now for the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ²But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. ³The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. ⁵Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

The false purpose of sex

In this passage Paul refers to 3 common misunderstandings of sex.

1. The self-expression view:

1 Cor 6.12: "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything. (see 10.23)

The false purpose of sex

2. The self-gratification view:
1 Cor 6.13: "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, but God will destroy them both."
 3. The self-denial view:
1 Cor 7.1: Now for the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."

The false purpose of sex

Self-expression	Self-gratification	Self-denial
Sex is all-important	Sex is unimportant	Sex is unimportant
Rebellious approach	Rebellious approach	Religious approach
Liberal: 'Anything goes'	Liberal: 'Anything goes'	Conservative: 'Nothing goes'
Purpose: Identity	Purpose: Pleasure	Purpose: Procreation

The true purpose of sex

But Paul gives a radically different view of sex with a radically different purpose.
 4. The self-donation view:
1 Cor 6.16: Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

The true purpose of sex

'become one flesh' doesn't just refer to sexual unity.

- 'flesh' = embodied personhood, e.g. "I'll pour out my Spirit on all flesh."
- Physical unity vs whole person unity.
- You always give more than you intend.
- You always leave some glue behind...
- You damage your commitment apparatus.
- The purpose of sex = making covenant (marriage)
- Song: 'The first cut is the deepest!'

The true purpose of sex

1 Cor 6.18: Flee from sexual immorality.

- 'sexual immorality' = *porneia* = all sex outside marriage.
- Marriage is the one safe place for sex, e.g. fire in the fireplace.
- Don't just avoid *porneia*, flee it!
- Don't make covenant without commitment.
- But marriage is more than just a safe place to have sex, it points beyond itself.

The true purpose of marriage

1 Cor 6.13b: The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

1 Cor 6.17: But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

- Our exclusive, covenant commitment to our wives point to our exclusive devotion to Jesus.
- If the muddy stream tastes so sweet, how will the water at the source taste?

conclusion

“A misunderstanding of purpose inevitably leads to abuse.”

So unless we understand that the purpose of sex is to make covenant and the purpose of the marriage covenant is to point to our union with Jesus, we will inevitably abuse sex and marriage.
