

SECTION TEN

THE BODY

CHAPTER ONE

THE BELIEVER AND HIS BODY

We need to know how God views the position of the body. No one can deny that there is a relationship between the body and the spiritual life. In addition to having a spirit and soul, we also have a body. Although the intuition, fellowship, and conscience of our spirit may be very healthy, and although the mind, emotion, and will of our soul may be renewed, we have not become a spiritual man if our outward body is not healthy and renewed in accordance with our spirit and soul. We cannot be considered complete, and we are still lacking in something. As human beings we not only have a spirit and soul, but we also have a body. We cannot overlook the body and care only for the spirit and soul. If we do so, our life will wither.

The body is needed and important; otherwise, God would not have given man a body. If we carefully read through the Bible, we can see the importance that God places on the body of man. Nearly everything that is recorded in the Bible has to do with the body. The incarnation is the most conspicuous and convincing point. The Son of God took a body of flesh and blood. Though He has passed through death, He still has this body throughout eternity.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BODY

Romans 8:10 through 13 tells us in detail about the condition of our (the believers') body, how the Holy Spirit helps our body, and the proper attitude towards the body. By understanding these few verses, we will not be mistaken concerning the position of the believers' body in the plan of God's redemption.

Verse 10 says, "But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness." Both our body and our spirit were originally dead. But after we believed in the Lord Jesus, we received Him within us to be our life. Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit, now dwells within the believers. This is the most important truth of the gospel. Every believer, no matter how weak he is, has Christ dwelling within him. This is the very Christ who is our life. At the moment He entered into our inward part, He enlivened our spirit. We have seen this previously. Originally our body and spirit were dead. Because we have received the indwelling Christ, our spirit is alive. The spirit and body were previously dead, but now the spirit is revived; only the body remains dead. This is the common condition of every believer—the spirit is alive and the body is dead.

This experience (shared by every believer) causes major differences between the outward and inward parts of the believers. Our inner man is full of life, but our outward man is full of death. We are living, and our spirit is full of life, but we dwell in a body of death. In other words, the life of our spirit and the life of our body are completely different. The life in the spirit is truly life, and the life in the body is nothing but death, because our body is still a "body of sin." Consequently, no matter how much growth in the spiritual life we have, our body is still a "body of sin." We have not yet received the body of resurrection, that glorious and spiritual body. The redemption of our body is in the future. Today's body is nothing but an "earthen vessel," an "earthly tabernacle," and it is still in "dishonor." Although sin has been cast out from the spirit and the will, the

redemption of the body is still something in the future. Therefore, sin has not been cast out from the body. Since sin is still in the body, the body is dead. This is the meaning of "the body is dead because of sin." In the meantime our spirit is living, or more accurately stated, our spirit is life; because of the righteousness of Christ, our spirit received life. When we believed in Christ, we simultaneously received (1) the righteousness of Christ and (2) God's justification. In the first case, Christ dispensed His righteousness into us. This is a fact that has truly transpired and is not a figure of speech. Christ has dispensed His righteousness into us like one dispenses material things of the world. In the second case, God through Christ has reckoned us righteous. This is only a legal procedure. If there were no dispensing of righteousness, there would be no justification. When we received Christ, we received justification from God positionally. He dispensed Christ's righteousness into us at the same time that He entered into us to be our life and revive our dead spirit. This is why Romans 8:10 says, "The spirit is life because of righteousness."

Verse 11 says, "And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." The preceding verse says that God causes our spirit to become life, and this verse tells us that God causes our bodies to receive life. Verse 10 says that only the spirit is living; the body is still dead. This verse continues by saying that the body can also become living after the spirit is revived. First it says that the spirit is living because Christ lives within us; then it says that the body is living because the Holy Spirit lives within us. The Holy Spirit wants to give life to our body.

We have already seen how our bodies are dead. Although the shell is not dead, it is heading toward the tomb. Spiritually speaking, the body is also reckoned dead. Although humanly speaking, the body has life, God regards that life as death because it is full of sins. "The body is dead because of sin." On the one hand, even though the body has strength, we cannot allow it to express its own life. It should not have any action because the actions of its life are nothing but death. Sin is the life of the body, and sin is spiritual death. The body is living in a kind of spiritual death. On the other hand, we know that we should be witnessing for God, serving God, and doing God's work. All of these need the strength of the body. Since the body is dead spiritually and since its life is also dead, what should we do so that our bodies can be used to supply the needs of the spiritual life without utilizing its life of death? Our body is unwilling as well as unable to walk according to the will of the indwelling Spirit of life. On the contrary, it opposes and fights with that will. What must the Holy Spirit do in order to enable the body to walk according to His will? The answer is that the Holy Spirit wants to give life to our mortal bodies.

The One "who raised Jesus from the dead" is God. But God is not mentioned directly; He is referred to as the One "who raised Jesus from the dead" because the emphasis is specifically on God's work of raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead. This draws the attention of the believers to this point: if God raised up the dead body of Jesus, He is able to raise up the mortal bodies of the believers. The apostle states that if the Spirit of God, namely the Holy Spirit, who is also the Spirit of resurrection, "dwells in you," God will "also give life to your mortal bodies" through Him. This is the second time that the apostle used the word "if." But he was not in doubt about whether the Holy Spirit is within the believers. In verse 9 he said that those who have partaken of Christ already have the Holy Spirit. He meant that since one has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, his mortal body must receive His life also. This is a privilege shared by everyone who has

the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. He was unwilling for even one believer not to know and draw upon this in faith, thereby losing this portion of blessing.

This verse tells us that if the Spirit of God dwells in us, then God should give life to our mortal bodies through the indwelling Spirit. This does not refer to the time of resurrection in the future. This has absolutely nothing to do with resurrection. God is only making a comparison between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and our bodies that have now received life. This verse does not speak of the body which has died; if it did, this would be dealing with resurrection. It is only speaking of the "mortal" body that has not died, but which will die. The body of the believers is spiritually dead. This is different from saying that it is already dead. In reality, it is heading toward the tomb and it will die. Just as the Holy Spirit dwelling within us is a matter of the present world, the Holy Spirit giving life to our mortal bodies is also an experience of the present world. Neither does this verse speak about our regeneration, because the Holy Spirit is mentioned as giving life to our body, not to our spirit.

In this verse, God tells us that the believers' bodies are privileged to receive life through the Holy Spirit that is dwelling within us. This does not mean that "the body of sin" becomes a holy body, that "the body of our humiliation" becomes a glorious body, or that the "mortal body" becomes an immortal body. These are impossible in our present life; these things will happen only when the Lord takes us up and our bodies are redeemed. The nature of our body can never be changed during the present life. For the Holy Spirit to give life to our body means: (1) if our body has illness, He can cause it to be recovered, and (2) if our body does not have illness, He will preserve us from encountering any illness. In short, the Holy Spirit wants to make our body strong, so that it can meet all the requirements of God's work and living, and so that neither our life nor the kingdom of God will suffer any damage because of the body.

This is what God has prepared for all of His children. But how many believers really have the experience of the Spirit of the Lord giving life to their mortal body every day? Are not many still influenced by their physical constitution, thus endangering their spiritual life? Do not many often fail because of the weakness of their body? Are they still unable to participate in vigorous work for God because of the bondage of illness? The experiences of the believers today cannot yet match the provisions of God. There are many reasons for this. Some are ignorant of the provisions which God has put in the Holy Spirit. Some consider that this is impossible because of unbelief. Some think that this has little to do with them because they do not want it. Some know it, believe in it, and want it, but do not present their bodies as a living sacrifice. They simply hope that God, through the Holy Spirit, will give them strength so that they can live for themselves. Therefore, they also cannot experience it. If believers are really willing to live for God, and if they will claim these promises and provisions by faith, they will see that it is truly a fact that God will fill up the body with life. (We will have more to say about this later.)

Verse 12 says, "So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh." This verse thoroughly speaks about the proper relationship between the believer and the body. Countless numbers of believers today have fully become the slaves of the body, and countless numbers of them have their spiritual life completely confined in their body! They are like two different people; when they turn within to themselves, they feel that they are very spiritual, very close to God, and very high in their spiritual life, but when they live in the outward flesh, they feel that they are fallen, fleshly, and separated from God. They obey their bodies. Their bodies seem to be a heavy burden. Once there is a little ailment, they change the way they live. Once there is a little

weakness, disease, or pain, they are at a loss; they begin to love and pity themselves and lose all the peace in their heart. In this circumstance, it is impossible for them to have a spiritual life.

The apostle's words "so then" connect this verse with the preceding text. Verse 10 speaks of the body being dead, and verse 11 speaks of the Holy Spirit giving life to the body. Based on these two conditions, the apostle continued, "So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh." (1) Since the body is dead because of sin, we must not live according to it; otherwise, we will sin. (2) Since the Holy Spirit has given life to our mortal bodies, we do not need to live according to the flesh, because our flesh has no authority to bind our spiritual life anymore. Based on these provisions of the Holy Spirit, our inner life can now give orders directly to the outer body without any hindrance. Formerly, we were debtors to the flesh. We had no way to stop its desires, cravings, and lusts. So we obeyed it and committed many sins. However, since the Holy Spirit has made these provisions for us, the lust of the flesh cannot force us to do anything, and even the weakness, disease, and pain of the flesh can no longer control us.

Many people think that the flesh has its lawful desires and cravings and that we should fulfill them. But the apostle tells us that we do not owe the flesh anything since "we are debtors not to the flesh." Beyond keeping the flesh in a proper condition as a vessel to God, we do not owe it any debt. Of course, the Bible does not forbid us to have some care for the body; when illness occurs, it will require more attention. Clothing, food, and dwelling are all needed. Sometimes, rest is indispensable. But we are saying that we should not allow our life to be solely centered on these things. We must eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, rest when tired, and put on clothing when cold. But we must and should not allow these things to enter deeply into our hearts or become part of the goals of our daily living. We should not crave these things. These things should come according to needs and go according to needs; they should never linger inside us for a long time. It is not right for them to become our cravings. At times the body does have these needs. Yet because of the work of God or because more important needs exist, we should be able to buffet ourselves and not be under the body's subjection. Both the sleepiness of the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane and the endurance of hunger by the Lord Jesus at the well at Sychar express the need to overcome even lawful desires. Otherwise, these desires will lead to failures. We owe no debts to the flesh. Therefore, we should not sin through the lust of the flesh, and we should not reduce the spiritual work because of the weakness of the flesh.

Verse 13 says, "For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live." Since God has made such provisions, the believers will suffer punishment if they do not receive them and live according to the flesh instead.

"If you live according to the flesh, you must die." Here the word "die" and the word "live" in the following phrase have several meanings. We will only mention one of them: the death of the body. As far as sin is concerned, our body is "dead"; as far as the outcome is concerned, our body is "mortal." If we live according to the flesh, the mortal body will become the body that is "about to die." If we live according to the flesh, on the one hand, we cannot receive the life which the Holy Spirit gives to the body, and on the other hand, the aging of the body will speed up. All sins are harmful to the body. All sins will produce an effect in the body, and this effect is death. We must fight against the death in our body through trusting in the Holy Spirit who gives life to our body. Otherwise, the death in the body will speed up its work.

"If by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live." We should not only receive the Holy Spirit to be the life-giver to our body; we should also receive Him as the mortifier of the practices of the body. If we neglect to put to death the practices of the body by the Holy Spirit, we cannot expect the Holy Spirit to give life to our body. We can only live by putting to death the practices of the body through Him. If the body wants to live, the practices of the body must first die. Otherwise, death will be the imminent result. This is the mistake of many people; they think that they can live for themselves, direct their own body, do the things that please themselves, and still receive life from the Holy Spirit for their body to keep their body strong without ailments. How can this be possible? The Holy Spirit gives life and power to man in order that man would live for Him! The life which God gives to our body is for Himself; it is for the purpose of living for Him. If we have not consecrated ourselves fully, we would only live for ourselves more if the Holy Spirit gave us health, strength, and power! Many believers who pursue the Holy Spirit so that life will be given to their body should realize that they cannot receive what they are asking for if they do not pay attention to this point.

Originally, we could not control our body. Now, through the Holy Spirit, we can. He gives us the power to put to death the practices of the body. Every believer has experienced lust within his members, stimulating the body to rise up to fulfill the desire of his lust, and seen how powerless he is to deal with it by himself. But through (or by) the Holy Spirit, he is able to do it. This is a very important point. It is useless for the self to crucify the self. Today many believers understand the truth of co-crucifixion on the cross. But very few really express this life. The truth of co-crucifixion is merely a teaching in the life of many people. They have not seen clearly the place of the Holy Spirit in salvation. They do not know that the Holy Spirit is working together with the cross. If we only have the cross without the Holy Spirit, the cross is absolutely useless. Only the Holy Spirit can "apply" what the cross has accomplished, and only He can cause it to become our experience. If we do not allow this truth to become real in our lives "by the Spirit," after we hear about the truth of the cross, all that we see will be just theories.

It is good to know "that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled." But if we do not "by the Spirit"—by the power of the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Spirit—"put to death the practices of the body," the knowledge of this truth alone will not deliver us from the practices of the body. Many believers clearly understand and accept the truth of the cross, but it has virtually no effect on them. This makes them doubt if the salvation of the cross on the practical side is real. It is not surprising that they think this way, because they have forgotten the Holy Spirit who alone can turn the cross into experience. Only He can make salvation real to us. Yet He is forgotten by men. Unless a believer denies himself entirely and trusts fully in the power of the Holy Spirit—riding on the power of the Holy Spirit—to put to death the practices of the body, the truth he recognizes will only be a theory. Only through the mortifying power of the Holy Spirit can life be given to the body.

GLORIFYING GOD

First Corinthians 6:12 through 20 adds considerable light to the matter of the believers' body. We will now briefly consider this portion verse by verse.

Verse 12 says, "All things are lawful to me, but not all things are profitable; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything." The apostle was talking about the question of the body. (This will be explained later.) He said that

everything is lawful because, according to nature, all the desires of the body, such as eating, drinking, sex, etc. (v. 13), are natural, necessary, and lawful. But he said that these things (1) are not all expedient and (2) should not bring people under their power. In other words, there are many things, humanly speaking, that a believer can do related to his body but may choose not to do because he belongs to the Lord and wants to glorify God.

Verse 13 says, "Foods are for the stomach, and the stomach for foods; but God will bring to nought both it and them. But the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." The first half of this verse is paired with the first half of the last verse. Food is lawful, but food and the belly will both be brought to nothing. Therefore, not all are expedient. The last half is also paired with the last half of the last verse. A believer can be completely free from the control of sexual lusts and offer his body completely to the Lord (7:34).

"The body is...for the Lord." This statement is very crucial. The apostle has just spoken on the problem of food. The matter of eating and drinking provides believers with an opportunity to carry out the instruction, "The body is...for the Lord." The original cause of man's fall was food. The Lord Jesus was also tempted by food in the wilderness. Many Christian believers do not know they should glorify God in the matter of eating and drinking. They do not consider that the purpose of eating and drinking is only to make the body fit for the Lord's use. They eat and drink to satisfy their own desires. We should know that the body is "for the Lord" and not for ourselves. Therefore, we should not use our body to please ourselves. Eating and drinking should not hinder our fellowship with God; they should only preserve our body in its normal condition.

The apostle also spoke on the question of fornication. This kind of sin defiles the body. Therefore, it is absolutely contrary to the teaching of "the body is...for the Lord." The fornication mentioned here does not include only the indulgence of the lust of the flesh outside of marriage, but also between a husband and a wife. The body is for the Lord; this means that the body is completely for the Lord and not for one's self. Therefore, lawful indulgence should also be forbidden.

The apostle wants us to see that everything that passes the limit or ignores the limit—no matter what it may be—ought to be resisted absolutely. Since the body is for the Lord, no one ought to use the body in addition to the Lord. Whoever employs the body, no matter what part, for his own pleasure, does not please God. In addition to being a vessel for righteousness, the body should not serve any other purpose. The body, like our person, should not serve two masters. Even though food and sex are matters of nature, we can only allow them to be satisfied when need arises. When the need is met, the body is still for the Lord, not for food and sex. Today many Christian believers pursue only after the sanctification of their spirit and soul, but do not know that in order to attain sanctification of their spirit and soul, they must attain sanctification in their body. In many respects the sanctification of the spirit and soul depends on the sanctification of the body. They forget that all of their nerves, sensations, activities, living, working, eating, drinking, speaking, etc., should be for the Lord. Otherwise, they will not arrive at perfection.

"The body is...for the Lord" means that the body belongs to the Lord. Nevertheless, it is in the hand of man for him to keep for the Lord. Today, however, few know about this or practice this! The reason many of God's children suffer weaknesses, diseases, and afflictions is that God is chastening them and calling them to offer their bodies

completely to Him. After they do this, He will heal them. He wants them to know that their bodies are not their own, but the Lord's. If they still live according to their own will, they will see that God's chastisement will not leave them. If there are some among us now who are sick, they should pay attention to this word.

"The Lord [is also] for the body." This is a marvelous word. Ordinarily we think that the Lord came to save the soul. But this verse tells us that "the Lord [is also] for the body." Many believers despise the body too much. They believe that the Lord only cares to save souls and that the body does not have any use. They consider the body worthless in the realm of spiritual life and that there is no provision of grace for it in God's salvation. But this verse tells us that "the Lord [is also] for the body." God says that the Lord is also for the body that man despises.

Since believers despise the body in this way, they think the Lord Jesus only takes care of the sins of the spirit and soul and does not take care of the illness of the body. Therefore, when they suffer from weaknesses and illnesses, they resort to human ways for remedy. Although they know that the Lord healed the body more than He saved souls in the four Gospels, they interpret these acts spiritually. They believe the ailments only pointed to their spiritual condition. They acknowledge that when the Lord was on earth, He healed diseases of the body, yet they believe the Lord only heals their spiritual sicknesses today. They are willing to commit their spiritual illnesses to the Lord for His healing, but they think the Lord has no concern about their bodily illness and that they should find their own treatment. They forget, however, that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, even forever" (Heb. 13:8). They think that the Lord Jesus healed the sicknesses of the body when He was on the earth but that He is only healing the sicknesses of the spirit today.

Among most believers, the body is put aside. It seems as if God has not provided anything for their body, that all of Christ's salvation is limited to the spirit and soul, and that the body has no share whatsoever in it. They do not pay any attention to the fact that the Lord Jesus healed the sick when He was on the earth, and the apostles continued to experience the power of healing. The only reason for this is unbelief. The Word of God, however, indicates that the Lord is also for the body. The Lord is for the body. All that the Lord is, is for the body.

In the context that our body is for the Lord, the Lord is also for our body. Here we see the relationship between God and man. God gave Himself entirely to us because He expects us to give ourselves entirely to Him. After we have given ourselves to Him, according to the thoroughness of our giving, He will give Himself to us. God wants us to know that He has already given up His body for us. He also wants us to know that if our body is truly for Him, we will surely experience that He is for our body. The significance of "the body is...for the Lord" is that we offer our own body completely to the Lord, to live for the Lord. The significance of "the Lord for the body" is that the Lord has already accepted our offering with pleasure. The Lord will give His life and power to our body. He will guard, keep, and nourish our body.

Our body is weak, defiled, sinful, and mortal. It seems unbelievable that the Lord could be for our body. But when we see God's ways of salvation, we will understand. When the Lord Jesus descended to the earth, He was incarnated in the flesh. He had a body. When He was on the cross, He bore our sins in His own body. When we join ourselves to Him by faith, our body is also nailed to the cross with Him. Hence, He releases our body from the power of sin. In Christ, this body has now been resurrected and ascended to the

heavens. Now the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Therefore, we can say that the Lord is for our body. He is not only for the spirit and soul, but also for the body.

There are several meanings to the words "the Lord [is] for the body." First, the Lord is for the body because the Lord desires to deliver our body from sin. Almost all sins are involved with the body. Many sinful actions are initiated by the peculiar physiological constituents of the body. For example, drunkenness is the result of a craving in the body. Reveling is the result of the demand of the body. The wrath of many is influenced by the peculiar constitution of their body. A physiological makeup that is overly-sensitive and provocative easily leads to frigidity, severity, and harshness of speech. The reason many people have a peculiar disposition is that they are peculiar in their physiological constitution. Many people are especially defiled, wanton, fornicating, and lawless because their physiological constitution is different from that of ordinary people. When they are dominated by their body, they commit all these sins. But the Lord is for the body. Therefore, if we first offer our body to the Lord and acknowledge that He is the Lord of all, and if we claim His promises by faith, we shall see that the Lord is for the body; that is, He will deliver us out of sin. Therefore, no matter what kind of physiological constitution we have—whether it is weaker than others or not—we can rely on the Lord to overcome it.

Second, the Lord is also for the sickness of the body. Just as He annihilates sin, He heals diseases. In all things concerning our body, He is for us. Therefore, He is also for our illnesses. Our illnesses are for the purpose of revealing to us the power of sin on our body. The Lord Jesus wants to save us completely. Therefore, whether it is sin or illness, He desires to deliver us out of both.

Third, the Lord is also for our living in the body. The Lord wants to be the strength and life of our body so that our body would live by Him. In our daily living, He wants us to experience His resurrection power and see that our body also lives by Him on this earth. (The above two points will be covered in detail in a separate chapter.)

Fourth, the Lord is also for the glorification of our body. This is for the future. The highest point that we can attain today is to live by Him. But this does not involve changing the nature of our body. When the day arrives, the Lord will redeem our body and make it the same as His body of glory.

We should not neglect the importance of the words: "The body is...for the Lord." If we really want to experience that the Lord is for the body, we must first practice having the body for the Lord. If we do not consecrate our body completely to live for the Lord, and if we use our body according to our own desire, to please and enjoy ourselves, it is impossible for us to have the experience of "the Lord for the body." Only when we put ourselves completely in the hands of God, submitting to His orders in all things and presenting our members as vessels to righteousness, can we prove that the Lord is truly for our body. He will give us life and power. If our body is not for the Lord, we cannot experience the Lord being for our body.

Verse 14 says, "And God has both raised up the Lord and will raise us up through His power." This verse explains the last phrase of the foregoing verse: "The Lord for the body." The resurrection of the Lord was the resurrection of His body. Our resurrection in the future will also be a resurrection of the body. God has already given resurrection to the body of the Lord Jesus. God will also give resurrection to our body. These two occurrences are facts. How can the Lord be for our body? With His power, He will raise

us. This is the climax of, "The Lord for the body." This will take place in the future. But how about today? Today we can have a foretaste of the great power of His resurrection.

Verse 15 says, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Absolutely not!" The first question is a marvelous one. Other passages only say, "Now you are the body of Christ" (12:27). Only this passage says, "Your bodies are members of Christ." Indeed, "you," your whole person, is a member of Christ. Why does this verse speak of the body here? It seems that we only believe that our spirit is the member of Christ, because it is spiritual. How can our physical body be a member of Christ? Here we see a very marvelous fact.

We must understand our union with Christ. God does not regard any individual believer as a separate believer. God put all believers in Christ. No believer can be outside of Christ, because his daily life is supplied by Christ. In God's eyes the union of the believers to Christ is an absolutely true fact. The body of Christ is not a spiritual term, but a real fact. Just as the head is joined to the body, Christ is joined to all the believers. In the eyes of God, our union with Christ is complete, eternal, and absolute. In other words our spirit is joined to Christ's Spirit. This is very crucial. Our soul is joined to the soul of Christ. This is a union in mind, emotion, and will. Our body is also joined to the body of Christ. If the union between us and Christ is without any breach, our body cannot be an exception. If we are members of Christ, our body must also be Christ's member.

Of course, this will only be consummated at the time of the coming resurrection. But today, through our union with Christ, this has become a fact already. This teaching is very crucial. We can gain much consolation if we know that the body of Christ is for our body. Every truth can be experienced. Have we found some physiological defect in our body, such as illness, affliction, or weakness? We have to see that the body of Christ is for our body. Our body is joined to His body. Therefore, we are able to draw life and power from the Lord Jesus to supply all the needs of our body. Whoever has a deficiency in his body ought to exercise his faith to stand firmly on the position of his union with the Lord and acknowledge that he is for the Lord and the Lord is for him. In this way, he can apply all that the Lord is for the body.

The apostle was amazed that the Corinthian believers could not comprehend such an obvious teaching. He reckoned that if the believers knew this teaching, they would not only have plenty of spiritual experiences, but they would also receive a warning concerning their practice. If the body is a member of Christ, how could they join themselves to a prostitute?

First Corinthians 6:16 says, "Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute is one body? For He says, The two shall be one flesh." Here the apostle explained clearly the principle of union. Whoever is joined to a prostitute is one flesh with the prostitute. Therefore, he becomes a member of the prostitute. The believer who is joined to Christ is a member of Christ. If we take the members of Christ and join them to a prostitute, making them also members of a prostitute, where will Christ stand then? This is why the apostle said, "God forbid" (KJV).

Verse 17 says, "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." In these three verses we can see the mystery of the union of our body with the Lord. The most crucial point in these three verses is the matter of union. Verse 17 means that since those who join their

body to a prostitute become one flesh with her and become her members, the believers who are joined to the Lord in one spirit will all the more have their body become His members! This is a very crucial thought. If the mere joining of one's body with a prostitute makes two bodies one, will not those whose whole being is joined to Christ be one with Him in the body?

The apostle believes that one who is joined to the Lord is initially "one spirit" with the Lord because this is the union of spirits. But he never considered the body of a believer to be independent of his spirit. He admits that the initial joining is in the spirit, but the union of the spirit also makes the believer's body become a member of Christ. This statement is a proof of what he just said, that "the body is...for the Lord" and "the Lord [is also] for the body."

All the problems rest on the matter of union. God's children must know clearly that their own position in Christ is an uninterrupted union. Hence, our body is a member of the Lord. The life of the Lord can be manifested from our body. If the Lord were weak, anguished, and sick, we would have nothing. But since He is not, our union with Him can secure the health, power, and life of the Lord for us.

However, we must stress one point: this does not mean that since our body is a member of Christ, our body should sense all the spiritual fellowship and spiritual matters. Christians are often misled to think that since the body is a member of Christ, everything should be evidenced by the body. They think that God's presence should be felt in the body, that God shakes the body, and that the shaking of God is in the body. They think that God rules over the body directly, that the Holy Spirit fills the body, and that the Holy Spirit communicates His will to the body, using the tongue and mouth of the body to speak for Him. In this way, the body replaces the spirit in its work. As a result the spirit loses its function, and the body works for the spirit. Sometimes the body cannot endure much labor and breaks down. Furthermore, evil spirits, that is, spirits without a body, love nothing more than man's body. Their main purpose is to attach themselves to man's body. If a believer exalts the position of his body beyond what it should be, evil spirits will take the opportunity to work. This is in accordance with the law of the spiritual realm. If a believer thinks that God and His Spirit communicate with him through his body, he may expect God and His Spirit to communicate with him through his body. But God and His Spirit do not communicate directly through his body but through his spirit. If the believer still insists on pursuing after the experience of God in his body, evil spirits will take this opportunity to come into him because this is exactly what they want. The result is nothing other than evil spirits attaching themselves to the believer's body. When we speak about the union of our body with Christ, we are simply saying that the body can receive God's life and be strengthened by it, and that one should use it carefully because its position is so noble. We are not saying that the body can take over the work of the spirit.

Verse 18 says, "Flee fornication. Every sin which a man may do is outside the body, but he who commits fornication sins against his own body." The Bible considers the sin of fornication to be more serious than any other sin. This is because fornication is especially related to the body, while our body is a member of Christ. We should not be surprised that the apostle emphatically reminded and repeatedly exhorted the believers to flee fornication. We pay attention to the moral defilement of fornication. But this is not the apostle's emphasis. Other than fornication, no sin causes our body to be joined to that of another. Therefore, fornication offends the body. Other than fornication, no sin changes the members of Christ to members of a prostitute. Therefore, fornication is

a sin that offends the members of Christ. Because a believer is joined to Christ, fornication becomes all the more deplorable. We can look at it another way: if fornication is so deplorable, the union of our body with Christ must be very real. Verse 19 says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God." This is the second "do you not know." The first "do you not know" (v. 15) refers to "the body is...for the Lord." The second "do you not know" refers to "the Lord [is also] for the body." In 1 Corinthians 3:16 the apostle already told us that "you are the temple of God." But now he specifically says, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." This means that the residence of the Holy Spirit expands from the spirit to the body. It would be wrong to assume that the Holy Spirit first settles in our body as His residence; the Holy Spirit initially dwells in our spirit and only communicates directly with our spirit. But there is nothing to restrict Him from issuing His life from the spirit and giving life to our body. If we think that the Holy Spirit comes first to our body, we will be deceived. But if we limit the Holy Spirit only to our spirit, we will suffer loss.

We ought to know that our body has a place in God's salvation. Christ wants to sanctify our body and fill it with the Holy Spirit so that it can be a vessel for Him. Because His body has passed through death, resurrection, and glorification, He can supply the Holy Spirit to our body. Just as our soul-life saturated our body, His Holy Spirit will saturate our body. He wants to flow into every member and supply us with life and strength beyond what we can think. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. This is an established fact and something that we can experience in a living way. Many believers, like those in Corinth, seem to have forgotten this fact. Although the Holy Spirit is indwelling them, they appear as if He is not in them. We need faith to believe, acknowledge, and receive God's facts. If we claim them by faith, we will see the Holy Spirit not only put Christ's holiness, joy, righteousness, and love in our soul, but also put His life, power, health, and vigor into our weak, weary, and sick bodies. He will bring to our body the life of Christ Himself and the element of His glorified body. When our body is willing to obey Him completely, when we are willing to reject all self-will and independent action, and when we seek nothing other than to be a temple for the Lord, in short, if we have really died in Christ, the Holy Spirit will surely manifest the life of the resurrected Christ in our body. How wonderful it would be if we saw that the Lord, through His Spirit dwelling in us, heals us, strengthens us, and becomes our health and life! If we believe that our own body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we will follow the Spirit in awe and joy with much holiness and love.

First Corinthians 6:20 says, "For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body." The last part of verse 19 is a continuation of the question in the same verse. "Do you not know...you are not your own?" You are the members of Christ. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. You are not your own; you have been bought with a heavy price by God. All that is yours, especially your body, belongs to God. Christ is joined to you. The sealing of the Holy Spirit dwells in you. All this proves that your body belongs particularly to God. "So then glorify God in your body." Brothers, God wants us to glorify Him in our body. He wants us to glorify Him through a consecration in which "the body is...for the Lord," He wants us also to glorify Him through the grace in which "the Lord [is] for the body." Let us be sober and watchful, not allowing ourselves to employ our body for our own use, neither allowing our body to fall into a state as if the Lord is not for the body. Only then will we be able to glorify God, and only then will He be able to freely manifest His power. Then, on the one hand, we will be freed from selfishness, self-love, and sin, and on the other hand, we will be freed from weakness, sickness, and pain.