

1 Corinthians 6:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

Analysis

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Paul intensifies union-with-Christ theology. Melē Christou (μέλη Χριστοῦ, 'members of Christ')—believers' bodies are literally parts of Christ's body (12:27, Ephesians 5:30). Not metaphor: mystical union. Then the horrifying implication: **shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?** (aras oun ta melē tou Christou poiēsō pornēs melē; ἄρας οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσω πόρνης μέλη;)

Pornē (πόρνη, 'harlot, prostitute') was common in Corinth—temple prostitution and street trade. Paul's logic: sexual union joins bodies (v. 16), so sleeping with a prostitute unites Christ Himself to her. **God forbid** (mē genoito, μὴ γένοιτο, 'may it never be!')—Paul's strongest negative. The very idea is blasphemous. Sexual sin isn't private; it drags Christ into defiling union.

Historical Context

Corinth's Aphrodite cult may have involved sacred prostitution—religious sex as worship. Roman culture broadly tolerated prostitution as male prerogative. Male believers likely saw brothels as neutral recreation. Paul shocks them: you're not autonomous individuals—you're Christ's body parts. Your sexual choices implicate Him. This theology revolutionized sexual ethics: sex isn't recreational but covenantal, uniting persons at the deepest level (Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:31-32).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does union with Christ (your body as His member) change your view of sexual temptation and purity?
2. What would it mean to pause before sexual decisions and ask, 'Am I joining Christ to this act/person?'
3. How does Paul's visceral horror at sexual sin challenge casual cultural attitudes toward hook-up culture and pornography?

Interlinear Text

οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη; Χριστοῦ
not Know ye that G3588 bodies your the members of Christ
G3756 G1492 G3754 G4983 G5216 G3196 G5547

ἐστιν ἄρας οὖν τὰ μέλη; τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσω
are shall I then G3588 the members G3196 G3588 G5547 G4160
G2076 G142 G3767

πόρνης μέλη; μὴ γένοιτο
of an harlot the members God forbid G1096
G4204 G3196 G3361

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:30 (Parallel theme): For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Romans 12:5 (References Christ): So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Colossians 2:19 (References God): And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (References Christ): Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Ephesians 4:12 (References Christ): For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

1 Corinthians 6:19 (References God): What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 Corinthians 11:3 (References Christ): But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Luke 20:16 (References God): He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.