

1 Corinthians 6:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

Analysis

Flee fornication. Pheugete tēn porneian (φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν)—urgent, present imperative. Pheugō means 'run away, escape' (like Joseph from Potiphar's wife, Genesis 39:12). Don't debate, rationalize, or linger—flee! Porneia encompasses all sexual immorality outside marriage. Then Paul's unique claim: **Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.**

This is grammatically tricky. Paul likely quotes another Corinthian slogan ('every sin is outside the body'), then refutes it: ho de porneuōn eis to idion sōma hamartanei (ὁ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἁμαρτάνει, 'but the fornicator sins into his own body'). Eis ('into') suggests internal violation—sexual sin uniquely corrupts the body's integrity because it involves the body as subject, not just instrument. Other sins (theft, drunkenness) involve the body as tool; fornication involves the body as object, profaning its purpose as Christ's member and the Spirit's temple.

Historical Context

Ancient Corinthians distinguished sins: theft and fraud were serious (impacting property), but sexual license was trivial recreation. Paul inverts this: sexual sin uniquely violates the body's sacred purpose. His theology anticipates modern insights: sexual trauma affects persons more deeply than other violations because

sex engages the whole person—body, soul, emotions. 'Flee' was countercultural: Corinthian men boasted sexual exploits; Paul calls them to run like Joseph.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What situations, relationships, or media consumption require you to 'flee' rather than attempt to manage or resist gradually?
2. How does viewing sexual sin as uniquely self-destructive (sinning 'into' your own body) motivate purity without adding shame?
3. What accountability structures can help you flee temptation swiftly rather than lingering in compromising situations?

Interlinear Text

φεύγετε	τὴν	πορνείαν·	πᾶν	ἁμάρτημα	ὃ	ἐὰν	ποιήσῃ
Flee G5343	G3588	fornication G4202	Every G3956	sin G265	that G3739	G1437	doeth G4160
ἄνθρωπος	ἐκτὸς	τοῦ	σώμα	ἐστίν·	ὁ	δὲ	
a man G444	without G1622	G3588	body G4983	is G2076	G3588	but G1161	
πορνεύων		εἰς	τὸ	ἴδιον	σώμα	ἁμαρτάνει	
he that committeth fornication G4203		against G1519	G3588	his own G2398	body G4983	sinneth G264	

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:11 (Parallel theme): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (Parallel theme): For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

Colossians 3:5 (Parallel theme): Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

2 Timothy 2:22 (Parallel theme): Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Hebrews 13:4 (Parallel theme): Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Ephesians 5:3 (Parallel theme): But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

1 Corinthians 6:9 (Parallel theme): Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

2 Corinthians 12:21 (Sin): And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

1 Thessalonians 4:5 (Parallel theme): Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

Romans 1:24 (Parallel theme): Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: