

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

by Randy Keener

KEY VERSE:

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body. I Cor. 6:19-20

FAITH STORY:

I Corinthians 6:12-20

FAITH FOCUS:

Paul is writing to the church in Corinth. He explains to them that our bodies are temples of God, and members of Christ. He tells them that God should be glorified in our bodies.

SESSION GOAL:

Help students realize that our bodies are holy temples of Christ, bought with a price, so we need to treat them with love and respect.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Learn that Paul says our bodies are God's temple
- Identify ways in which they have treated their bodies in both healthy and unhealthy ways.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Paper, pencils
- 2 Bibles for all students
- 3 Digital camera and a laptop on which to show the pictures
- 4 Think about class members and some genuine compliments you can give each one of them (see Apply)
- 5 Arrange for an accomplished guitar player with a nice guitar to come to class (A Taylor guitar would be great!) Let the person know what is expected of them (see Focus and Respond.)
- 6 A hammer
- 7 A candle and lighter

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (5–7 minutes)

Welcome students to class and invite them to see/touch/play the guitar (with great care, of course.) Then invite the guitar player to talk about the guitar. Things that could be covered:

the easy action on the neck, beautiful full sound—other things that make the guitar a highly valuable instrument. The price should also be mentioned.

Then the player should say: “Sometimes my guitar doesn’t sound the way I want it to. When I feel this way, I sometimes take a hammer (pick up the hammer) and just smash the phooey out of it.”

At this point the person brings the hammer down right beside the guitar.

CONNECT: (5–7 minutes)

Ask: *If you owned this guitar and it didn’t always sound great, would you smash it? Why or why not?*

Say: *Just because something isn’t perfect all the time doesn’t mean we trash it. What do you own that is a little like a Taylor guitar?*

Give students a chance to respond and lead a discussion about cars, clothes, and other “valuable” items that are repaired, washed, treated with respect even when they are less than perfect.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (7–10 minutes)

Hand put Bibles and read I Corinthians 6:12-20. After reading the passage, divide into small groups. Ask each group to come up with answers to these questions:

- What does this passage have to do with a Taylor guitar?
- What is the main point of this passage?

Bring the class back together discuss their answers. The passage is about our bodies being the temple of God, purchased with the price of Jesus’ death on the cross. The comparison to the Taylor guitar is that our bodies are valuable, beautiful, and need to be treated with care and respect. The main point of the passage is we need to treat our bodies as if God is actually living within us, because God is! Paul is specifically addressing sexual immorality in this passage, and that is a huge area in which we need to respect our bodies and the bodies of others. See Insights from Scripture for additional points to be made in this mini-lecture.

APPLY: (10–15 minutes)

Invite students to use the digital camera to take pictures of each other—fun, crazy pictures of individuals, small groups—whatever they want to do. Load the pictures onto the laptop and look at them together. Share your compliments with each person as part of this process, and invite students to share compliments as well.

Say: *You are all beautiful people, each in a different way. You have made choices in your life to treat your body with respect at times, and you have made choices at times not to treat it as a temple of God. I’d like for you to take a few minutes to think about those times and to write them down. This is for your own reflection and you won’t have to share them with the class. Be honest. When would God say to you “Good job!” and when would God say, “That’s no way to treat my temple!”*

Hand out paper and pencils. Ask the guitar player to play a quiet reflective song as students spend time thinking and writing.

RESPOND: (5–10 minutes)

Set up 3 prayer stations. Place the guitar at one station, a Bible and candle at the second station, and the computer showing the pictures you took today at the third station. Invite students to take turns at the stations, and to spend time praying there. Encourage them to think about the value of their bodies at the guitar, the Holy Spirit's presence in their bodies at the Bible, and their commitment to respecting their bodies at the computer.

Close with a group prayer.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

Paul's instructions that the body is a temple of God, and that the body belongs to God carry huge implications for what we do with our bodies. It may be hard to identify with the powerful temple imagery because in our culture, we don't have a place that is revered as the singular dwelling place of God. Still, if we can impress upon our youth (and ourselves too!) that the Holy Spirit dwells within our body, perhaps we can change how we view the "right" we feel we have to do what we want to with our body. All through the Bible, we see the importance placed on holiness and sexual purity. Perhaps we need to work harder at our approach to sex education within the church, emphasizing the fact that if the Spirit dwells within us, we don't have the right to engage in sexual immorality. In Paul's words, "Do you not know.... that you are not your own? You were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." If we belong to God, we are not free to invent our own moral standards or do anything we like.

It might be tempting to say we can't fight against the peer pressure and the cultural influences our teens face. True, but it is our responsibility to share the truth as we understand it, and leave the rest up to God's spirit. Not only do we share the message, but we must live it out if we expect teens to take us seriously. If we teach them that our body is the temple of God, but we are significantly overweight, what does that say to them?

Paul's words in this passage address sexual immorality, but the bigger picture is that our bodies are not our own. The bigger issue is taking care of the amazing temple that our spirit has been given to live in while here on the earth.

WORKS CITED:

Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, First Corinthians. Richard B. Hays, John Knox Press, 1997