

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Glorifying God In Your Body

By Heath Rogers

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

God is to be glorified by all of His creation. To glorify means to praise, exalt or honor God. This is done both by our worship and by our obedience to His will. The word *“glorify”* also means to give recognition to one’s honor and majesty in a way that causes others to do likewise.

The Bible gives us a number of reasons why we are to glorify God with our physical body. First, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in us (1 Cor. 6:19-20). A temple is a dwelling place for a deity, a place where he is worshiped and served. No one who is devoted to a deity will desecrate a temple devoted to the deity. Second, our body was made by God (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; Psa. 139:13-14). God took the time to make man from the dust of the ground, and He took the time to form our body in the womb of our mother. The human body stands as a testament to God’s divine wisdom and creative power. Third, our body is not our own. The Christian has been purchased with a great price (the blood of Jesus Christ).

All of these truths point to one undeniable fact – our body belongs to God. It is His by right of creation and redemption. As such, God has every right to be interested in the way that we use our body. He has every right to tell us how to use our body, and to expect that it be used in a way that brings Him glory. How do we glorify God in our body?

Not Using Our Body As An Instrument of Sin. Sin may begin in the heart, and some sins may be committed in our thoughts, attitudes, words, or inactivity, but many sins are committed with our body.

Christians are to consider themselves to be dead to sin (Rom. 6:11-13). We are not to present our body as a willing participant in sin, but as an instrument of righteousness to God’s will and glory.

1 Corinthians 6:13-18 specifies the sin of fornication. There is something about the sin of fornication that is different from all other sins. Fornication affects a person both emotionally and physically. It is a sin against our own body. It takes our physical body and joins it to another in a way that is not lawful before God. Sexual desires are to be fulfilled only within the marriage bond. We are to remain sanctified by abstaining from fornication. We must control our body in sanctification and honor, not give in to aroused passions or lusts (1 Thess. 4:3-5).

The Way We Present Our Body. Appearances are important. They are a type of non-verbal communication. As a Christian, our appearance says something about us and about the God that we serve.

As one who is professing godliness, Christians are to be adorning themselves appropriately. *“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works”* (1 Tim. 2:9-10, KJV). Paul sets forth three principles which are to govern our appearance.

1. **Modest** (proper - NASV; respectable - ESV). The word modest is translated from a word that means orderly or well-arranged; that which fits in and is appropriate. Refers to a mindset that does not seek to stand out or draw undue attention to oneself.
2. **Shamefacedness** (propriety - NKJV; modesty - NASV, ESV). This term refers to having a sense of shame, knowing the boundaries between right and wrong.
3. **Sobriety** (moderation - NKJV; discretely - NASV; self-control - ESV). A person who is sober is in control of himself. This is the willingness and ability to stop ourselves from going beyond recognized boundaries.

These principles must be applied to our clothing. Modesty requires us to dress in a way that is considered acceptable for the occasion. Most people will dress appropriately for different occasions (working in the yard, playing at a friend's house, applying for employment, attending a funeral, etc.). For example, when Joseph was called from prison to come before Pharaoh, he was shaved and given a change of clothing (Gen. 41:14). Jesus spoke of a man being removed from a wedding feast because he did not have on proper attire (Matt. 22:11-13).

Shamefacedness and sobriety will stop us from wearing provocative clothing. The clothing industry deliberately designs clothes that will attract sexual attention to the wearer. Clothing that reveals the flesh or form of the human body will send a message and will attract attention. The Bible recognizes this fact, speaking of the *"attire of a harlot"* (Prov. 7:10). Clothing will do what it is designed to do – regardless of the wearer's intentions. It is impossible for a Christian to profess godliness while wearing the *"attire of a harlot."*

Tattoos and body piercings. These principles regulating our appearance apply to more than our clothing. For the time being, tattoos and body piercings cause one to stand out from society, and as such they violate the principle of modesty. It is true that things change, and these "fashion statements" may one day become norms in our society. For instance, there was a time when a woman with pierced ears was looked upon as a prostitute, and when a man with an earring in one particular ear was considered to be a homosexual. This is no longer the case. Social mores have changed with regard to these ideas, and they may very well change with regard to tattoos and body piercings. However, the principles of modesty, shamefacedness, and moderation will not allow a Christian to be on the cutting edge of such a societal change. For the time being, a Christian's desire to get tattoos and body piercings is more of an indication of worldliness than godliness.

Tattoos and body alterations are permanent. A statement made while one is in his youth will lose its "coolness" in time. What do you think these tribal arm bands, tramp stamps, and stretched-out ear lobes will look like on the bodies of sixty or seventy-year-olds? Think about it.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). We would not desecrate a temple by spray painting pictures on the walls or punching holes all over the exterior. Isn't the Christian doing the same thing when he tattoos or pierces his body? Think about it.

Our body is not our own to alter the way we choose. If God wanted pictures of our favorite animals, sports team logos, names of our loved ones, black stars, or peace signs on our bodies, don't you think He would have put them there? How would you feel if you loaned your car to a friend and he returned it with a picture of an eagle painted on the hood or decorative holes punched in the fender? Someday we will have to turn this body back in to the owner. He has not given us permission to make alterations to express our passing whims and interests. Think about it.

The Way We Treat Our Body. We are to be good stewards of the blessings that we have received from God, including our physical body. Our body is an instrument to be used in our service to God. However, while we are in this body, we are to take care of this body. We need to exercise (1 Tim. 4:8), eat properly, and abstain from things that harm the body (tobacco, alcohol, drugs).

A disturbing trend among some people is a practice called "cutting." While it may seem strange to us for an individual to willingly harm their own body, it is actually done as a means of exercising control. The result is that physical scars are left on one's body. Of course, the ultimate harm that one can do to their body is to take their own life. Our body was not given to us so that we could harm and destroy it. We must take care of it.

Good Works Done With Our Body. We have been created and redeemed for good works (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14). When these good works are done, they will be seen by others who will then glorify the God that we serve (Matt. 5:16). Some of these works are helping those who are in need, praying in public places, visiting sick and shut-ins, attending funerals, standing up for righteousness, etc.

God cares about the heart, but He also cares about our physical body. While we may have a good heart, we need to understand that the sins we commit in the body still count as sins, and the wages of sin is still death.

To glorify God, we must bring our body into subjection to the will of God, we must adorn it in a way that professes godliness, we must give it the proper care, and we must employ it in a life of service to God and good works to our fellow man. – *Knollwood church of Christ Articles*, August, 2013. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250