

**Honor the Dwelling Place of the Lord
Tattoos, Body Piercing and Temple Defilement**

Scripture

Date

OPENING

Here's where I interject one of those bonus items. You know the ones you're not really sure that you want me to mention.

Let me start by saying one word, "tattoos". (wait) Okay, now that I have your attention please listen carefully so that nothing I say is taken out of context.

Before you get offended and allow the enemy to create division in your heart by saying "He's preaching right at me", I want you to know that I am not addressing an individual, but a symptom that could lead to an epidemic.

Please focus on my words and do not allow yourselves to be caught up with one particular

sentence and miss the rest of the explanation.

It was suggested to me that I shouldn't mention this issue because of its sensitivity and the offence it could generate.

I believe that we have received enough teaching that we, as true Disciples of Christ, desire to know the truth because the longing of our heart is to be more like Him.

So my love for His Word supercedes any fear of offence and my confidence in your maturity overturns any fear of rejection to God's Word.

I have been grieved after observing several incidents regarding tattooing within the Body of Christ over the past few weeks.

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A while ago I was at a local sports event and over heard a wife of one of the elders in one of our local churches. This person and one of the members of their pastoral staff were discussing their new tattoos as if they had really accomplished something. Hey, let's mark our bodies, cool!

I'll admit I was "this" close to getting a tattoo before I went into the military. I had it all picked out, but the Spirit of the Lord kept reminding me that He had not approved what I was going to do to His Temple and that He was in charge of all building programs and remodeling of this temple. SO, by the grace of God I was given the strength to walk out.

After I saw these two individuals talking I couldn't

quite figure out how the church can get so caught up in trends that directly contradict God's Word.

But that's when God reminded me that although many continue this practice in open rebellion to God's Word, there are many more who have never been instructed any differently.

He also reminded me that instruction in His Word is the reason He has placed me here and if I fail to bring this instruction, I then void my purpose... and my calling.

Tattooing is a desensitizing of our spirit man to the Word of God (by justifying our actions) and the defilement of our physical man as the Temple of God (by taking back our bodies

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as our own and placing graffiti on the walls of His Temple).

This is not necessarily any better or worse than alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sexual addictions, overeating, backbiting, gossiping or any other defilement of God's temple.

Nevertheless, it needs to be addressed on an individual level today so there is no mistake where the Lord apparently stands on this issue.

I am not going to read all of the scriptures to you, but I will give you the references and those who are true disciples will research this for themselves.

In Leviticus 19:28 the Lord tells us not to cut or print any marks

in our flesh for the dead or for any other reason.

Leviticus 19:28

"Never **cut** your bodies in mourning for the dead or **mark** your skin with **tattoos**, for I am the Lord.

There are some who justify this by saying that their tattoos have nothing to do with the dead. But follow through on the whole verse and you'll realize God is saying don't defile your body for any reason.

What the Lord was referring to here wasn't just dead people in general, but memorials to those who had died. There is no higher honor than for someone to erect a memorial to someone who has died.

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Think about it, graveyards, tombstones, plaques of dedication, entire stone walls built to honor those who have died in war, our nations capital is primarily made up of memorial after memorial to those who have engraved their signature on the history of our country.

These body markings were memorials to the dead and were considered honorable. To think that someone held such a position of esteem that an individual would sacrifice their own flesh to engrave or mark a memorial to them was to hold them in the highest position of honor.

The marking was done in various ways, not just limited to "tattooing" as we see tattooing today. The very nature of

tattooing itself, represents the definition for defilement in every area of marking. It would be akin to our use of the word graffiti today. Graffiti is the inappropriate and unauthorized marking on and degrading of someone else's property.

Tattooing or marking included, but was not limited to, cuttings, engravings, inscriptions, incisions, impressions, body-piercing, branding, etc. These were inflicted upon a person through the use of ink, knives, gouging instruments, hot irons, awls for piercing and other various tools.

The children of Israel had learned this practice while in exile in Egypt. This was a **pagan** ritual that God was trying to purify them from. It was time for them to

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consecrate themselves to Him and no one else.

Remember when Elijah battled the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18? When Baal didn't respond to the prophet's sacrifice they became so desperate that they began cutting themselves as an offering unto their god.

1 Kings 18:28-29

So they shouted louder, and **following their normal custom**, they **cut** themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. [29] They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no reply, no voice, no answer.

It's even feasible to think that many of them were carving into their flesh the name of Baal in order to find favor.

The interesting thing is that **Elijah never cut himself once**, nor did he mark on his body or dance around in desperation. He stood before his God in pure confidence of God's power and ability to prove Himself and watched as the offering to His God was consumed in an instant.

I believe that the reason the Lord used the reference to the dead was to enforce the intensity of this commandment. If He disapproved of something as highly respected as a memorial being engraved or printed in your body for the dead, then He definitely disapproved of such markings for any other reason.

The Young's Literal Translation says that you are not to put any

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marks or even **crosses** on your body.

So those who have justified their markings as “religious”, I will say this, God never gave you permission to mark yourselves, He never gave you commandment to do such things, God doesn’t want you to mark His Temple, not even with a cross, a religious symbol or even His Name. Why? Because He alone is the one who will mark you as His own, He alone wants to be the one to write *His Name* upon you and He alone will be the one to write upon you the new name of *Christ*. Defining you forever as His eternal child.

After researching the original language, a literal translation of Leviticus 19:28 would read as follows:

“You are not given permission to put upon, inflict upon yourself or publish impressions, inscriptions, marks, or incisions on your body in memory of those who are dead. (Same word used here as at the beginning of verse 28) You are not given permission to put upon your body ANY infliction, ANY publication, ANY impressions, inscriptions, marks, or incisions. I have spoken, for I am Jehovah, the Lord, the One true Holy One.”

Is it mere coincidence that the references to cutting and marking on oneself is sandwiched between scriptures condemning fortunetelling, sorcery, astrology, séances, whoredom and prostitution? Could there be a correlation?

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Yes, they all defile your holiness before God.

I am not a brain-child, but is this clear to anyone else. I'm not the shiniest apple in the basket and yet this seems clear even to me.

MARKINGS IN SCRIPTURE

According to scripture, there are three specific times of marking. Either by God, Jesus or the Antichrist.

God

- When He marked Cain because of his sin.
Genesis 4:15-16
The Lord replied, "They will not kill you, for I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who does." Then **the Lord put a mark on Cain** to warn anyone who might try to kill

him. [16] So Cain left the Lord's presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

- When He marks the 144,000 during the tribulation.

Rev. 14:1

Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had **his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.**

Jesus

- When He marks the overcomer.
Rev. 3:12
All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And **I will write my God's name on them**, and they will be citizens in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem

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that comes down from heaven from my God. And **they will have my new name inscribed upon them.**

tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. [11] The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, **for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name.**

Antichrist

- When he marks the masses for the last days.

Rev. 13:16

He required everyone—great and small, rich and poor, slave and free—to be **given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead.**

MESSAGE BODY

One of the notable differences here is that God places His mark on you personally and it does not defile His Temple, it consecrates it. He needs no assistance from you or any manmade device, just obedience to His Word.

Rev. 14:9-11

Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or **who accepts his mark on the forehead or the hand** [10] must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath. And they will be

The Antichrist however, can only give you a manmade mark and comes against the

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instruction in Leviticus. This mark is inspired by satan and applied by man, but is allowed by the individual.

Tattoos are being justified, even by the church, as seemingly innocent markings that have been a part of our society for years.

Our willing participation or acceptance of these rituals are a sure sign of a rebellious heart and people. As we continue to offend God our hearts become more and more callous, not only to the commandments of God's Word, but to the sensing of God's Spirit.

This disobedience desensitizes us and become the forerunners to the mark of the beast.

We buy our children stickers that look like tattoos, we let them write various designs on each other's skin, and then we are surprised when one day they come home with a tattoo.

"Oh, don't get radical Pastor Rob." Well maybe we should all get a little more radical. Think about it, as we as a society become desensitized to God's Word and promote markings on our bodies, our children will eventually think that it's not a problem and when the Antichrist makes his announcement to the world that a mark is now required, it will be no big deal.

This is absolutely not a message of condemnation, but of warning.

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We need to exercise wisdom in all areas of our life. Continuing to come into alignment with God's Word.

Some commentary writers felt that these rituals were so strongly and wisely forbidden by GOD, because they represented signs of apostasy or a defection of the Christian faith in direct rebellion to God's instruction regarding Holiness; and, when once made, they were insuperable or in other words overwhelming obstacles (but not impossible) to overcome in order to return to a right standing with God.

Sin is sin, it is a disobedience to a direct command and sin separates us from God.

If you have markings on your body, whether it was before or

even after your conversion to Christ, God can and will definitely forgive you.

But first you have to recognize it as sin, and if you knew better even as an act of rebellion. Before you can be forgiven, you must see your need for forgiveness and repent.

Also, if you have a spouse, children or friends that witnessed this act of rebellion they need to also witness your repentance. As you share with them the error of your ways you can then share with them the awesome grace and mercy of God's forgiveness.

It's our choice, it always is. Our choice to walk with God in obedience to His Word, or walk away from Him in rebellion of His Word.

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APPLICATION

This topic is one that I would not want to preach an entire sermon on. Number one, because it shouldn't be necessary. Number two, because as Disciples there are three ways that we make change.

Divinely, Developmentally and Directly.

Divinely is when we make a conscious choice to give something to God that is completely out of our control and it is miraculously responded to and taken care of by God.

Example: We could not save ourselves so we had to make a conscious choice to receive His

atonement or payment for our sins through the blood of Jesus.

Developmentally is when we make a conscious choice to give something to God but requires a consistent application on our part and is processed out through a daily dying to the flesh.

Example: You have made a conscious choice to stop gossiping and in addition to praying for God's strength you must commit to taking a daily stand in your life to defeat this demonic influence.

Directly (immediately) is when we make a conscious choice to give something to God that requires no divine revelation just obedience.

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Example: You have read in the scriptures where God requires the tithe of all of our increase. There is no room for discussion or need for divine revelation. It requires immediate obedience to God's Word, and as we obey God will bless us with a greater understanding of His principles.

The issue that we have just discussed is one of those **Direct** issues. You now are required to make a conscious choice to either follow God's direction or turn away.

The Old Testament , with its high view of the goodness of the body as part of God's creation, disallowed it. The New Testament reinforces the principle with the assertion that the Christian's body is a temple

OT Old Testament
NT New Testament

of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

1 Cor. 6:19-20

Or don't you know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit**, who lives in you and was given to you by God? **You do not belong to yourself**, [20] for God bought you with a high price. So **you must honor God with your body**.

CLOSING

Please, I encourage you to let the Holy Spirit do the work. If we are doing anything contrary to God's Word and we begin to justify ourselves, that is an immediate red flag signaling us that our self-will is still trying to be in control and it's time to die, once again, to our flesh.

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I love and appreciate all of you.
Believe me if I didn't care I
could have a lot more friends
by just avoiding all of these
hard issues. But I do care and
my commission from God is
very clear. Develop Disciples...
and prepare my bride. I am
coming for a glorious church,
without a spot or wrinkle or any
other blemish. Instead, she will
be holy and without fault.(Eph
5:27).

Leviticus chapter 19 is directly
related to the Holiness of God
and sanctity of the law, a calling
to His people to be Holy.

Leviticus 20:7-8

So **set yourselves apart to
be holy**, for I, the Lord, am
your God. [8] **Keep all my laws
and obey them**, for I am the
Lord, who makes you holy.