

Maximize – Maximize God's Temple

Feb. 16 – Pastor Randy

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize 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, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

There are two aspects to being a faithful steward of your physical body.

1. First of all, as faithful stewards of our bodies, we will take measures to care for the health of the body. Because I am called to put my body to work for the glory of God, the good of myself, my family and my neighbor, the physical condition of my body is a spiritual issue.

The physical body cannot be separated from the spirit. The outer affects the inner and the inner affects the outer. Your spiritual health will impact your emotional and mental health which will in turn impact your physical health. Your physical health also impacts your emotional mental health which in turn impacts your spiritual health. Someone suffering from chronic pain or fatigue will have a more difficult time resisting the temptation to be depressed or irritable. Many people become more susceptible to temptation when they are under stress.

The fact is the Bible does not have much to say explicitly about maintaining your physical health. Even when the subject of gluttony is addressed the main issues of concern are:

1. An over-indulgence on food and drink disregards the needs of the poor.
2. An over-indulgence consumes all of one's resources leading to poverty.
3. It's close association with drunkenness which leads to immoral conduct.

However, just because the Bible does not speak explicitly and directly about maintaining one's physical health, it does so implicitly and indirectly in many

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places. First of all, it is clearly implied by the truth stated in our opening passage; if our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and belong to God, of course we should take good care of them. In Ephesians 6, Paul wrote to husbands to nourish their wives as they would their own body. He addressed husbands from the assumption that, of course they take care of their own body. Therefore, if you are one with your wife, you ought to care for her with the same degree of diligence!

Jesus demonstrated concern for his own and his disciples' physical health. *The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. Mark 6:30-33*

Some Christians, even ministers, have made a virtue out of being workaholics but I can assure you that burnout is not a sign of spirituality.

Stewardship of our body must be distinguished from worship of the body.

Last week we learned that faithful financial stewardship is hindered when we become proud of our wealth or trust in our wealth. I mentioned that pride is evidence that our wealth has replaced God as the ultimate source of our status and trusting in our wealth is evidence that wealth has replaced God as our ultimate source of security. Pride in wealth and trust in wealth turns wealth into an idol.

The same principle can be applied to stewardship of our bodies. Good stewardship means taking care of the health of our bodies. But we must exercise caution that we don't become so obsessed with our bodies that we turn them into an idol; an object of worship. Faithful stewardship of our bodies is an expression of worship to God, not an expression of worship of the body itself.

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Body worship is a prevalent phenomenon in our society. Some people have become so obsessed with their physical prowess and appearance that they have jeopardized their health to attain such. Steroid use is the most obvious example. Elective cosmetic surgery has exploded. I am not criticizing surgery to reconstruct physical defects, but the obsessions with physical appearance.

2. Being a faithful steward of our bodies also means we will devote our body to actions that glorify God.

In our opening text from 1 Corinthians 6, Paul was addressing the issue of sexual sin. When Paul told them to run from sexual temptation, he did not base his command on the fact that such behavior violated the law of God, although it does. Paul offered a more fundamental and profound reason: Christians must avoid sexual sin because their bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit. They are sacred, set apart for activity that glorifies God. Then he goes even deeper and explains how the Christians body has become the temple of the Holy Spirit. We were bought by God with a high price! We are no longer free to do with our bodies what we please. We must now honor God with our bodies.

There are several words in the NT that describe what Jesus accomplished for us through his death and resurrection. Each once describes an aspect of God's saving work in Christ. One of those words is redemption, and although it is not used in this passage the meaning of redemption is expressed by the phrase, "bought by God with a high price".

Throughout the NT we find language that connects sinful activity to specific body parts. Jesus referred to the eyes, hands, and feet as sources of offending behavior. In Romans chapter 3, Paul, quoting from the OT, speaks about those who deceive with their tongues, curse with their mouths, and have feet that are swift to shed blood. In Romans 6:13 we read,

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Of course this is figurative language. Obviously my eyes don't have a mind and will of their own. If they look inappropriately it is only because I willed them to do so. When someone goes after another person to attack them physically, their feet did not move them to attack without permission.

In all these cases, the specific body part in mention is acting at the will and direction of the person, so the point is that we have to steward - direct and control - our bodies so that they perform righteous rather than sinful actions.

This point is summed in Romans 6:13 which reads,

Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.

The flow of Paul's thought in the first 12 verses in Romans chapter 6 is that those who have been made right with God through faith in Christ have also been united with Christ in His victory over sin and death which He accomplished through his crucifixion and resurrection. Take a look:

"Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from

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the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.

Being that we are baptizing six individuals today, this is a great time to give attention to this passage. It describes in words the powerful picture which water baptism paints of salvation. Water baptism is a picture of death and resurrection; both Jesus death and resurrection and ours. Here is what Paul is saying: Through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior we are joined with Him. It is as if we got on his back and went through death with him. We didn't actually die and suffer the consequences for our sin, but it is as if we did because of our union with him. In death our sins are paid for. But Jesus didn't just die. Because he was without sin; perfectly righteous, sin could not defeat him and death could not hold him. He rose again in victory over sin and death; taking along with him all those who have become united with him through faith. We are now freed from sin and death because we are IN HIM, The Victor over sin and death. David conquered Goliath and Israel was victorious.

Now we can use our bodies as instruments to do what is right for the glory of God. Fists that were used to crush become hands that help. Tongues that were used to tear down now speak words that build up. Mouths filled with cursing become mouths filled with praise and gratitude. Eyes engaged in voyeurism and ears tuned to gossip become eyes focused on the beauty of holiness and ears in tune with the voice of Spirit.

In the words of an old hymn of the church, "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord for thee. Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love. Take my feet and let them be swift & beautiful for Thee. Take my voice and let me sing, always, only for my King. Take my lips and let them be, filled with messages from thee.

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