

CHRISTIAN TATTOOS?

Lesson 1

History and OT Commands

Tattooing and body-modifying arts have become epidemically popular in the last 20 years, even working their way into the Church. What was once found only among sailors, prisoners, and harlots is now common in the pulpit and on the worship team. Any fad or technique the Church borrows from the world must be viewed with a leery eye of caution and investigated with every tool at hand. Let us look at a brief synopsis of body art.

- Nearly every pagan culture involves some form of self-mutilating body art.
- Most pagan religions involve cutting and piercing in their worship; from the Muslim dervishes of Turkey, to the Shaolin Monks of Tibet, to the Hindus of India.
- For some cultures, the process of tattooing is a borderline worship experience (Tibetan tattoos).
- In the Bible, the prophets of Baal (a demon) cut themselves in their worship of this dead god.
- Jesus cast the devil out of a man who was driven of devils to cut himself with rocks.
- The body art we see creeping into America has its roots among pagan cultures and in demon worship. Piercing, tattooing, branding, scarification, gauging and plating: these techniques were not taught to us by a loving God but were developed and propagated by individuals that worshipped devils.

FORBIDDEN BY THE BIBLE

It should be noted, there is only one verse in the entire Bible speaking directly to the act of tattooing: **Leviticus 19:28**. (However, there are many verses forbidding cutting.) For some, **Leviticus 19:28** is enough motivation to never mark their bodies. For others, this verse stands in their way and must be excused. For this reason, this passage and other Old Testament passages are discounted and even totally discarded. We must address these issues.

HOW DOES THE OT APPLY TO US TODAY?

- Not everything in the Old Testament is the Law. The Old Testament contains books of history, poetry, and prophecy. Technically, the Law is contained in part of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and part of Deuteronomy.
- The Old Testament was recorded as an example to warn us.
 - **Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.**

1 Cor. 10:6,11

- The law does not make you righteous, but it can teach you what holiness looks like. Obeying the law will not make you righteous, but it will make you holy.
- We are redeemed from the curse of the law (**Galatians 3:13**), not the Law.
- The law was fulfilled, not abolished. The law will not pass away until all has been fulfilled. Jesus fulfilled the sacrifices and rituals. We must live a life fulfilling the moral laws, e.g., thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not lie with a beast, etc.
- The New Testament directly quotes the Old Testament 695 times and references the Old Testament over 4,100 times.
- With so many NT verses tying us to the OT, it's hard to view the OT as obsolete in our lives.

LEVITICUS 19

Does **Leviticus 19** have anything to offer us today? The whole subject of **Leviticus 19** is summed up in verse 2: **Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.** This is the summary statement for the next 35 verses. **Leviticus 19** teaches the reader how to be holy. These verses were written to help Israel be different from the surrounding nations and to be a people separated unto God.

The following is a summary of those 35 verses.

- V.3- Honor your mom and dad and go to church.
- V.4- Flee idols and don't make another golden calf.
- V.5- Give offerings willingly and with a proper heart.
- V.6-8- God's offerings are holy. Don't treat them flippantly.
- V.9,10- Don't be greedy in your business. Support the poor and the stranger.
- V.11- Don't steal, lie, or cheat.
- V.12- If you're a believer, keep your word. Don't use your faith as a cop-out.
- V.13- Don't defraud or rob anybody. Pay your employees on time.
- V.14- Don't abuse the handicapped.
- V.15- Be righteous in your courts of law. Don't have respect of persons.
- V.16- Don't be a gossip or slanderer. Help when your neighbor's life is in danger.
- V.17- Confront people directly if they have sinned against you so you won't develop hate in your heart for your brother.
- V.18- Don't hold grudges or avenge transgressions. Love your neighbor as yourself.
- V.19a- Don't interbreed cattle. They would have had to do business with the Canaanites to acquire an outside breed.
- V.19b- Don't sow mixed seed in your field. This was the idolatrous practice of the Zabians (fire worshippers). They did so with magical rites and incantations.
- V.19c- Don't wear a garment of cotton and wool interwoven. (Wool, being a filthy material, represents the lamb's contact with the world. Cotton, being a

- clean material that grows pure and stands above the world, represents holiness.)
- V.20-22- Fornication is sinful and carnal and punishable. Do not take advantage of women.
 - V.23-25- The fruit of the new land must be cleansed, then tithed upon, then enjoyed.
 - V.26a- Don't eat anything "over" the blood- a reference to spiritism.
 - V.26b- Don't go to the psychics or astrology for guidance.
 - V.27- Don't cut hair like the heathen. (This hairstyle was a demon priest hairstyle.)
 - V.29- Don't prostitute your daughter.
 - V.30- Keep My day holy and honor My sanctuary.
 - V.31- Don't respect those that are demonized and don't seek after wizards.
 - V.32- Respect the elders.
 - V.33- Don't oppress immigrants.
 - V.34- Love the immigrant and give him a chance.
 - V.35,36- Be honest in all of your endeavors.
 - Therefore verse 28- **Don't cut or tattoo yourself, I am the LORD.**

God wants us to be different from the world around us. If you are embracing the world you are becoming God's enemy (**James 4:4**).

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Lesson 2

Do You Have the Right?

One common misconception propagated by the spirit of the world and heathen is: your body is your own to do with as you please. This lie feeds the sins of fornication, abortions, and body vandalism. Biblically, your body belongs to God and it is to be a living sacrifice.

YOUR BODY IS NOT YOUR OWN

- **What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**
1 Cor. 6:19,20
- **Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile [*destroy*] the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.**
1 Cor. 3:16,17

Vandalism is defined as deliberate destruction or damage to public or private property. Even today, vandalism is an offense punishable by the courts of law. Art without permission is vandalism. Our bodies are God's sanctuary. If we graffiti it without His permission—it is tantamount to temple vandalism. His court of law will have plenty to say about it.

LUST AND INSECURITY: THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

- **If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**
2 Timothy 2:21,22

The context of this passage is what kind of Christians are in the house of God. According to Paul there are only two types of vessels in the Church: vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. Paul states if you want to be a vessel of honor, then you must purge your life from the dishonorable or dirty vessels. This means you get the dirty Christians out of your life. This leads into verse 22. Paul is basically saying "flee dirty Christians." Then he says, "flee also youthful lust."

Youthful lust isn't just sex. What is the one thing all young people long for? Acceptance. To be judged as "cool." Youthful lust is the desire to be unique and individual. The desire to be accepted is the reason young people will smoke,

fornicate, pierce themselves, tattoo themselves, etc. This strong desire to be accepted is what drives immature people to be cool, to be accepted, to make a statement, and to rebel.

TATTOOS AS A STUMBLING BLOCK

- **But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. Wherefore, if meat [or tattoos] make my brother to offend (*stumble*), I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend (*stumble*).**

1 Cor. 8:9,13

The Greek word for “offend” in these verses is *skandalizo*. This is where we get our English word *scandal* or *scandalous*.

This word means:

- to cause to trip and fall
- to entice to sin
- to cause a person to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey
- to see in another what I disapprove of and what hinders me from acknowledging his authority

These definitions definitely describe the affect of tattooing in the Church today.

Would a pure and clean Christian be involved in anything scandalous? Scandals are for heathen politicians, actors, musicians, and such like.

- **But whoso shall offend [*skandalizo*] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**

Matthew 18:6

Here, Jesus states, if your lifestyle or choices as a believer in Jesus Christ cause another believer in Jesus Christ to go astray or sin, then it would be better for you if you were to be drowned in the sea.

- **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**

2 Thess. 5:22

What is the atmosphere of a tattoo parlor? Who had what tattooed where on them before you sat in the chair? Who had what pierced in the chair before you laid back to get inked? Don't forget you are spending God's resources on this tattoo. What is the spiritual condition of the man who is about to touch you and what was he doing last night?

SELF-CONTROL: IT'S STILL A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Lay's Potato Chips has a slogan: “Bet you can't eat just one!” It seems this maxim holds true for tattoos. Many have testified how addictive they are.

- **But the fruit of the Spirit is love...temperance [*self-control or self-restraint*]: against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22,23**

One of the fruit or evidences of the Holy Spirit working in your life is self-restraint. The Holy Spirit will anoint you to control your flesh. Anyone given over to tattooing demonstrates an obvious lack of self-restraint.

NT SCRIPTURES ERRONEOUSLY OFFERED AS SUPPORT FOR TATTOOS

Christians who want to sin will always find a Biblical justification.

- Jesus had piercings.
 - If you want Jesus type piercing you need to have railroad spikes driven into your hands and feet and you need to have a spear pierce your side, through your diaphragm, lung and into your heart.
- Jesus has His name written on His thigh (**Revelation 19:16**).
 - And out of His mouth goes a two edged sword. Will we start sword swallowing as well?
- Paul bore in his body the marks of the LORD (**Galatians 6:17**).
 - These marks (*stigmata*) are references to the literal flesh branding or flesh carving a master would inflict on his slave. The slave could also be branded by having a metal collar welded around his neck. (This collar would have the owner's name inscribed upon it.) We understand Paul to speak of the scars his body had incurred for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These scars of persecution were a natural-outward proof Paul belonged to Jesus Christ. Many pagans have Christian symbols tattooed on their flesh proving nothing.
- **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 2 Cor. 6:17,18**