



Series:	Reference:	Title:	Date:
Ruin to Renovation	Colossians 3/Romans 5	Body Stewardship	06.17.18
Website Writeup:			
As a continuation of our body discussion in spiritual formation, we gain some practical steps in light of the Scriptural call to steward our bodies well for the glory of Christ.			

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Thanks to Dallas Willard, this series is born out of his book, *Renovation of the Heart*. Many of his thoughts & words make it into these sermons; read the book as you follow along.

We've been in this series, *Ruin to Renovation*, for 21 weeks now. Last week we addressed the body saying it's good, created by God, and filled with desires, passions & feelings which, although aren't necessarily sinful themselves, they can lead us into sin if they don't come under the Lordship of Jesus. We train & condition our bodies, which is tied to our passions & desires, creating false needs contrary to the life of Christ in bodies. Therefore, at times, the body becomes problematic in that it's already conditioned in habitual ways which need to be submitted & transformed in Christ to walk well in faith. We're called to live responsibly in our bodies for the glory of Jesus.

If we look at Colossians 3 it will give us some ground to work from in this idea of Body Stewardship...*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Our bodies follow the mind into whatever we set our will upon. Scripture speaks of our future resurrected glorified bodies, although we can't fully imagine what that means, we know God values our physical bodies; what we do in them matters. He's recreating the heavens & earth, of which we are a physical part.

He continues in Colossians to direct us to...*⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires & greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

All these things we do in the body - unfit for the regenerate person, not glorifying to Jesus, nor healthy for us & others - but the new self in Christ is being renewed in the knowledge in the image of its Creator - that wording is intentional - we're changed by the knowledge of God's Word to us, into his image, or character.

Paul gives us further direction in this...*¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy & dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness &*

patience. ¹³ Bear with each other & forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach & admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

So, we remember Romans 12:1-2 from last week where we're to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, our true & proper worship, which is what Colossians 3 speaks of doing. That we worship God by what we do with & in our bodies! **So Paul tells us in Romans 6:8-14...**
⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So, Christ opened up the floodgate of power for us to live in victory in these areas through his death & resurrection.

As a result, Paul instructs...*¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.*

All these passages work together, speaking of the same things. Offering our bodies as a living sacrifice in glorification, obedience & sacrifice to Christ! We're a new creation in Christ, the old has gone, the new come (2 Co 5:17), but we live in bodies still sometimes conditioned to that which is unnatural for the regenerate person. So, we need to be intentional in our submission to Jesus...but how? Today I want to give you a few practical steps to do this well.

Firstly, Dallas Willard suggest two books which will help guide us. I'd add one more. All three female authors. The first by Frances Ridley Havergal, *Kept for the Master's Use*. The second, by Margaret Magdalen, *A Spiritual Check-Up: Avoiding Mediocrity in the Christian Life*. Thirdly, I would add, Nancey Pearcey's book, *Love Thy Body*.

Outside of these, there are practical steps we can take:

1. **Release our body to God (Romans 12:1):** In the knowledge that your body's good, integral to spiritual formation, and you're called to glorify Christ with it, take the time to prayerfully consecrate its members. Get quiet. Pray the Holy Spirit would meet & lead you in this. Sit in a comfortable chair, or lay down. Prayerfully offer up the different parts of your body asking the Holy Spirit to establish Christ's Lordship

over them. One by one; your tongue, eyes, hands, feet, stomach, genitals, brain, etc.. Surrender every part in prayer asking God to take charge of it in all ways. Take your time, don't rush. Use Scripture in this process.

2. **Give up idolizing your body:** Idolizing your body comes out in one of two ways: (1) worrying too much about it (sickness, health, etc.), or (2) being too preoccupied with it in self-aggrandizing ways. You've given it over to him, now trust him with it. Don't be overly concerned with it & ask him that you'd care for it only in how it serves His kingdom. Prayerfully give up worry about it, or preoccupation with how your body looks or performs. Ask you'd be concerned with it only in the way that it serves God & others.
3. **Don't misuse your body:** This means we don't use it as a source of selfish sensual gratification, nor do we use it to dominate, control, or manipulate others. Pray you'd be able to give it over to the extent that addiction wouldn't take root in your physical being. Pleasures aren't bad, but when pleasures become necessities we call them addictions. That's when we've allowed ourselves to be controlled by feelings & desires, so much so that we are controlled by physical desires, rather than Christ. Neither do we intentionally use our bodies to tempt, or coerce someone else in sexual, forceful, or violent ways. Pray through the passages we've used in these sermons to get a better handle on this. For instance, 1 Corinthians 6:13-15 says, *The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?* Prayerfully regard your body in that light, you're a member of Christ's body. That means doing with it healthy, good & right things in the light of Scriptural teaching
4. **Realize the body is to be properly honored & cared for (Sabbath):** Although we work hard, and at times to the point of tiredness, we don't consistently overwork our bodies. Rather we manage our time to give them needed healthy methodical Sabbath rest. We realize peace comes to the body when it's at home in the rightness & power of God, which includes resting it well. We work hard & rest well. We don't overwork ourselves, but care for the body in ways which are honoring to God. We don't let the allure of success & monetary gain drive our bodies into the ground, and destroy or hinder our spiritual lives.

There is much more we could say, but that gets us started on the right foot. Now we want to celebrate something very physical; bodies ministering to bodies. We sent two bodies from our collective body over to the Middle East recently to minister to other bodies! This was a ver physical hands on act of love, mercy & discipleship. Ministry happens when we use our time, minds & bodies in obedience to God's call; Kathleen & Jen did just that in their journey last week. I've asked them to share for 10 minutes about what they did & how they experienced the Holy Spirit work.