

Lord of Our Body Temples



SABBATH—AUGUST 20

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-17; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

MEMORY VERSE: “Don’t [do] you [not] know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honors God” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV).

IMPORTANT THOUGHT: We cannot use and abuse our body, then throw it away when it wears out. We are examples of God’s grace. We are saved by Jesus’ blood. For this reason, we should honor God with our body. The question is, How do we do that?

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD. Paul talked about the word *temple* with the people of Corinth. At first, they did not think of their body as a temple. Instead, they thought of the temple of Aphrodite.¹ This temple was a place where worshipers were involved with temple prostitutes.² That is probably why in his letters to the Corinthians, Paul worked very hard to teach the new believers about the temple where God lives. This temple is in the hearts of people who accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Paul says, “You are the temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6:16, NKJV). He also says, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19, NKJV). The best reason for taking care of our bodies is not just so we live longer or enjoy better health. The best reason for taking care of our bodies is to honor God. Our bodies are His gift to us.

Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 27.

¹Aphrodite—a sex goddess of the Greeks.

²prostitute—men and women who earn money by having sex. In Aphrodite’s temple, the prostitutes were women.

SUNDAY—AUGUST 21**ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY JESUS (John 1:1-4).**

The New Testament writers boldly preach that Jesus is both the Messiah and the Creator of the world. Thousands of years before the Son of God entered into the world as Jesus of Nazareth, He spoke the world into life.

John makes these claims about the Word who became a man. What are these claims?

John 1:1, 2 _____

John 1:3 _____

John 1:4 _____

Paul also points to the greatness of Jesus as the Creator of all things. We owe even our life to Him. Speaking of Jesus, Paul writes, “All things were created by him [Jesus]. He created everything in heaven and earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can’t [cannot] be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities [powers]. Everything was created by him and for him.

³compare—show how things are the same.

Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together” (Colossians 1:16, 17, NIV).

Compare³ John 1:1-4 with Colossians 1:15-17. What is the important message of both?

During His ministry (work) on earth, Jesus never claimed to be the Creator of all things. But as we study His life and teachings, we find many examples that point to His power as Creator. For example, when Jesus calmed down the storm on the Sea of Galilee, the surprised disciples asked, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” (Mark 4:41, NIV).



Now read Genesis 1:26, 27 and Genesis 2:7, the story of God mak-

ing humanity.⁴ Contrast⁵ how humanity was created with how everything else was created. What does this contrast (difference) tell us about the basic meaning of our own personal life? About who we are? About why we are here? What very different opinions can we make about the meaning of our lives in contrast with people who believe we are alive because of evolution?⁶

MONDAY—AUGUST 22

SAVED BY HIS BLOOD (Galatians 3:13).

In yesterday's study, we saw that the Bible clearly shows Jesus as the Creator. He is the One who created all things. He is the One who spoke the world into life. He is the One who breathed "the breath of life" into the first human. In this way, we are not our own. We did not somehow create ourselves or put ourselves here by our own will. Therefore, we have no claim over ourselves. As parts of His creation, we belong to God. *His* claim over us is greater than our claim over ourselves.

Read the last two sentences of the above paragraph. What do

these sentences suggest to us? How should these sentences influence how we live and the decisions we make? When was the last time you made a decision based on the fact that you belong to God?

We belong to God because He is our Creator. But according to the Bible, that is not His only claim over us.

Why else do we belong to God? Acts 20:28; Galatians 3:13; Galatians 4:4, 5; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12.

Being redeemed⁷ is to be bought back, to be recovered, to be rescued, or to be set free. Jesus has done all these things for us. This means His claims over us are even greater than before. Now we are His, by both creation and redemption.⁸ And redemption might even be a greater claim. This is because being created does not need to mean something good. For example, some people might curse their own life and wish they had never been born. But Jesus redeemed us by dying for us. His death for us promises us a new life in a world without sin. By His death, He has done something wonderful for us that nothing can destroy (read Daniel 2:44).

⁴humanity—people in general.

⁵contrast—show how things are different.

⁶evolution—the belief that we became humans by slowly changing from a lower form of life to a higher form of life.

⁷redeemed—saved. Jesus saved us by buying us back with the sacrifice of His death on the cross. Jesus did not just save us. He paid the full price for our sins.

⁸redemption—the process (method) of Jesus saving us by buying us back through His death on the cross.

Write a prayer thanking Jesus for what He has done for you as your Creator and Redeemer (Savior). What do you want to do because of what He has done for you? What responsibilities do you feel toward Him? What encourages you to accept those responsibilities?

TUESDAY—AUGUST 23

THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

In 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, Paul pointed out that it was important to honor God with our bodies. The Corinthian believers were facing several serious challenges. They lived in a city where people were encouraged to have improper sex. Satan was spoiling God's image in both unbelievers and believers. Improper sex was like a sickness in the culture, and it was a problem in the church, too.

What two reasons does he give for honoring God with our bodies? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

Summarize what you believe Paul is telling us in 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. How should these truths influence our life in a useful daily way?

As followers of Jesus, we must care about how we use our bodies.

Too often, people say, "This is my life. I can do what I want." But the Bible challenges that self-centered thinking. When Christians are involved in harmful behavior, they hurt themselves personally and dishonor God publicly.



Use your body well. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

What are some harmful actions that are not good for people to do? Proverbs 20:1, 25; Deuteronomy 21:20; 1 Corinthians 10:32.

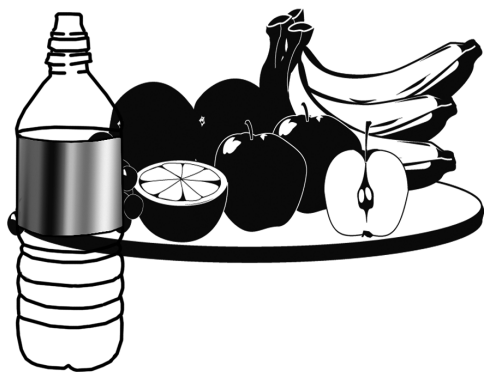
Honoring God with our bodies involves more than keeping away from improper sex. We recognize that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. They are redeemed by Jesus' blood. Knowing this will influence every part of our lives. We will try to avoid polluting our body temple with harmful drugs, food, or sex. We will try to care for our body temple and involve ourselves in activities that honor God.

A person may argue, “What is important for the Christian is only the spiritual, not the physical.” How would you answer this argument from the Bible? How do you understand the strong connection between our physical side and our spiritual side?

WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 24

DO ALL TO GOD’S GLORY (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Paul has asked the believers in Corinth to avoid polluting their body temples through illegal sex. Now he shares a principle⁹ that can guide every part of life: “so eat and drink and do everything else for the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 10:31, NIV). The Greek noun translated “glory” is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 6:19: “Honor God with your body.” The connection between these two verses is clear. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, everything you do (including what you eat and drink) should be done to the honor of God.



⁹principle—a basic rule of life.

How does one “honor God” with one’s body? How does one eat and drink “to the glory of God”? How do 1 Corinthians 10:31 and 1 Corinthians 6:19 show that God does care about what we eat and drink? Why would He care?

We have a physical body. In the new heaven and the new earth, we will still have a physical body (Revelation 21:4, 14). The idea that we are temples shows even more how holy and important our bodies are. So it is no surprise that the Bible urges us to take care of our bodies. We need to use our bodies in ways that glorify the God who made them. Any sin or abuse of our body pollutes what God has created and given us.

If God loves and cares about us, it should be no surprise that He wants us to take care of our bodies. Our body can cause much joy or so much suffering. It often depends upon how we take care of our bodies.

What do the following verses say about God’s attitude toward our health? Exodus 15:26; Jeremiah 30:17; Mark 5:25-34; 3 John 1, 2.



God wants us to be healthy.

“The laws of nature are the laws of God. So it is our duty to give these laws careful study. We should study their requirements about our own body and follow these requirements.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 369. What is Ellen White telling us? How do these words show the principle Paul gave us in 1 Corinthians 10:31?

THURSDAY—AUGUST 25

SHALOM (Psalm 119:165)!

Many people have heard of the Hebrew word *shalom*. This word means “peace.” It is sometimes used as a greeting from one Jew to another.

What do you think of when you think of the word *peace*? In what different ways do you use that word in your language?

The word *shalom* itself has a very rich and deep meaning in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the word shows up in one form or another hundreds of times. It carries the idea of completeness (fullness), plenty, wholeness, soundness, good health, and peace. The word itself includes every part of life—physical, mental, and spiritual.

For example, in one of the earliest uses of the word *shalom*, Jacob asks about the wellness (*shalom*) of Laban (Genesis 29:6). The word translated “well” both times in the verse is *shalom*. But, in Jeremiah 29:7, Jeremiah tells the Jewish prisoners in Babylon to pray for the *shalom* (peace) “of the city I have sent you to” (NirV). This is because, the Lord says, in the *shalom* of the city will be the *shalom* of the Jewish prisoners.

Look up the following verses where the word *shalom* was used before the Bible was translated into other languages. How do these verses help us understand the meaning of *shalom* when it comes to our physical and spiritual wellness? Genesis 43:28; Proverbs 3:2; Jeremiah 33:6; Psalm 38:3; Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 48:22.

The Bible calls Jesus *Sar-Shalom*, “the Prince of Peace.” This makes sense because, through faith in Him and through obedience to His law, we can find *shalom*—wholeness, completeness, and wellness.

As Adventists, we have been greatly blessed with a health message. How seriously do you accept this light on health? What changes might you need to make to have more *shalom* in your life?

FRIDAY—AUGUST 26

ADDITIONAL STUDY: The health message—honoring God with our bodies—has always been important for Seventh-day Adventist Christians. God gave much guidance on health through the ministry (work) of Ellen White. It is our honor and pleasure to share this message of honoring God with our bodies with the world.

“It is not possible to work for the salvation of men and women without explaining to them the need of breaking away from unhealthful sins that destroy the health, soul, and mind. . . . Let the poor have the gospel of health preached to them so they may know how to care for the body properly. This is because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 137.

Read also *Education*, pp. 99, 100; *Health Reformer*, October 1866;

Christ's [Jesus'] Object Lessons, pp. 347, 348; *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 17.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. We are saved by God's grace through faith and not by our own works. Then why is it really important for us to care for our body temples?
2. Describe the connection between holiness and healthful living. Is this connection found anywhere in the Bible? If so, where?
3. As a class, talk about what you might be able to do to help your own church members be more aware of taking good care of their bodies.
4. What dangers do we face in focusing on how important health is to faith and growth in Jesus? How do we do so without making people who are sick feel as if they were somehow facing God's judgment?
5. What part do dress and jewelry have in the matter of our body temple? Give proof for your answer from the Bible.