

# Lord of Our Body Temples



## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *John 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Gal. 3:13; Col. 1:16, 17; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19.*

**Memory Text:** “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (*1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV*).

**Key Thought:** Our bodies are not disposable containers we can use and abuse according to our own desires. As trophies of God's grace, redeemed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should honor God with our bodies. The question is, How do we do that?

**Y**ou are the temple of the living God. When the apostle Paul first mentioned the word *temple* to the inhabitants of Corinth, they did not think of their own bodies; rather, they thought of the temple of Aphrodite, a place where worshipers engaged in sexual immorality with temple prostitutes. That's probably why in his letters to the Corinthians Paul goes to great lengths to reeducate the new believers concerning the temple where God dwells, which is in the hearts of those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Paul declares, “You are the temple of the living God” (*2 Cor. 6:16, NKJV*), and “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (*1 Cor. 6:19, NKJV*). Thus, the most compelling reason to care for our bodies is not simply that we might extend our lifespan or enjoy better health now, but because we choose to honor God with our bodies, which are His gifts to us.

*\*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 27.*

## All Things Were Made by Him *(John 1:1-3).*

The New Testament writers boldly proclaim that the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Messiah, the Son of the Highest, but He is also the Creator of the world. Thousands of years before the Son of God entered into humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, He spoke the world into existence.

**What** three claims about the Word who became flesh does the apostle John make at the beginning of his Gospel record?

<i>John 1:1, 2</i>	
<i>John 1:3</i>	
<i>John 1:4</i>	

The apostle Paul also emphasizes the supremacy of Jesus Christ, Son of God, as the Creator of all things, and the One from whom we have even our life. Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, Paul writes, “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (*Col. 1:16, 17, NIV*).

**Compare** John 1:1-4 with Colossians 1:16, 17. How do they complement each other? What’s the key message of both?

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ never explicitly claimed to be the Creator of all things. However, as we study His life and teachings, we find many evidences that point to His creative power. For example, when Jesus calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee, the astonished disciples exclaimed, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!” (*See Mark 4:41, NIV.*)

**With the few texts we read for today as background, read Genesis 2:7, the account of God making humanity. Notice the closeness, the intimacy, of the act, in contrast to how everything else in the Genesis account was made. What does that tell us about the basic meaning of our own personal existence, about who we are, about why we are here? What radically different conclusions can we draw about the meaning of our lives in contrast to those who believe we are products of pure chance, nothing more? (See also Gen. 1:26, 27.)**

## Redeemed

In yesterday's study, we saw that the Bible very clearly reveals Jesus Christ as the Creator, the One who created all things, the One who spoke the world into existence, and the One who in a very intimate act breathed "the breath of life" into the first human being. Thus, we are not our own, in that we somehow created ourselves or put ourselves here out of our own volition, and, therefore, have an absolute claim over ourselves. On the contrary. As the objects of His specific act of creation, we belong to God, *whose claim over us is greater than our claim over ourselves.*

**Read** the last sentence of the above paragraph, specifically the italicized section. What are the implications of that thought? How should it impact how we live and the kind of decisions we make? When was the last time you made a decision based on the premise of that sentence?

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

**Read** the following texts. What are they saying, and how do they help us understand the Lord's claims over us? *Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:13; 4:4, 5; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19.*

In the Bible, the idea of being redeemed is to be ransomed, to be bought back, to be recovered, to be rescued, or to be set free. Through Jesus our Redeemer, all these things have happened to us, which means His claims over us are even greater than before, for now we are His, by both creation and redemption. And redemption might even be a greater claim, because simply being created doesn't necessarily mean something good. After all, some people might curse their own existence and wish they had never been born. In contrast, as the One who redeemed us in an act that promises us a new existence in a world without sin or suffering, Christ has done something wonderful for us that nothing can diminish or destroy (*see Dan. 2:44*).

**Write out a prayer thanking God for what He has done for you as your Creator and Redeemer. How, then, do you want to respond to Him because of what He has done? What obligations do you feel toward God, and what motivates you to fulfill those obligations?**

## The Temple of the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor. 6:19, 20*).

In his first epistle to the Christians in Corinth, the apostle Paul emphasized the importance of honoring God with our bodies. The Corinthian believers were facing some intense challenges. They lived in a city where sexual immorality was not only prevalent, it was encouraged. Satan was marring the image of God in unbelievers and believers alike. Promiscuity was not only plaguing the culture, it was permeating the church.

**In** Paul's discussion of the damaging effects of sexual immorality, what two reasons does he give for honoring God with our bodies? *1 Cor. 6:19, 20*.

**Summarize** in a few lines what you believe Paul is telling us with these two verses. How should these truths impact our lives in a practical, daily way?

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot use and abuse our bodies with careless indifference. Too often, people say, "This is my life, and I can do what I want with it." The Word of God challenges that self-centered philosophy. When Christians engage in harmful activity, they damage themselves personally and dishonor God publicly.

**What** are some other harmful activities that are inappropriate for those whose bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? *See Deut. 21:20; Prov. 20:1, 25; 1 Cor. 10:31*.

Honoring God with our bodies involves more than refraining from sexual immorality. Once we recognize that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, this realization will affect every aspect of our lives. We will not only seek to avoid defiling our body temple with any substance or activity that is harmful or inappropriate. We will also actively seek to care for our body temple and involve ourselves in activities that honor God.

**"What matters for the Christian is only the spiritual, not the physical." How would you, from a biblical perspective, respond to this claim? How do you understand the strong link between the physical and the spiritual dimensions of humanity?**

## Do All to the Glory of God *(1 Cor. 10:31)*.

Having appealed to the believers in Corinth to avoid defiling their body temples through sexual immorality, the apostle Paul shares a principle that can guide every aspect of life: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (*1 Cor. 10:31, NIV*). The Greek noun translated “glory” is the same word used as a verb in 1 Corinthians 6:19: “Honor God with your body.” The correlation between these two passages is clear. Because your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, everything you do, including what you eat and what you drink, should be done to the honor of God.

**How** possibly does one “honor God” with one’s body, or how does one eat and drink “to the glory of God”? What does that mean? How do these above texts show us that God does care about what we eat and drink? Why would He care?

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We are physical beings. In the new heaven and the new earth, we will still be physical beings (*see Rev. 21:4, 14*). The idea that we are temples serves to prove even more so how sacred, and important, the physical aspect of our being is. No wonder, then, we are admonished to take care of ourselves, to use our bodies in ways that glorify the One who made them. Any kind of physical indulgence, any kind of bodily sin, any kind of abuse of our body simply defiles what God has created and given us.

Also, if God loves and cares about us, then it should be no surprise that He wants us to take care of our bodies, which can be a source of much joy or so much suffering, often depending upon how we ourselves take care of them.

**What** do the following texts say about God’s attitude regarding our physical well-being? *Exod. 15:26, Jer. 30:17, Mark 5:25-34, 3 John 1:2.*

**Read these words of Ellen White: “Since the laws of nature are the laws of God, it is plainly our duty to give these laws careful study. We should study their requirements in regard to our own bodies and conform to them.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.6,p.369. What is she telling us here? How do these words reflect the principle Paul gave us in 1 Corinthians 10:31?**

## Shalom!

Many people have heard of the Hebrew word *shalom*, understood as “peace.” It is sometimes used as an informal greeting among Jews today.

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

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The word *shalom* itself has a very rich and deep meaning in the Old Testament, where it appears in one form or another hundreds of times. It carries within it the idea of completeness, good welfare, wholeness, soundness, well-being, inner harmony, and health. The word itself incorporates every aspect of life, including the physical, mental, and the spiritual, whether individually, collectively, or nationally.

For example, in one of the earliest uses of the word, Jacob inquires about the well-being (*shalom*) of Laban (*see Gen. 29:6*). The word translated “well” both times in the text is *shalom*. In contrast, in Jeremiah 29:7, Jeremiah tells the Jews in captivity to pray for the *shalom* “of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away,” because, the Lord says, in the *shalom* of the city will be the *shalom* of the Hebrew captives.

**Look up the following texts where *shalom*, in one form or another, appears. How does its use help us understand the meaning of the word in regard to our total health and spiritual well-being? *Gen. 43:28, Ps. 38:3 (the word translated “rest” in my bones is *shalom*), 119:165, Prov. 3:2, Isa. 48:22, Jer. 33:6.***

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The Bible calls Jesus, *Sar-Shalom*, “the prince of peace,” which makes sense because, in Him, through faith in Him, through obedience to His law, both moral and physical, we can find “shalom,” wholeness, completeness, and well-being in our lives.

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

**Further Study:** The message of health reform, honoring God with our bodies, has always been important for Seventh-day Adventist Christians. God provided much guidance on the topic of health reform through the ministry of Ellen White. It is our privilege to share this message of honoring God with our bodies with the world. “It is impossible to work for the salvation of men and women without presenting to them the need of breaking away from sinful gratifications, which destroy the health, debase the soul, and prevent divine truth from impressing the mind. . . . Let the poor have the gospel of health preached unto them from a practical point of view, that they may know how to care properly for the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 137. See also *Education*, pp. 99, 100; *Health Reformer*, October 1866; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 347, 348; *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 17.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 Since we are saved by God’s grace through faith and not by our own works, why does it really matter how we care for our body temples?
- 2 In what ways, if any, can you see a link between holiness and healthful living? Is that idea found anywhere in Scripture?
- 3 As a class, talk about what you might be able to do to help your own church members be more conscious regarding the need to take care of their bodies.
- 4 What dangers do we face in emphasizing the importance of health and its link to faith and spirituality so that we don’t make those who are sick feel as if they were somehow facing the judgment of God?
- 5 What role do dress and adornment have in the question of our body temples? What does Scripture say about this topic?

## Where's Ina? part 2

Jugen Densing

After praying for Ina, Virgie, one of the student missionaries said Goodbye and started down the trail to Mountain View College for the monthly meeting. She pondered Ina's promise: "I will live because you prayed for me."

When Virgie returned to the village, the children ran to meet her. "Ina is well! Ina is well!" they cried. Virgie hurried to Ina's hut to see for herself.

Ina was well. She was washed; her hair was combed; she was walking, cooking, and comforting others. She welcomed her visitors and invited them to come and hear of her healing. "It is a miracle!" Virgie whispered.

Virgie learned that every day the children had gone to Ina's house to sing for her. They brought their picture roll and held worship in her little hut, because Ina was too weak to join them in the school. When Jugen, the missionary who had remained in the village, told the story about Jesus raising the dead girl to life again, Ina promised, "I too will be well. This Jesus, who can raise a dead girl to life, can heal me too."

When Jugen tried to bathe Ina, Ina refused. She was sure that she would die if she bathed. But Jugen reminded Ina that she bathed in the cold river often, and she was strong and well. Finally, after much protest and tears, Ina was bathed and dressed. She smiled for the first time in days.

On Sabbath morning Ina asked if she could attend worship. But Jugen told her she was still too weak to go and should remain in her hut, where she could listen. But during worship time, Ina struggled down her stick ladder and tried to walk to the meeting place. She was too weak to walk, so she crawled on hands and knees. When the children saw, they ran to help her. Finally she was seated on a stick pew.

"You should have stayed in your hut," Jugen gently reminded Ina.

"No," Ina said. "I can't lie there while you enjoy your beautiful stories here. Don't you worry about me, I'm going to be well!"

*What faith!* Jugen thought.

A few days later Ina was strong enough to walk. She made her way to her garden to dig sweet potatoes. A few days after Virgie returned from Mountain View College, Ina left to visit her sister in a village three hours' walk away. Her simple faith in God had seen her through.

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*Jugen Densing is a student at Mountain View College in the Philippines. She and her fellow student missionaries live among the Manobo tribal people in the mountains to teach the children and share God's love*