

## **Tattoos and Body Piercing: on Christians?**

"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 Corinthians 6:19,20)

There is a movement afoot today, and has been progressing for years, that in Christian circles it's ok to just do about anything. Including, but not limited to, getting tattoos and body piercing. Have you heard of this? Just when we thought we heard it all.

The idea of tattoos and body piercing on Christians sounds so paradoxical and inane that one wonders what some Christians are thinking. Many use a verity of fallacies of interpretation to justify their desire to have these pagan practices done to them. It ranges from "it's ok because God saved me and I can do what I want" to "I do it to witness; it's a great witnessing tool" as the following excerpt depicts.

"Derrick Rachul's tattoo on his upper arm is a stylized image of Jesus on the cross. Two-and-a-half years ago, he found the symbol in a surfer magazine, blew it up on a photocopier and walked into Primal Art tattoo shop with seven of his closest friends and \$75 each to get it done. That summer, he went to Hawaii with Youth With a Mission to do evangelism among surfers. "I met a guy that had a whole pile of tattoos: demons, naked women, the whole bit. He noticed my tattoo and asked me about it, what it meant," Rachul told Heinrichs. "We talked for quite a while, actually. I told him I'm a Christian and talked about what it represents. "That was part of the reasoning in getting it. This could give me opportunities [to talk about faith]. I thought it was cool." (<http://www.mcjonline.com/news/news3062.htm>)

When we hear statements like that we know people have not read all of the Holy Scriptures, and have little knowledge of God. These practices are pagan and have absolutely no benefit to the Christian at all. It's "to the satisfying of the flesh." What an embarrassment. Come on grow up!

Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 2:23-3:2)

Adrienne Mayor classical folklorist says, "A legal inscription from Ephesus indicates that during the early Roman Empire all slaves exported to Asia were tattooed with the words "tax paid." "Stop me, I'm a runaway" was another standard motto etched on the brows of Roman slaves. New research indicates that Roman authorities punished early Christians with forehead tattoos that condemned them to the mines. In A.D. 330, the first Christian emperor, Constantine, banned the practice of tattooing the faces of convicts, gladiators, and soldiers. Because the human face reflected "the image of divine beauty," he said, "it should not be defiled." (Adrienne Mayor, *People Illustrated*, Volume 52 Number 2 March/April 1999)

The point is, that it does not matter whether a Christian gets a tattoo for witnessing, or if other cultures get them, or if the word tattoo is used in the Bible or not. What does matter is whether God wants His people to be about this kind of practice. One tattoo artist defends his position of Christians getting tattoos (of course one reason is he's a tattoo artist!) and goes to great lengths to prove it. He says.

"Freddy Corbin of Temple Tattoo in Oakland believes that "about 75 percent of the people who get religious tattoos do so because they think they're cool. Nowadays, I think only about ten to 25 percent have a true spiritual connection to it...Have you heard the one about God having the children of Israel engraved on his palm as a reminder not to forget them? It seems to me that you can interpret or skew the material in the Bible any way you want, whether or against tattooing, since the literal Hebrew translation of the Bible doesn't really say the word tattoo, just "cutting of the skin." The fact is you could apply that phrase to plastic surgery, amputations and knife wounds--you get the idea. To my way of thinking, no one can honestly say God forbids tattoo for adornment or any other reason, whether the tattoo has a religious theme or not." (C. G. Morris, *Skin & Ink*, May 2000)

One interesting note to Mr. Morris he has a vulgar message come up on his web site when attempting to copy material from it. It reads "Don't seal my \_ \_ \_ \_ lame \_ \_ \_! should we believe him when he tries to teach us? No.

Again, The point is that it does not matter whether a Christian gets a tattoo for witnessing, or if other cultures get them, or if the word tattoo is used in the Bible or not. What does matter is whether God wants His people to be about this kind of practice?

Another writer in defending his position that Christians can get tattoos cites five accounts in which Christians got tattooed, but all citations are catholic

individuals that received them. Catholics care little for the word of God, if they did they would not be in catholicism, let alone caring if God wanted them to get tattoos or not.

In the same puerile web site defending Christians and tattoos they say the following: "As devout, tattooed Christians, it is incumbent upon us to educate other Christians about tattoos We also need to prove to our critics that our faith is based on more than just tattoos; it is supported by good works as well. And we must pray as often as possible that divisive but trivial issues (such as body art) are cast aside in favour of more pressing problems: inequality, hunger, Christian unity..."

Notice, they believe arguing about whether Christians should get tattoos or not is considered "divisive but trivial issues," and that this topic should be " cast aside in favour of more pressing problems: inequality, hunger, Christian unity..." it's the old world hunger diversion when no true Biblical support can be found.

Statistics state, According to a 1990 FDA consumer report, a random survey given to 10,000 households showed 3 percent of Americans and 5 percent of men have tattoos. The report also cited an increase in sales of tattoo ink, indicating an increase in the number of people receiving tattoos.

If you think body piercing and tattoos are "cool" go do a search on the web, and if you still think it's "cool" after seeing some of the disgusting things being done to the body than your sick! And in need of Jesus' saving grace. It is unbelievable what some deluded individuals are doing to themselves. Don't be one of them!nature

Is it a pagan practice? Yes. Even proponents of tattoos will admit to that so why get one? Christians should not.

God says we are not to learn the ways of the heathen.

"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people [are] vain." (Jeremiah 10:2,3)

We are to "be" holy unto the Lord. This holiness does not consist in heathen practices for whatever purposes you may think.

"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These [are] the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." (Exodus 19:6)

"And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat [any] flesh [that is] torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs." (Exodus 22:31)

" For I [am] the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I [am] holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy." (Leviticus 11:44,45)

"Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God [am] holy." (Leviticus 19:2)

"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I [am] the LORD your God." (Leviticus 20:7)

"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD [am] holy, and have severed you from [other] people, that ye should be mine." (Leviticus 20:26)

"They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, [and] the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy...Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, [am] holy." (Leviticus 21:5,6,8)

"For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth." (Deuteronomy 7:6)

"For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that [are] upon the earth...Ye shall not eat [of] any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that [is] in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." (Deuteronomy 14:2,21)

"And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken." (Deuteronomy 26:19)

"The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways." (Deuteronomy 28:9)

"And I said unto them, Ye [are] holy unto the LORD; the vessels [are] holy also; and the silver and the gold [are] a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers." (Ezra 8:28)

" And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." (Isaiah 62:12)

" If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are." (1 Corinthians 3:17)

"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 Corinthians 6:19,20)

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Ephesians 1:4)

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone]; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Ephesians 2:19-21)

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27)

"In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight." (Colossians 1:22)

"Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Timothy 1:9)

"But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate." (Titus 1:8)

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Hebrews 3:1)

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15,16)

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5)

"That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of [our] life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." (1 Peter 4:2,3)

"[Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness." (2 Peter 3:11)

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Revelation 22:11)

Seeing many do not believe the Scriptures used to justify not getting tattoos are worthy; it would suffice us to mention that the above Scriptures command us to be holy. If the same reasoning used to disallow the Leviticus passage because as they say "only meant for the Old Testament law" and "we're not under law but grace" then we would have to disregard the above passages even though it's used in the New Testament as well. That kind of reasoning does not make sense.

Christians must not get tattoos or body piercing because it does not keep with the ways and nature of God in Christ--the one we profess to follow. It's the same as other vices as well like: smoking, drugs, alcohol, plastic surgery, wearing jewelry, dying the hair, etc. Whatever the "world" likes, as far as perverting God and His word, we Christians should despise.

"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 15:16)

Keep a guard over your heart. Tattoos and such are to the satisfying of the flesh.

"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I [am] the LORD." (Leviticus 19:28)

"They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh." (Leviticus 21:5)

Really it's all about loving Jesus and being obedient to Him. Is getting a tattoo walking in His ways?

"The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways." (Deuteronomy 28:9)

"And ye shall know that I [am] the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that [are] round about you." (Ezekiel 11:12)

We're not to learn or practice the way of the heathen.

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matthew 6:32)

"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people [are] vain." (Jeremiah 10:2,3)

Do you think Jesus would get a tattoo or pierce his body? His body was pierced for us on the cross not because it was "cool" or "the in thing," but for your sins and mine!

Stop being associated with this wicked world, and falling into stupid and ignorant atrocities as tattoos and body piercing! For practicing these things only gratifies the flesh and not the spirit.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:1-3)

Amen?

## **Addendums**

Oct. 10, 2003 – "Around 16 percent of adult Americans have at least one tattoo, believing the body art makes them feel sexier, more rebellious and even, in some cases, more intelligent, according to a poll published."

Aug. 15, 2007 - "National Geographic Channel's popular Taboo series takes viewers beyond their comfort zones to explore customs that are acceptable in some cultures, but forbidden in others. As its name suggests, Taboo crosses the boundary into worlds rarely seen, and showcases the wide range of human lifestyles."