

Not Just for Health Nuts

One of the bible verses that I used to rally around reminded me that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. I rallied around that verse for the wrong reason, as I interpreted it for me to take care of my body. Makes sense, but that is too narrow of an interpretation. All my life I avoided the vices that would harm my body, with one exception. I had a passion for ice cream and sweets. Admittedly, I used ice cream and sweets to motivate me in a quest for fitness and to burn off those calories. I did exercise frequently. The sum total of what I avoided and fitness remediation showed the narrow-mindedness in my understanding of this verse. The bigger picture is: God wants me to do something with my body. He wants me to help people, not to just walk the treadmill with my nose buried in a book, invested only in myself.

The verse says: *Do you not know that your bodies are temples 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 bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).* The verse reminds me that God created me and he invested in me – that His Son “paid the price” for me. But the final part of the verse says to “honor God” with my body. The passage from Romans 12:1 tells us to *“offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”* The sacrifice is what I do with my body to please Him. That certainly sheds a much different light.



I saw an interesting quote that is attributed to Teresa of Avila, a 16th century writer and church reformer. It gives suggestions of how we can honor God with our body.

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”



While Jesus is very much alive and invested in us, He wants us to step up and do what He would do, if He were walking the face of the earth. If we believe that Jesus came to serve and not be served we can be His “boots on the ground” to enrich those around us. In reality Jesus doesn’t care what my fitness routine is. He does care how I use my body to serve Him. He wants me to use my brawn and brain, my voice and my heart to serve him. God gave me one with hands and feet and with ears to listen to people’s needs.

In the verses quoted in this devotion he reminds us to be open to the Holy Spirit as it encourages us to help people.

I will continue to try and stay healthy. To let it go to waste would be a waste of God’s gift. But, the body is a means to serve, not an “end” if I ignore others while pursuing personal fitness. My body enables me to listen, speak and physically help people. God wants me to use what He gave me as a living sacrifice so that I can give my best effort to serve Him by serving others.

Question: What are you doing to help others?

Prayer: Dear Lord. I thank you for the gift of life, and the opportunity to use the body you have given me to help others. Let the Holy Spirit guide and motivate me to serve others. Amen.