

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

JANUARY 18 - 22, 2021

## SHATTERED MIRRORS

SERMON SERIES

Jan 3 - Feb 14

# MONDAY

**Genesis 9:6; 1 Corinthians 15:42-53; 1 Corinthians 6:19**

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## **Bodies Matter: Do Not Devalue Them**

Despite having understood what it means for humans to be created in the image of God, we often find ourselves confronting people who feel that, since this body is just a temporary vessel until we die and “return to dust,” we should not place too high a value on it. While non-Christians may mistreat their bodies with an “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die” attitude, this is certainly not an appropriate position for us as believers. Yes, it is true that it is our spiritual “soul” that is eternal, but there are many pointers in Scripture reminding us of the deep value God places on our human bodies.

Think of verses like Jesus referring to His own body as a “temple” (John 2:21), or Paul referring to our bodies in similar terms (1 Corinthians 6:19). When Paul urges us not be conformed to the world, he stresses that it is our bodies that must be presented as “living sacrifices,” and he is very clear that, while these present bodies will indeed disintegrate at death, they will be replaced by more glorious, similar-but-different versions of the ones we inhabit now (1 Corinthians 15:42-53).

We as humans are very prone to “how we look”; and so, of course, there are those who make too much of the body and our physical appearance. That’s certainly not what we’re talking about here, because that is physically

drawing attention away from God and directing it to ourselves. Perhaps that is why Paul uses the term “living sacrifice.” One commentator with a sense of humor noted that the biggest problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps trying to crawl off the altar! We are definitely reminded in Scripture to keep a balanced perspective between a healthy body and an unnaturally excessive concern about how we physically look.

But likewise, we must always remember that our bodies are a “temple” that must be used for God’s glory. It is for this reason that God speaks so forcefully in Genesis 9:6, reminding us that something of Himself is reflected in every single human body, and this is what we want to unpack in this week of devotions. What are some of the implications for us as believers surrounding this statement? The first implication is clearly the position to place the same kind of value on our physical bodies that God does.

## QUESTIONS

Do I have a healthy perspective on my body as it represents the image of God? What can I change in my life to show the same value for the human body that God does?

## PRAYERS FOR SOWING SEEDS

Sowing Seeds provides food for the hungry, responds to emergencies of those in need, and strives to eliminate hunger in the communities they serve. Please partner with us in praying a prayer of thanksgiving for those whose kind hearts have helped us serve at our hour of need through contributions, love, and deeds.

# TUESDAY

**Genesis 9:6; Matthew 5:21-22**

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## **Bodies Matter: Do Not Destroy Them**

If our bodies matter to God, and Scripture seems to be quite clear on that, then it follows that His statement that He will “demand an accounting for the life” should one person “shed the blood” of another (Genesis 9:6) must not be brushed over as if it was “just another of those strange Old Testament laws.” When the Ten Commandments formed the foundation for most legal systems, the instruction “do not murder” was taken very seriously indeed, with severe consequences if it was ignored. Sadly, life in the 21st century is not always respected or valued in the same way, and in some cultures the taking of life is so commonplace that we are almost desensitized to it.

Yet Jesus could hardly be clearer in the Sermon on the Mount in endorsing this commandment, and even adding new perspectives that we will discuss later during the week (Matthew 5:21-22). The consistent teaching of the whole Bible, from the killing of Abel by his brother in Genesis 4 onwards, is that the destruction of a human body touches on God’s special creation, which means that there are consequences. Since Jesus repeated nine out of the ten commandments in His teaching, including “You shall not commit murder,” it’s good to be reminded in today’s world that this command was NOT just an Old Testament instruction, but it is as applicable today as it was in the Old Testament.

We as Bible-believing Christians are therefore called on to study the Word and ask the important question, “What does God say?” Some Bible scholars understand the passage we are studying in Genesis 9 to indicate that some form of God-ordained capital punishment may be appropriate when murder is proven. There are huge ethical questions in our everyday lives, such as abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, et al., and so our challenge is to search the Scriptures to ensure that we have a Christian worldview and a God-honoring perspective on current issues, being ready at all times to defend our faith in a loving and just God (1 Peter 3:15).

Whatever conclusions we arrive at personally, we will stand before Him one day and be accountable for our position of how we have loved our brothers and sisters who were created in His image. But until then, know that even with ultimate accountability to God, comes grace and the forgiveness that is ours today through the ultimate price of Jesus dying for you and me on the cross.

## QUESTIONS

What is my Christian worldview on “taking a life”? Can I, using Scripture, articulate my position on Genesis 9:6?

## PRAYERS FOR SOWING SEEDS

Praise God for the opportunity to serve over 200,000 souls in 2020. Please pray that we could continue to serve more families and individuals in 2021.

# WEDNESDAY

## Matthew 5:9; Psalm 11

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### **Bodies Matter: Do Not Damage Them**

While some of the issues raised in yesterday's devotion may cause important reflection and conversation, hopefully there will be absolute agreement on today's reflection: If bodies matter to God, then no one has the right to cause intentional harm to the body of another person. Any form of intentional physical attack must be seen as an act that grieves God.

Sadly, we are living in a time when the concept of physical respect is considered out-of-date, and acts of violence is the daily experience and is real for many people. Movies, computer games, and even some sports come close to glorifying violence, which then gets played out in the real world day after day in the lives of so many. Attacks causing grievous bodily harm, burglaries that include vicious violence, and gender-based violence even within family circles barely make the news these days because of their frequency.

What does God have to say about that? Well, we have already seen that clearly bodies matter to Him. Therefore, any physical attack is an affront to God. The Psalmist says that "*those who love violence His soul hates*" (Psalm 11:5). Jesus Himself introduced the counter-cultural idea of "*turning the other cheek*" (Luke 6:29), not to endorse violence but to defuse it.

We as Christians need to be visible in calls to end any form of violence in our society. Perhaps it's good to remind ourselves that one of the Beatitudes that Jesus taught His disciples was, "*God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God*" (Matthew 5:9 NLT). In other words, since the Beatitudes are our "BE-attitudes," we who call ourselves the children of God should be known for our commitment to peace on earth and our abhorrence of any form of violence. May God convict us and help us in love to step up to make a difference wherever we can in preventing violence and doing good in making a difference wherever we can.

## QUESTIONS

Who can you pray for today who is a victim of violence? What small step are you convicted of in witnessing to God's love in acting against violence?

## PRAYERS FOR SOWING SEEDS

We are humbled and thankful that by God's grace our team continues to be free of COVID-19. Pray that we can continue to be healthy and safe in this new year.

# THURSDAY

## Matthew 5: 18-22

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### **Bodies Matter: Do Not Disparage Them**

It's interesting how often in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, "You have heard it said, but I say ..." In doing this, Jesus was in no way changing the Old Testament law. In fact, He was insistent that He was not even adjusting "the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of the pen" (Matthew 5:18). What He was doing, however, was to ensure that He called out the subtle changes that the Pharisees were making to the law to accommodate their own sinfulness. He was adding an inspired interpretation to the Old Testament law, so that it could be applied appropriately in their day, and in our lives today.

This is exactly what all of us as New Testament Christians are called to do. It may be convenient to shrug off the Old Testament with the words, "That was then but this is now!" As believers we have to ask ourselves what Old Testament teachings were part of the moral law, which never changes, as opposed to the ceremonial law (which was fulfilled when Christ shed His own blood) or the judicial law (which fell away when God's people were not confined to the land of Israel).

As already shared this week, the Ten Commandments were clearly intended to be timeless (as moral law) and Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 5:21-22. However, Jesus expanded on this "shall not kill"



command by pointing out that murder is not just the physical act of plunging a knife into the heart of someone else, but it can even be filling our hearts with hate when we disparage someone else in a fit of anger.

The fact that Jesus was angry (Mark 3:5) and Paul tells us “*in your anger do not sin*” (Ephesians 4:26) reminds us that it is indeed possible to be angry without sinning, but it’s actually easy to recognize this type of righteous anger. Righteous anger is always on behalf of someone else; seldom in our self-interest. It goes without saying that it’s unlikely righteous anger will ever lead to a heart filled with grievous or murderous intentions.

This Scripture in Matthew has Jesus urging us to keep our emotions under control. Even though our emotions may not cause physical harm, the motivation or intention to disparage a person is not reflective of the love we should have for a human created in God’s own image.

## QUESTIONS

Is there someone today I need to seek forgiveness from whom I have treated badly? Is there something in my life I need to change to be more loving and respectful of others?

## PRAYERS FOR SOWING SEEDS

We are blessed by so many community partners who shared our mission and continue to make food abundant and available. Please offer a prayer of blessing over them that they might receive in a similar manner for what they have given.

# FRIDAY

## Matthew 5:22

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### **Bodies Matter: Do Not Despise Them**

We have been looking this week at the high value God places on our bodies, and how easy it is for sin to creep in and cause us to do things that demonstrate or mean something different. We are reminded through Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, that we need to take serious note of the warning from Jesus. Even the very words we speak can give the impression that we despise someone else—someone who, like us, is made in the image of God.

In Matthew 5:22, Jesus speaks about calling a brother “Raca” or simply referring to a person as a “fool.” The marginal reference in most English translations for “Raca” tells us that it is an “Aramaic term of contempt.” Some commentators have rendered it in English as “you blockhead!” In other words, it is an expression of extreme disdain for a person, despising and belittling them.

But Jesus goes further and warns about calling someone a “fool.” Throughout Scripture, such a term was never used to imply a lack of intellectual ability, but was always referring to someone who knowingly rejected truth about God. Such an accusation was therefore equivalent to telling people “you will go to hell” because in the view of the speaker, they (the fools) had no relationship with God.

Our bodies do indeed matter to God; therefore, they should matter to us just as much. We should indeed strive to honor God with our own bodies at all times, but also honoring the bodies of others by respecting and treating them just as Jesus Himself would have done. However, we are also human beings, saved by grace, and this may not have always been the situation. And so, we acknowledge that as our God, we believe in and serve a God of love, grace, forgiveness and redemption. Why else would He have sent His only Son into this world? (John 3:16)

So, as hard as these Scriptures are to understand, to reflect on, to form what we believe, and to apply, we are sons and daughters of a gracious and loving God. There is a path for redemption and forgiveness through the confession of sin so that His glory and His love can shine from each one of us—individually and uniquely created in His image. What a promise!

## QUESTIONS

Are there areas in your Christian walk that may look different through your new learnings this week?

## PRAYERS FOR SOWING SEEDS

Pray that God would fill our hearts with joy and that God's light would guide us forward in the new year.



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