

Body Piercing and Tattoos

Body modification describes the practice of cutting, piercing, burning, marking or inking one's personal body. This craze that is seen throughout our culture is nothing more than a return to paganism. Its adornment in the pages of sports and high fashion magazines does not change its Satanic roots. This article will take a look at seven reasons why body piercing and tattoos are wrong for the Christian according to God's Holy Word.

TATTOOING IS FORBIDDEN

According to **Leviticus 19:28**, body modification is a violation of the Scripture and thereby forbidden, *"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD."* This text was written over 4,000 years ago. The entire chapter is dealing with personal conduct and holiness (**verses 1-4, 11-18, & 20**). Most of **Leviticus 19** are moral commandments that not only apply to Israel in the Old Testament, but also apply to the church in the New Testament. As the Ten Commandments are binding upon the Christian today, so are most of the things mentioned in **Leviticus 19**. Many believe that nothing in the Old Testament applies to the church today, so they never read it. Some will say that the New Testament does not forbid tattoos. But do we need a verse forbidding tattoos in the New Testament when we have a clear verse in the Old Testament? In **verse 29**, we are told not to prostitute our daughters, *"Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness."* This is not repeated in the New Testament, but that does not mean it is permissible. Some will even say that **verse 27** cannot apply to the Christian and that it forbids haircuts, *"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard."* This is a foolish statement on the part of these individuals, for the passage is dealing with a pagan practice of cutting the hair in a certain shape in worshipping pagan gods. Please consider Matthew Henry's statement on this verse, "Those that worshipped the Host of Heaven, in honor of them, cut their hair so as that their heads might resemble the celestial globe."

Now, back to **verse 28**, there are two prohibitions concerning the disfiguring of the body. First, the cutting of the flesh (blood-letting) and second, tattoos (print any marks). Bloodletting was a common practice among the heathen (**Leviticus 21:5, Deuteronomy 14:1, I Kings 18:28**). I will say more about this in our second point. Please notice in our text that bloodletting and tattooing are associated with the dead. Satan's name in **Revelation 6:8** is Death, for he is the author of death and he has a mark (**Revelation 13:16**) that his followers wear. It is interesting that most tattoo shops are morbid with scenes of death, hell, serpents, fire, skulls, profanity, pornography, and blasphemy. In other words, the major theme is death. One author on this subject, from which

I gleaned much of my information, said that the most popular tattoo is the Grim Reaper. The writer said that "Satan is the real master tattooer." All of this is the opposite of God's kingdom. Jesus Christ is light and life (**John 1:3, 6:48, 11:25, 14:6, II Corinthians 4:3-4**). The Christian should not be caught dead in a tattoo shop where death is glorified. Please keep in mind that until a few years ago, nearly everyone (saved or lost) knew that tattoos were wrong. All commentaries declare **Leviticus 19:28** as tattoos unless it is a recent liberal writer. Body modification is strictly forbidden in Scripture.

TATTOOING IS A PAGAN PRACTICE

It is a pagan practice and has long been associated with idolatry and debauchery. Pagans abuse their bodies in worshipping their gods. The present obsession of body modification is nothing more than a revival of tribalism. Throughout the world, wherever there were paganistic practices and beliefs, there were body modifications. According to God's Word the blood is important, **Leviticus 17:11**, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."* In the occult world, blood is highly valued because they believe that by releasing blood (bloodletting) they gain supernatural power. The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft says of the bloodletting ritual, "Blood that is let is believed to unleash power." In satanic worship, there are a lot of rituals whereby body piercing and tattooing are used to produce an identification with a certain tribe or clan, or to signify passage at a certain stage of life, or to signify sexuality, class, power, masculinity, etc.

Many primitive tribes used tattoo marks as a way of identification in the next world. In certain tribes around the world, even to this day, we see body scarification, multiple earrings, tattoos, nose rings, etc. In some areas, the earlobes are stretched to create large holes and even the lower lips are stretched in order to fit saucer-size pottery. Hindus are well known for their nose studs, belly rings, tongue studs, and eyebrow rings. In Papua New Guinea, body mutilation, tattoos, and scarification distinguish the different tribes. Tattooing is even associated with head hunting for men and the coming of age for women. In Sudan, there are many body modifications among the various tribes. The Amazon tribes use tattooing to identify various members of a given tribe.

Please keep in mind that body modification has its roots in paganism. Tattoos have been used by some to secure a place in heaven, to obtain strength, favor, acceptance, sexuality, etc. The man who was possessed of devils in **Mark 5:1-9**, lived among the dead and cut himself with stones continually. God, help us to wake up.

TATTOOING IS A SIGN OF REBELLION

Throughout history, body modification has been viewed as rebellion against God, **I Samuel 15:23**, *"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,*

and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” In America, tattoos are seen mostly among criminals, rock stars, drug addicts, sex perverts, and outlaws. Delinquents tattoo themselves more than non-delinquents. Studies have linked tattoos to sodomy and gross sexual perversion. The jails and prisons are filled with those who are tattooed. At the time of this writing, over 20 million Americans are tattooed. One survey among women who were tattooed showed that 34 percent feel sexier and 29 percent feel more rebellious against a Holy God.

TATTOOING IS DANGEROUS

Body modification has many medical hazards. It can cause deadly blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, tetanus, syphilis, AIDS, etc.

In **Exodus 15:26**, God told Israel if they would follow Him, He would save them from many hurtful diseases, *“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.”* According to studies done, the commercial tattoo industry may be the number one distributor of hepatitis C. This deadly disease kills over 10,000 people a year and rising with over 4 million infected. Hepatitis C is spread by infected blood and needles. Tattoos open your body for disease. The tattooing machine punctures thousands of tiny holes in your body which invites infections and disease. According to the Center for Disease Control, if the instruments used are contaminated, there is a risk of HIV transmission. The American Red Cross prohibits donors from giving blood for one year after getting a tattoo. The point is, it is dangerous to your health to get a tattoo.

TATTOOING IS DEFILING THE BODY

As a Christian, our body is the temple of God, **I Corinthians 3:16-17**, *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”* We are to present our body as a living sacrifice to God (**Romans 12:1-2**). If God lives inside the believer, why would you carry Him inside a wicked tattoo shop? To put holes or marks in your body is to dishonor God. (**I Corinthians 6:15, 19-20, II Corinthians 6:14-18.**)

Tattooing Is Contrary To Christianity

In **II Corinthians 5:17**, the Bible declares the Christian as a new creature in Christ, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new*

creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” As a believer, old ways are to pass away.

When pagan tribes were converted to Christianity, without exception, tattooing is one of the first pagan practices to pass away. Missionaries outlaw tribal rites as pagans are converted to Jesus Christ. Repentance is preached as well as faith, because it is a part of the gospel message. **I Thessalonians 1:9** actually says the Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. According to **I Corinthians 10:21**, *“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.”* The Bible is clear in **Jeremiah 10:2** that we are not to learn the way of the heathen, because their customs are vain.

Tattoos Will Be Regretted

Most people that have gotten a tattoo usually end up regretting it, especially if they get saved. As another author puts it, “Tattoos stand as a constant reminder of past depravity.” And I quote from another source, “According to the American Society of Dermatological Surgery, over 50 percent of everyone receiving a tattoo wants it removed.” Over 50 percent of the sailors in the Royal Navy regret getting a tattoo and among those married it is over 70 percent. We are told in **James 4:4** to not be friends with the world, *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*

Tattoo removal is among the fastest growing area of the Dermatology Industry. It is very painful and expensive to remove a tattoo. A fifty-dollar tattoo could cost hundreds of dollars, even thousands to remove, and it takes several procedures to remove them.

Conclusion

Our hope is the glorification of the body (**Romans 8:28-30**). We are told in **I Thessalonians 5:21-23**, *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* In **verse 21**, we are to prove all things according to the Word of God; **verse 22** speaks of abstaining from all appearances of evil, and **verse 23** speaks of sanctifying our body. By the grace of God, we are to be pure when our Savior roars out of Zion to redeem His church. Amen.

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