

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN QUAD: Developing a Balanced Life

Becoming Physically Mature

Introduction:

We have broken the Christian life down into four parts based on Luke 2:52 where it tells us that Jesus, our example, the only perfect person who ever lived developed in four distinct areas of life:

1. In wisdom--*MENTALLY*
2. In stature--*PHYSICALLY*
3. In favor with God--*SPIRITUALLY*
4. In favor with men--*SOCIALLY*

Today we look at the second area, the Physical. Our key verse is

1 Corinthians 3:16:

"Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and {that} the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

In one ancient manuscript this verse was translated like this:

"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in you just as surely as God dwelt in the Holy of Holies."

At the moment of our conversion God came to dwell in our innermost being through His Holy Spirit. In this way we have it better than the New Testament disciples. He is ***in us*** rather than just ***with us***.

In Colossians 1:25-27 Paul told us,

*"Of {this church} I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the {preaching of} the word of God, {that is,} the mystery which has been hidden from the {past} ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"*

We are the actual dwelling place of the God of the universe. *Awesome!*

Our conversion should bring with it a new life. We should put up a big sign UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.

Romans 6:12 and 13 presents this fact in these terms,

*"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and **do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin** {as} instruments of unrighteousness; **but present yourselves to God** as those alive from the dead, **and your members {as} instruments of righteousness to God.**"*

Fritz Ridenour wrote in his book *How To Be A Christian Without Being Religious:*

"God will not stay at arms length. When He comes into your life He demands all of it. Away with religious pretence and pontificating. Away with your religious games called church

that you play so well every Sunday. God wants all of you, -- your heart, your soul, your mind, your body--as a living sacrifice."

You know Romans 12:1 and 2 very well, listen to it from the *Williams Translation*,

"I beg you therefore, my brothers, through the mercies God has shown you, to make a decisive (once for all) dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted to pleasing God, which is your logical act of worship."

Ridenour continued,

"God did not just save your soul, He saved you--your total self, and this includes your body. When a Christian gets serious enough about Christ to commit his body--what he does with his hands, eyes, ears, mouth, etc.--to God, then he is ready to know and do God's will."

God considered it a reasonable service to give His body for us.

In Philippians 2:5-8 Paul told us to,

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, {and} being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Paul personally could say in 1 Corinthians 15, *"I die daily."*

Our response can be no less, it is our logical act of worship.

1 John 4:19, *"We love, because He first loved us."*

Ephesians 5:1 *"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, **an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**"*

What does it mean to present you body as a living sacrifice?

We need to present our very body to be consumed and offered to God for His purpose and pleasure. We need to be consumed by the desire and passion to die to our selves and live unto the God who gave Himself for us.

To truly surrender to God is to totally abandon ourselves to His will and allow Him to enter into every area of our lives through his Holy Spirit.

Or, as the Psalmist puts it in 139:23 and 24,

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way."

Consider your life and your heart, your innermost being as being like your house. When a guest is coming to your house you clean up the public rooms of your house, living room and family room, dining room and kitchen, bathroom and hallway, all the areas they will see or occupy.

Now if they are a family member or close friend who have more freedom to roam you may clean up the bedrooms, study, and private baths. In either case we can hide stuff in the closets, crawl spaces, sheds, and garage.

Total surrender means opening up every area of our life house, the temple of the Holy Spirit, to Him without reservation. Allowing Him to visit every area of your life point out the dirt and junk and clean them out.

We prove our surrender by totally abandoning our lives to God putting the members of our bodies completely at his disposal. We need to allow our head, eyes, ears, tongue, heart, hands and feet to respond to the commands of God as expressed in Scripture.

We don't have time to do this now, but a great personal study is to look at all the various members of your body and list what the Bible has to say about the control of each. You can start in Proverbs and branch out from there. You will find it challenging.

There are two principles in regards to our bodies that help us to mature:

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF OWNERSHIP

1 Corinthians 6: 19 and 20 take the concept of our bodies as God's temple, expands, explains, and applies it.

*"... do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**"*

A. We Are Under New Management.

God not only lives in us through He Holy Spirit, **He owns us:**

1. By Prior Claim

He created us and the creator has first rights to the creation.

Ephesians 2:10 says, *"For **we are His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*

Or as it is graphically presented in Isaiah 45:9, *"Woe to {the one} who quarrels with his Maker — An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! **Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?'**"*

2. By Purchase

He bought us and the purchaser has first rights to the purchase.

Remember 1 Corinthians 6:20 says, *"For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."*

Follow Peter's train of thought in 1 Peter 1:13-19,

"Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober {in spirit,} fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts {which were yours} in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior; because it is written, 'YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.'

Continue thinking with Peter:

*And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay {upon earth} ; knowing **that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, {the blood} of Christ.***"

3. By Possession

He lives in us and possession is nine tenths of the law.

He has squatter's rights. Watchman Lee wrote in his book titled *The Normal Christian Life*,

"... when once we have made the first discovery of the fact that we are the dwelling place of God, then a full surrender of ourselves to God must follow. When we see that we are the temple of God, we shall immediately acknowledge that we are not our own. Consecration will follow revelation.

*The difference between victorious Christians and defeated ones is not that some have the Spirit and some do not, but that some **know** His indwelling and others do not, **that some consequently recognize the divine ownership of their lives while others are still their own masters.**"*

B. How can I demonstrate that I am under God's management?

As you consider this question, remember that we have an *Owner's Manual* that tells us how to operate in our Spirit filled life by letting the Word of God dwell richly in us (Colossians 3:16).

The second principles in regards to our bodies that help us to mature is:

II. TEMPERANCE

If you have been in my office you have noticed a rather unusual collection on my wall. It is a collection of Temperance signs. Years ago I saw one in an antique shop and was fascinated by it. It was from the days of prohibition and was produced by the Women's Temperance Union in their crusade against demon liquor.

As years passed I was able to find a number of other temperance signs, but about twenty years ago temperance went out of style and I have not found any since. Self-indulgence has trumped temperance.

Why are they in my office? Because the concept is a good one. In fact, it is a concept with which many inside and out of the church struggle.

The word is nicely defined on the last sign I acquired that says, "Kindly Control Yourself."

1 Corinthians 9:25 Paul presents the principle:

*"And everyone who competes in the games exercises (temperance) **self-control in all things**. They then {do it} to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."*

A. Self-control VS Spirit-control

(Refer to paper on Disciplined Christian Life and lack of Scripture.)

The Scripture say surprisingly little about the physical aspect of the body but that is not surprising since the thrust of the Bible is the eternal destiny of man's soul. But that does not negate the truth that God created us and was happy with His creation and wants to dwell in and use His people to advance His kingdom.

Temperance or self-control applies to both our spiritual and physical lives. When Scriptures refer to controlling ourselves it they speak of controlling our mind, will and emotions, but also controlling the "members of our bodies" or body parts.

The very members of our body: brain, eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet need to be temperate, self-controlled, and under the ultimate control of the Holy Spirit.

This is not an easy task since we have a natural adversary, our old natural man, at war with out new inner man. Remember Paul's struggles documented in Romans 7?

Look at just one part of the battle in Romans 7:22-25,

"For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Did that answer end the battle? Read on in the remainder of verse 25, *"So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind **am** serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."*

The war is ongoing and it rages in al least three areas:

Was Jesus interested in physical health? Yes! He healed many.

Did the Apostles care? Yes! In 3 John verse 2 John wrote,

"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."

Does Scripture present a health and wealth gospel? No! In fact it makes it clear that physical wellbeing is not the focus of our lives, spiritual well being is.

What is the Biblical teaching on sickness?

1. God can heal.

Since all Scripture makes it clear that God is omnipotent, all-powerful, He can do whatever He wants. He has control of the spiritual and physical universe. He can heal and does when He chooses.

3. God can glorify Himself by allowing sickness.

The misconception that God causes or allows sickness to punish His children for sin is difficult to prove using Scripture.

The only two possibilities I can find are David loosing his child because of his sin with Bathsheba and the warning

in regard to taking communion without understanding the true meaning and significance. In 1 Corinthians 11:30 Paul said,

"For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

There are, however, times when God uses sickness to bring glory to Himself and His kingdom:

In the case of Job, God allowed Satan to bring serious illness on Job in order to prove that Job was a true follower who would remain faithful. And Job proved God was right when he said in Job 13:15 *"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him."*

In the case of Paul, God allowed a physical thorn to buffet him and once again it was effective in bringing glory to Him.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 tells the whole story,

*"And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, **to keep me from exalting myself**, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me —to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."** Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."*

In the case of a man brought to Jesus for healing that Pharisees ask, "What did he or his parents do to cause his sickness. Jesus' answer in John 9:3 answer was clear,

*" {It was} neither {that} this man sinned, nor his parents; **but {it was} in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.** "*

And, if you can somehow equate sickness to a trial or testing you have the teaching in James 1:2-4:

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have {its} perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

B. How can I demonstrate Spirit -Control in my physical life?

As you consider this question, again remember that we have an *Owner's Manual* that tells us how to operate in our Spirit filled life by letting the Word of God dwell richly in us (Colossians 3:16).