

# **A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE BODY**

## **GOLDEN TEXT**

"The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13b).

## **USEFUL PRACTICE**

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore must be preserved in holiness until Christ returns.

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

### **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

12 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

13 You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”

17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

19 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;

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

**I) To teach** the creation of human beings;

**II) To expose** the biblical view of the body;

**III) To speak out** against the secular view of the body.

## INTRODUCTION

God created human beings for the praise of his glory (1 Corinthians 6:20). In view of this, He expects from regenerated man a life of holiness (1 Pet. 1:15). However, secularist concepts propagate a way of life independent of divine precepts. In this lesson, we will study the creation of man and the characteristics of the human body in Scripture and correlate this theme with the secular view of the body today. Our goal is to present the biblical view of the body, its purpose, and its ultimate glorification.

### I - THE CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS

**1. The origin of the human race.** Man is the only living being created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). Therefore, our Statement of Fundamental Truths teaches that we were created by an immediate, supernatural act rather than an evolutionary process. Thus, man (*adham*) was formed from the damp dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). It is interesting to note that the use of the Hebrew *adham* denotes a proper name, but also a generic one, meaning “men” and “mankind” (Ps. 73:5; Isa. 31:3). Therefore, Adam was the first man to be created (Gen. 2:15, 19, 20); and

Eve, the first woman, formed from the body of Adam (Gen. 2:22; 3:20). Furthermore, man and woman are described as creatures of the earth, yet God “breathed into their nostrils the breath of life” (Gen. 2:7b). He did not do that concerning animals. The breath of God was the bestowal of our spirit and this distinguishes us from other created beings.

**2. The constitution of the human being.** Our Statement of Fundamental Truths professes that human nature consists of an external part, the body or flesh (Gen. 6:3; Ps. 78:39), called the “outward man”; and an internal part, called the “inner man”, composed of spirit and soul (2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:23). This human constitution is called *trichotomy*, that is, three substances: spirit, soul and body (Heb. 4:12). An example of this structure can be seen in the person of Christ (Luke 23:46; 24:39). The Pentecostal Study Bible teaches that our spirit is the component by which we have fellowship with the Spirit of God. And the soul is defined by aspects of the mind, emotions and will. The body is the part that returns to the dust and which, in the case of the saved, will be transformed on the day of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42).

**3. Human fall and restoration.** The Bible reveals that every area of our being has been affected by sin (Rom. 7:20-23). According to Systematic Theology: a Pentecostal Perspective, although constituted of three substances, if the human being is affected in one element of his human constitution, he will be affected entirely. In this perspective, the spiritual life cannot be disassociated from its body: “... glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20/NKJV). Thus, the irreproachable conduct of the Christian is required in the spirit as well as in the soul and in the body (1 Thess. 5:23). This means that holiness must reach the material and immaterial part of man. However, this restoration is only possible through the blood of Christ, by the action of the Spirit and by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:15-25).

## **II – THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE BODY**

**1. Outer part of man.** The term body (from Greek, *soma*) normally identifies the outer part of the human being (Matt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 15:38). The term flesh (from the Greek, *sarx*), when referring to physical man, includes his outer dimension (Luke 24:39; Acts 2:31). Both terms indicate the visible and material part of human nature. The body is the envelope of the immaterial part of the human being; it grows old and dies; that is when the soul and the spirit leave it (Gen. 35:18; James 2:26). The flesh (body) is usually described in a negative sense: “For I know that good itself does not dwell in me” (Rom. 7:18). However, this derogatory tone concerns the sinful nature of man and not specifically the physical body. Therefore, our

Statement of Fundamental Truths rejects the idea that the body is a prison of the soul and spirit or that it is inherently evil and insignificant.

**2. Temple of the Holy Spirit.** Scripture declares that “the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord” (1 Cor. 6:13b). This means that the body belongs to the Creator and must be united to Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). In this sense, this material part of the saved must be holy and used to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:20b). In 1 Corinthians 6, we read that the bodies of the saved are metaphorically members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15; cf. Rom. 12:4, 5). Therefore, they should not practice immoral acts (Rom. 6:13, 19; 1 Cor. 6:15, 16). Here, the Christian is exhorted not to sin against his own body (1 Cor. 6:18), for a high price was paid by Christ (1 Cor. 6:20a) making the believer the temple and dwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13). Therefore, as a sanctuary, the body must never be desecrated by any impurity.

**3. Glorified in resurrection.** The resurrection of Christ annihilated the empire of death (Heb. 2:14, 15) and guaranteed our resurrection (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14). Between death and resurrection there is an intermediate state, where the immaterial part of the human being consciously subsists (Luke 9:28-31; 16:22-31). However, our fleshly body cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). That is why, glorification is the last stage of our salvation (Rom. 8:30). It includes the redemption and transformation of our mortal bodies into Christ's glorious body (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21). This event will occur when Jesus returns (1 Thess. 4:13-17). At resurrection, the immaterial part will be reunited in an incorruptible, glorified, spiritual and immortal body (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 52-54). Thus, death will be the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26).

### **III - THE SECULAR VIEW OF THE BODY**

**1. Hedonism and narcissism.** Taking care of and keeping the body healthy is a way to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:20). However, in postmodern times of pursuit of happiness, hedonism and narcissism are instilled in society. By hedonism, we mean the lifestyle in which obtaining pleasure and avoiding suffering are priorities. In that respect, everything is allowed. With narcissism, we allude to the excessive love that a person has for himself. According to this approach, it refers to the individual who, foolishly, pursues the ideal body through good aesthetics at any cost and behaves ostentatiously in search of self-realization and being admired. In opposition to this culture, Paul teaches: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful” (1 Cor. 6:12a/NKJV). Freed from any divine morality, the individual starts to exercise total control over the body. In this way, its supporters act against the body in the legalization of abortion, prostitution,

drugs, assisted suicide, among others.

**2. Eroticization and debauchery.** When forming the human being, God also created sexuality (Gen 1:27, 28). Therefore, it is not an impure thing. Sin is not about sex, but about the perversion of its purpose. Our Statement of Fundamental Truths teaches that sexual intercourse is not only for procreation, but also for pleasure within the confines of marriage and the natural use of the body (Rom. 1:26,27; Heb. 13:4). However, nowadays, the eroticization of the body is explored in the media, arts, music and literature. The aim is to seduce and encourage illicit sexual practices. As a result, debauchery, that is, loose and immoral sexual conduct, proliferates alarmingly (1 Cor. 6:10). In the face of this, the apostle Paul warns: “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Cor. 6:12b/NKJV).

**3. Freedom and autonomy.** The Bible attests that human beings are endowed with free will (Gen. 2:16, 17). This indicates autonomy to make their own decisions and to have control of their own affairs. We are free. All our actions will be the subject of divine judgment, though (Ecclesiastes 12:14). However, in the current situation, secularist ideas promote the trivialization of the body. Atheistic existentialism, for example, claims that to discover the meaning of life, man must enjoy unconditional freedom. In this aspect, freed from any divine morality, the individual starts to exercise total control over the body. In this way, its supporters act against the body, advocating the legalization of abortion, prostitution, drugs, assisted suicide, among others. Contrary to this activism, the apostle Paul asserts: “do you not know that [...] you are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

## CONCLUSION

We have seen that King David's family was dysfunctional, which brought long-term problems to the entire household. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate the values of the Word in our homes. May parents exercise their roles at home, transmitting these values and closely accompanying their children; may the spouses have a relationship that may bring balance and security to their children. Christian family life is the greatest prevention against today's maladjustments.