

Theology of the Body



Lent

Your Body in Reference to God

Genesis 1:27-28, 31

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“If the church does not teach us what our bodies are for, our culture certainly will. If we don't learn to live the Christian life as embodied beings, worshiping God and stewarding the good gift of our bodies, we will learn a false gospel, an alternative liturgy of the body. Instead of temples of the Holy Spirit, we will come to see our bodies primarily as a tool for meeting our needs and desires. Or we might believe that our bodies should be flawless and spend endless amounts of time and money on creams or Botox or surgery to stave off the reality of our frail and aging bodies. Or we may attempt to ignore embodiment altogether, eating and drinking what we will with no regard for the way our choices violate a call to steward our bodies as gifts.”

- Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary*

Last Week: Naming the Problem

Christian Heresy & Secular Fallacy

Two Common Views of the Body

Rejection of the Body (Something to Escape)

Obsession with the Body (Something to Conquer)

1. What is the body?
2. What is the body for?
3. What gets in the way of seeing our bodies correctly?
4. How to reclaim what has been lost?

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

Genesis 2:7

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Genesis 1:27-28, 31

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground”...God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

What is the body?

“God is a mystery, and therefore so are humans.”

Genesis 1:27-28

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“In creating human beings in his likeness so that we could govern in his manner, God gave us a measure of independent power. Without such power, we absolutely could not resemble God in the close manner he intended, nor could we be God’s coworkers. The locus or depository of this necessary power is the human body. This explains, in theological terms, why we have a body at all. That body is our primary area of power, freedom, and—therefore—responsibility.”

- Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

The body is our powerpack to enact the will of God on this earth.

God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. [HUMAN BODY]

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. ”

[GOD’S STUFF ON EARTH]

“The human body is the primary field of independent power and freedom given by God to people. Put simply—no body, no power. People have a body for one reason—that we might have at our disposal the resources that would allow us to be persons in fellowship and cooperation with a personal God.”

- Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

Flesh vs. Body

Romans 8:5

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Romans 13:14

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16-17

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Galatians 6:8

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

“Living according to the flesh” means ‘living according to a self-centered, selfish way of being human,’ which is at the root of our sin and all its deathly consequences. Indeed, this ‘self-centered, selfish way of being human’ is what lies behind all the evil powers of this present age: corrupt governments and corporations and presidents and CEOs and more, animated by a spirit of greed or vanity or domination, creating oppressive structures and unjust systems within society.”

- Michael Pahl

Flesh vs. Spirit = contrasting two different ways of being human in the world

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.

Romans 6:13

Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.