

# BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

## WEEK 3: STEWARDSHIP OF OUR BODIES

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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- The goal of this series is to consider the unique calling of believers to steward their lives for the glory of God and of Christ. For the believer, our whole lives (our skills, bodies, time, money, and so on) ultimately belong to God. Everything we have is on loan to us from our Lord, and we will give an accounting for how we used it. Over the course of these lessons, we hope to bring biblical principles to bear in our everyday lives, so that we might manage what God has entrusted to us in a way that is distinctly Christ-centered. s
- Here is schedule for the upcoming lessons:
  - June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Overview of stewardship for the believers
  - June 9<sup>th</sup>: Our talents, gifts, and service to the Lord
  - **June 16<sup>th</sup>: Our bodies**
  - June 23<sup>rd</sup>: Our time and relationships
  - June 30<sup>th</sup>: Our money and other resources Part I
  - July 7<sup>th</sup>: No Class
  - July 14<sup>th</sup>: Our money and other resources Part II

### INTRODUCTION

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- When we think of biblical stewardship, we rarely think of our own bodies.
- What we do with and to our bodies have ramifications for how we live today for the glory of God.
- Most of the time when our bodies are mentioned regarding our Christian life it is under the topic of sexual purity / immorality.
- While this topic is absolutely essential, it is helpful not to minimize all the other things the Bible says about our bodies.
- We want to cover to main topics this morning, what does the Bible say about caring for your body and then what does it say about caring for your mind.
- We are also going to discuss some of the things which come upon us that are out of our control and how we can handle them in a God-honoring way.

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT STEWARDING OUR BODY?

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- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** “Or 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.”
- This is in the context of sexual purity, but the implications are much greater.
- Any honest person will take better care of something that doesn’t belong to them. Our bodies belong to God because He bought them. We don’t have the right to pollute and abuse God’s property!<sup>1</sup>
- This principle applies to more than our sexual conduct. If our bodies belong to Jesus, we also have no right to be idle with, or wasteful of, what belongs to Him. Our bodies should be put to use glorifying God (Therefore glorify God in your body).<sup>2</sup>
  - “Your body was a willing horse when it was in the service of the devil, let it not be a sluggish hack now that it draws the chariot of Christ.” (Spurgeon)
- To make sure that our bodies can be used for the glory of God, we must take care of them and put thought and effort into what we eat, how we live, and where we go.
- As with anything that we are a steward of, we must put thought into our bodies and not just allow things to take place so that we do not have control over them.

### How to properly steward our body for God’s glory.<sup>3</sup>

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- **Plan to be fit.**
  - Yes, we have to start by talking about physical fitness. Eating right and exercising is at the heart of being a good steward of your body.
  - To be sure, this does not mean that you spend hours and hours in the gym or exercising in some other manner.
  - Exercise, though beneficial, can become an idol in people’s lives.
  - Paul writes that “... bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (**1 Timothy 4:8**).
  - “This is a warning about neglecting spiritual fitness in favor of physical fitness. But it does not diminish the importance of being fit, for Paul still acknowledges it ‘is of some value.’ While we

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david/study-guide/1-corinthians/1-corinthians-6.cfm?a=1068019](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/1-corinthians/1-corinthians-6.cfm?a=1068019)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.crosswalk.com/blogs/christian-trends/how-to-be-a-good-steward-of-your-body.html> I have taken some of this list and modified some for the purpose of this teaching.

know that physical strength is fleeting, that it peaks early and goes into long decline, we also know that our bodies, minds, and spirits operate better in a fit body than an unfit one.”<sup>4</sup>

- **Guard against idleness.**

- **Ecclesiastes 10:18** “Through indolence [apathy] the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks.”
- This, and many other verses in Scripture point to the value of good work, as opposed to laziness. There is value to true rest, but sitting on the couch binge-watching Netflix is not the kind of rest we need in order to refresh ourselves to continue the work of the Lord. That is plain idleness.
- “Even a quick study of the biblical teaching of the subject will show that much of our unhealthy living is a result of idleness, of the refusal to prioritize our bodies. Guard against the idleness that keeps you on the couch when you should be active.”<sup>5</sup>
- Notice the above quote...*when you should be active.*
- Idleness is not about taking a break (we’ll talk about that in a moment), but about living a lifestyle of taking breaks when you should be working.
- Like the verse from Ecclesiastes, things start to fall apart (a house is referenced in the verse) when we are not diligent to work.
- Laziness is a lifestyle that we should not seek to adapt, nor should it be something that we are given over to in our life.
- This is something that will look different in each person’s life. Some people work long hours during the week, so they don’t do much when they are at home until the weekend comes along.
- Others get a lot done during the week, so they are able to have more free time during the weekend.
- This is a principle about not being idle, so we must apply it in our personal lives so that we are able to steward our bodies well for the glory of God.

- **Guard against gluttony.**

- **Proverbs 23:2** “And put a knife to your throat If you are a man of great appetite.”
- This verse seems incredibly harsh, and yet, gluttony is mostly overlooked in the church today. But it’s time we paid attention to this silent sin. When we overindulge, we are more likely to become overweight; we may even be on the path to heart disease or diabetes, which has the potential to inhibit our lives and our ability to work for the kingdom.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.challies.com/run-to-win/guard-your-health/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.challies.com/run-to-win/guard-your-health/>

- “Food is a great gift, but it makes a terrible god. Learn to practice self-control toward food and renounce any sign of gluttony.”<sup>6</sup>
- “The expression ‘put a knife to your throat’ (v. 2) means ‘to curb your appetite’ or ‘to control yourself’ (like ‘bite your tongue’).”<sup>7</sup>
- “It is a shame for a saint to be a slave to his palate. Isaac loved venison too, too well.”<sup>8</sup>
- When we think of gluttony, we automatically assume that a person who is overweight is gluttonous and that a “skinny” person has self-control.
- **This could not be farther from the truth.**
- We should not just *assume* something about someone by how they look. There are medical issues that people have which preclude them digesting food properly and it can have side effects which are not good.
- On the other hand, some people can be as gluttonous as they want and because of their fast metabolism, they appear to be “healthy.”
  - These people can indulge in the flesh and have very unhealthy eating habits, but because they look like they are fit, no one says anything to them.
- We all know our bodies, what is good for us and what is not. There may be some trial and error if one struggles with certain foods. But the rule of thumb is quite easy, calories in versus calories out.
- Eating can also become quite idolatrous. If we are constantly worried about what goes into our bodies, we can have an overemphasis and allow it to control us.
  - Like with most things that are beneficial to us, moderation should be the goal.
- **Prioritize rest as part of your normal lifestyle.**<sup>9</sup>
  - We are called to work and work for the glory of God.
  - We should not feel guilty to have rest in our schedule.
  - Spurgeon worked hard. He recognized that now is the time devoted primarily to working in service to the Lord and that heaven is the time for the Christian to rest and enjoy the fruits of his labour in the Lord, which are never in vain (1 Cor 15:58). The famous preacher had a weekly schedule that no pastor would envy. It certainly appears that the Lord gave him extraordinarily enlarged capacities. Yet even so, Spurgeon recognized the value and necessity of retiring from his regular work for a season of rest and recreation. In other words, Spurgeon didn’t equate vacation or time-off with squandering the Lord’s time.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david/study-guide/proverbs/proverbs-23.cfm?a=651002](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/proverbs/proverbs-23.cfm?a=651002)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> <https://joshkary.com/rest-time-is-not-waste-time/>

- Regarding exercise and enjoying the great outdoors, Spurgeon wrote this:
- “He who forgets the humming of the bees among the heather, the cooing of the wood-pigeons in the forest, the song of birds in the woods, the rippling of rills among the rushes, and the sighing of the wind among the pines, needs not wonder if his heart forgets to sing and his soul grows heavy. A day’s breathing of fresh air upon the hills, or a few hours, ramble in the beech woods’ umbrageous [shadowy] calm, would sweep the cobwebs out of the brain of scores of our toiling ministers who are now but half alive. A mouthful of sea air, or a stiff walk in the wind’s face, would not give grace to the soul, but it would yield oxygen to the body, which is next best” (Lectures to My Students, 158).

### How to properly steward our minds for God’s glory.<sup>10</sup>

- In other words, we can ask the question *how are we dedicating our time to the importance of how we think?*
- **Philippians 4:8** “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”
- This is a well-worn verse but one that is much needed in our day and age. Think about the amount of information that flows into your mind on any given day.
  - Think about how many things are already in your mind because you have lived life.
  - Think about how many things come into your mind that are unwanted and you just can figure out how they got there.
- The Bible has much to say about the mind because God knows that struggle that we have with our thought life. God also knows that in order to stand firm, we must be a good steward of our thought life.
  - **Isaiah 26:3** “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You.”
  - **Colossians 3:2** “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”
  - **Romans 12:2** “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
  - There are many, many other verses which speak to the importance of what comes into our minds and how we are to act in accordance with that information.
- What is primary though is that we must believe that our thinking is an important part of stewardship.
- This is not something that the Christian can simply allow to take on its own form.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.faithlafayette.org/resources/sermons/stewardship-of-our-thinking> much of this section can be found at this link. I also changed some of the information for the purposes of our current class.

- God has given us our minds, but not as a blank slate. We are not to allow whatever comes in to stay there and we must be cautious of what we are allowing to be in there.
- In fact, Paul exhorts the Corinthian church in **1 Corinthians 14:20** “Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.”
  - While this section is directed to the church regarding the use of speaking in tongues, the general principle that Paul is using applies generally to all believers today.
  - “He was asking his readers to put aside emotion and experience, along with the desires of the flesh and pride, to think carefully about the purpose of tongues.”<sup>11</sup>
- Our thinking of something will always include our experience and emotions, but we must not allow those things to *dictate* what truth really is.
- He also gives the exhortation **in evil be infants**...he is saying that it is okay not to know about the evil which is taking place around you. When that comes into your minds, it is not something that can easily be thrown out.
- We must take care of what comes into our minds and then how we respond to it. If we are spending our time putting evil or just worthless things into our minds, we should not be surprised when those things are coming out of them.
- **How can we start to cultivate a mind for Christ as a believer?**
- Simply put, concentrate on Godly thoughts.
- I will admit that it sure seems like one of the effects of the curse of sin is that sinful thoughts pop in our minds quickly. Thoughts of anger, bitterness, foolishness, lust are one split second away. But thanks be to God that we do not have to let those thoughts occupy our minds. The Lord says dwell, concentrate, meditate on Godly thoughts. By his grace we have the opportunity to dismiss garbage thinking and to take every thought captive which is consistent with the glory of Christ.<sup>12</sup>
- **What is the content of Godly thinking?**
- I believe that many people have the wrong idea of what Godly thinking looks like in normal life.
- This is not you and friends sitting around only reading the Bible, talking about God, and never doing anything else.
- We must remember that we live in a culture that is **highly charged** by sinful ideas, lifestyles, propaganda, advertisements, etc. There are going to be many thoughts that come into your mind that you don't want there.
- There may be many thoughts that come into your mind that you don't know why or how they got there.

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<sup>11</sup> MacArthur Study Bible, 1 Corinthians 14:20

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.faithlafayette.org/resources/sermons/stewardship-of-our-thinking>

- Just the fact that there are so many inputs or stimulants in our culture that we inadvertently see or hear, our goal is not to live a life of solitude but one that is constantly in the battle.
- In **Philippians 4:8** there is a list of the types of thoughts we should allow to make a home in our mind.
- I find it helpful to look at lists and think about the opposite.<sup>13</sup>

True	False
Honorable or valuable	Worthless or Trivial
Righteous or Just	Unjust
Pure	Impure
Love Inspiring	Repulsive
Good Repute	Offensive

- Just because a thought comes into our minds does not mean that is who we are anymore. We should not let thoughts stay in our minds that do not deserve the space.

## HOW DOES OUR MIND AND BODY RELATE TO EACH OTHER?

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- Why is it important that we steward our minds well? When we talk about the mind, we are talking about the immaterial or non-physical part of the body. The Bible also calls this the heart.
- “The theory is that when we are struggling to cope with problems in marriage, relationships, or work, the body gradually loses its ability to fight disease. With this we would all agree. What goes on in our hearts can have physical consequences.”<sup>14</sup>
- The point that he is making is that there can be detrimental effects upon our bodies when we are not stewarding our minds correctly.
- The word psychosomatic comes from a combination of the Greek word *psyche*, meaning “soul” or “person,” and *soma*, meaning “body.” In order to deal with problems of this kind it is necessary to understand how the relationship between the mind and the body works.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ed Welch, *Blame It on the Brain*, 59.

<sup>15</sup> The Journal of Biblical Counseling, *A Look at Psychosomatic Relationship*, 1:2, page 81, Bob Smith.

## Some examples of how our minds affect our bodies.

- Sometimes a real physical illness is complicated or aggravated by psychosomatic problems. For example, Joe has an ulcer and is having pain from it. In the process he becomes angered by the way his boss treats him. He already is having painful spasms from the ulcer, but these spasms are aggravated by the anger toward his boss, causing the pain to increase.<sup>16</sup>
- How are these problems to be handled? In the illustration of the man with the duodenal [abdominal] spasms his physician may give medicine to affect two areas. One medicine is to reduce the symptoms occurring in the duodenal muscles. This will be some kind of antispasmodic. The second medication is to reduce the impulse sent to the duodenum. A tranquilizer or a nerve pill will be used for this. But this is only treating the symptoms and ignoring the cause of the symptoms.<sup>17</sup>
- Once having a physical or check-up from a doctor, it is important to move into the spiritual realm.
- In the two above examples, it is not the stress that is the problem, it is the reaction to the stress.
- We can never be fully free of stress or other situations which may come suddenly upon us, but we can always dictate how we respond to them.
- **When we notice something is wrong with our bodies it is certainly not always a sin issue.**

<u>Physical Elements</u>	<u>Spiritual Elements</u>
Enough / Proper Exercise	Prayer / Meditation on the Word
Enough / Proper Eating Habits	Consistent Bible Reading
Interacting with People Regularly	Having Meaningful / Godly Fellowship
Being Outside the Home	Serving Others
Having a Job / Work to do	

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.