

If you think that this tract was going to tell you that you are going to hell for getting a body piercing or a tattoo ...well that is not the case.

We simply want to inform you about what the Bible does say about body piercing and tattoos and their implications.

These kinds of flesh cuttings are not devoid of cultural and historical background. In fact, body piercings and tattoos have a long history and are not new phenomena. The Old Testament even speaks of these practices. And the Law of Moses also speaks to what the Lord thought of such practices.

"You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD."

-Leviticus 19:28

"They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh."

-Leviticus 21:5

"You are the sons of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead."

-Deuteronomy 14:1

And ritual mutilation of the body is seen elsewhere in the *Old Testament* in conjunction with the worship of pagan gods. For instance, 450 Canaanite prophets did this attempting to summon the power of the false god Baal in a confrontation with Elijah, the prophet of the LORD.

"So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them."

-1 Kings 18:28

For as long as these practices have been around right on up to the present day, body piercing and tattooing have always been associated with at least one of several meanings: worship of the dead, the practices of witchcraft and sorcery, worship of pagan gods, living in depravity, and (the most fundamental of all) rebellion to authority, whether it be family, government, or God Almighty.

One might respond, "Yes, but that's the *Old Testament*." Well, what does the *New Testament* have to say on the matter?

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable."

-1 Corinthians 6:12a

So, are body piercings and tattoos profitable?

Jesus asked: *"What will it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

-Matthew 16:26

"There is nothing that comes from outside of a man that can enter into him and defile him: but the things which come from within him, those are the things that defile the man."

-Mark 7:15

Cutting your flesh will not defile you, however, getting a piercing or a tattoo will defile you if it is guided by the wrong motivation coming from within you.

So what is the proper motivation? Can a person get a body piercing or a tattoo just because it's stylish or trendy or popular? In other words, should a person be engrossed in a fondness for the luxuries and unnecessary practices of this world?

"Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

-1 John 2:15

"Do you not know that the friendship of the world is the enemy of God? Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

-James 4:4

Jesus said: *"I am hated by the world, because I give witness that what it does is evil."*

-John 7:7b

Jesus said to His disciples: *"If you are hated by the world, keep in mind that I was hated by the world before you. If you were of the world, you would be loved by the world: but because you are not of the world, but I have taken you out of the world, you are hated by the world."*

-John 15:18-19

Paul said of himself: *"I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me."*

-Galatians 6:14b

It would appear that imitating the world is the arch nemesis of the business of the Kingdom of Heaven. Anyone who is concerned about pleasing God will free from the motivations of this world.

The only question that remains is whether someone can get a tattoo or a body piercing to give glory to God?

"Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

-1 Corinthians 10:31b

Few people can honestly say 'yes'.

Tattoos and body piercings (whether occultic, pornographic, or just cute or sentimental) fly in the face of every traditional value, those things that are ordained by God.

God has always had a clear attitude towards rebellious people. The Lord has told us precisely to what rebellion is analogous.

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

-1 Samuel 15:23a

And what does God say to do with witches and wizards?

"You shall not allow a witch to live."

-Exodus 22:18

"A man ...that is a wizard shall surely be put to death: they shall stone him with stones: his blood shall be upon him."

-Leviticus 20:27

It is quite clear that God's plan for someone with the rebellious attitude of a witch or wizard is to put that evil attitude to death.

The road between God and man that leads us to reconciliation with Him has one obstacle standing in the middle of it, the cross of Jesus Christ. It has a sign on it: BE NAILED HERE AND DIE.

This is the only body piercing that saves lives.

"Surely, Jesus has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains. Yet we thought Him to be stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His gashes we are healed."

-Isaiah 53:4-5

Christ had to die for our sins, and we must die to our own agenda in this life. Life as we know it is no longer ours to live as we choose.

"And Jesus said to them all, 'If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.'"

-Luke 9:23

"Through the law I am dead to the law, so that I can live for God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave His life for me."

-Galatians 2:19-20

"You are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

-1 Corinthians 6:20

We, like Paul, must treat our fleshly nature harshly and make it our slave. We are not to obey the whimsical desires of this life.

"I mortify my body, and make it my slave."

-1 Corinthians 9:27

And we cannot treat our bodies as things isolated from God or of no interest or concern to Him.

"What? Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit ...and you are not your own?"

-1 Corinthians 6:19

"You are the temple of the living God"

-2 Corinthians 6:16b

The body is God's very house. Where is the honor, or the reverence, or the respect, or the fear of God in His living temple? Why would anyone want to take the Lord's temple and make it into a graffiti-covered, dented, and punched-through mess? Where is the godly desire to maintain a pure and holy body fashioned by God Himself?

Physically, cutting our own flesh is an act of man making for himself a counterfeit of God's intended marking. It can be seen in the Scriptures that God has a plan to mark us as His own in His own way.

When addressing the nation of Israel, the Lord found them like an abandoned infant on the side of the road and He cleaned them up.

"And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head."

-Ezekiel 6:12

We the Gentiles, through Christ, have been given access with Israel to become part of this bride that God is adorning. It is the Lord who pierces us with His special piercing in the spirit.

"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."

-2 Corinthians 1:21-22

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possessions, to the praise of His glory."

-Ephesians 1:13-14

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, with which you are sealed unto the day of redemption."

-Ephesians 4:30

The word used here for seal can easily be translated: a mark or a branding, a tattoo.

It is the Lord who would pierce us as His bride. It is the Holy Spirit, God Himself who would be our Soul Tattoo. We don't need the fleshly fakes when we can have the spiritual originals.

However, the Bible does say:

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything."

-1 Corinthians 6:12

You are perfectly free to choose what you will do, but the question that remains is: Are you a slave to the things in the world (body piercing and tattoos or anything else)?

If you say that you are a slave, then Jesus is the only way to freedom. He is the Deliverer.

If you say that you are not a slave to them, then why do you care for the things of the world at all?

"Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whosoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed'."

-John 8:34-36

Maranatha Christian Fellowship

315 10th Avenue SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Email: mcf@tc.umn.edu
www.spiritformed.com
612-378-2299



*a biblical look at
body piercing
and tattoos*

by Aaron Siver