

## God And The Tattoo

*'You shall not make any tattoo marks on yourselves.'*

Most of us just don't like being told what to do.

'**You shall not**', strong language indeed.

### What Does The Word Say

Does the all knowing God know something about tattoos that we don't know or understand to have inserted this command in *Leviticus 18:28* *'You shall not make cuts on your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves; I am Yahweh' (LORD)*

These instructions no doubt address the pagan practices of the culture of the day and not copying those practices. Should Christians copy the practices of the day? Are we in the world or of the world? *John 15:19* *'If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you'*

If we are made in the image of God should we mar that image? *Exodus 20:4* reads *'You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in the heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below'* Is a tattoo a depiction of an image of something in the heavens or on the earth?

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. (*1Cor 3:16*) This is quite an amazing statement, because it draws similarities to the Temple in Jerusalem. In *Exodus 20:25* we read *'if you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stone, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profaned it'* Even a stone for the altar in the Temple could not be marred in anyway. How astounding that we are the temples of His Spirit.

### Medical Science

What medical science is discovering about tattoos raises the question, 'are tattoos detrimental to your health'? Is there more behind God's taboo on tattoos than we are told in scripture?

Dr Hiram Castillo had an article on tattoos published in the journal 'Scientific Reports'. The study concluded the elements that make up ink in tattoos travel inside the body in micro and nanoparticles to form and reach the lymph nodes. Tattoos release microscopic pigment that lodge in the lymph nodes, posing a potential health risk.

### But I Have A Tattoo

Perhaps you got a tattoo before you were saved or because you did not understand the instructions of scripture.

We have a wonderful, merciful, patient God who knows all about us, and understands our earthliness. *2Tim 2:22 'Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the LORD from a pure heart'* Paul is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is acknowledging that we have youthful lusts. Our Heavenly Father knows us intimately and understands our struggles and misdemeanours.

### **What should I Do With The Tattoo**

A tattoo that dishonours the Lord could be problematic. Walking around with an occult symbol on your head would not bring the Father much glory.

Paul speaks about vessels for honour and dishonour in *2Tim 2:20*. He then goes on to counsel in verse 21 *'Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work'*

It goes without saying that a visible tattoo honouring the enemy would be better if it were not seen.

Tattoo removal is big business today. Some websites suggest minimal side effects from having a tattoo removed. A little research will inform you of the procedure and any risk factors.

That leaves us with the tattoo without demonic overtones.

We already know that scripture counsels against tattoos, and that medical science is saying they could be harmful. So what can we do?

### **Wisdom and Prayer**

Wisdom is found in the multitude of counsellors.

By seeking the counsel of our brothers and sisters, guidance can be found bringing victory. How much we have available to us in the Body of Christ. *Prov 11:14 'Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counsellors there is victory'* Prayer is also a wonderful line of action in matters where we need guidance. Seeking the Father for His wisdom about what to do about a tattoo. The good Shepherd of the sheep (Jesus) delights in us coming to Him with our petitions. Someone once said the meaning of prayer is 'answer'.

If you are new to the faith talking it over with your brothers or sisters and asking a mature believer to pray with you for guidance may be helpful until you are able to hear the Master's voice more clearly for yourself. *Eph 6:18 "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints"*

Any counsel from our brothers and sisters must be in line with the whole counsel of the word of God including the Torah that Jesus said would not pass away while the earth exists in *Matthew 5:18. 'for truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law (instruction) until all is accomplished'*

It may well be that the LORD does not want you to do anything about your tattoo at this point of your walk with Him.

By seeking Him for His heart, about those marks and things we still carry from our former life when we did it the world's way, we then have those things submitted to Him for His counsel.

### **In Conclusion**

We now know the Bible teaches no tattoos. We now know medical science has concerns about the harmful effects of tattoos. Tattoos are trendy and fashionable.

It might well be all your mates or girlfriends have one. Fashion has been described as conformity to the world. We are not to be conformed to this world or its pagan practices.

*Romans 12:2* reads:-

*'And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect'*

As our minds are transformed by the knowledge and understanding of the instructions of the word, and as we walk it out in obedience, we will be conformed into the image of Jesus the Son who is the Living Word.

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br. Bruce