

## This Body of Mine

1. Warm-up question: Jeff told how, every time he goes to MCL Cafeteria with his Dad, he's tempted to get a tall, oversized slice of Chocolate Cheesecake, even though he's supposed to be on a low-sugar diet. What is one of your greatest food temptations?
2. Everyone one of us knows the tension between doing what's best for our bodies versus doing what our bodies want. We struggle with food, with exercise, with getting enough sleep, with how we relate to alcohol, tobacco, and other substances, with following our doctor's advice, with managing stress, with balancing work with time with time to refresh, with engaging in risky activities like football or skydiving. And on and on it goes. In which of the areas of body care just mentioned do you most struggle? Why do you think that particular area is such a struggle for you?
3. On Sunday we used the Dialectic Method – Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis – to explore how to better balance the between tension body care and living life fully. We began with this **Thesis: My body is a miracle of God; I have a sacred duty to care for it responsibly.** Read Psalm 139:13-17, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. As you reflect on what we just read in Psalm 139, what comes to mind for you?
  - b. Your nose is able to detect 50,000 different scents. You have 100,000 miles of blood vessels running through your body. The DNA in all the cells in your body, if uncoiled, would stretch 10 billion miles. Your brain has 500 trillion neuron connections. Neil deGrasse Tyson says you brain contains the information equivalent of more than 4 billion books. When you consider all this, what thoughts or feelings arise within you?
  - c. Jesus said, "To whom much is given, of them shall much be required." Luke 12:48. How does this principle apply to our bodies?
  - d. Jeff said, "Long before John Mayer sang it, God already wrote it in Psalm 139. Your body is a wonderland! You are one of God's artistic masterpieces. Like Michelangelo sculpting his David or his Pieta, God sculpted you." Do you feel like your body is a wonderland? How do you feel about your body?
  - e. I Corinthians 6:19 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God and that you are not your own . . . ? Therefore glorify God in your body." What are the implications of saying that our bodies are temples of God?
  - f. In 1974, Pablo Picasso's masterpiece "Guernica" was desecrated by a protestor who used red spray paint to scrawl "Kill Lies All" on the painting. Imagine if you were Picasso witnessing this desecration. How would you feel? How do you think God feels when you do something harmful to your body? How does it make you feel when you do something harmful to your body?

4. On p. 3 you'll find a check list of various ways to care for our bodies. When we look at the list, most of us feel overwhelmed. If we did everything on the list, we'd end up investing most all our time and energy in body care, with no time or energy left for anything else. That seems excessive and led to our **Antithesis: Body care isn't the only priority in life. We also have a sacred obligation to pour ourselves out in service to God and the enjoyment of life, even if that means taking risks.** Our highest value in life is not to care for our bodies, but to actualize our spirits. Our bodies are here to serve our spirit, not the other way around.
- a. In II Corinthians 5:1, Paul says, "Our bodies are like tents that we live in here on earth. But when these tents are destroyed, we know that God will give each of us [another] place to live. These [new, eternal] homes will not be buildings someone has made, but they are in heaven and will last forever." What are the implications of seeing our bodies as tent-like temporary dwellings? Is this a good way to think about our bodies? Why or why not?
  - b. Jesus once compared himself to John the Baptist, who was an ascetic who never touched alcohol and ate a very simple, boring diet. Jesus noted that the same people who criticized John also criticized him, even though they were two very different people. In Matthew 11:19, Jesus said, "John came neither eating nor drinking, and [you] say, 'He has a demon.' [I] came eating and drinking, and [you] say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" How do you feel about the fact that Jesus "came eating and drinking"? As followers of Jesus, what should we draw from that fact?
  - c. Do you believe it's appropriate for us to sometimes make conscious choices to do things that might be bad for our bodies in order to serve God and others – or simply because we want to enjoy life more fully? Tell us about a time you've made that kind of choice. How do we know when to say yes or no to riskier behaviors?
5. Based on all the foregoing, Jeff suggested the following possible **Synthesis: My highest goal is quality of life. The well-being of my body affects quality of life. Therefore, I want to manage my body in a way that maximizes my overall quality of life.** Sometimes that will mean taking less risk, other times it will mean taking greater risk, as the Spirit leads.
- a. Critique the proposed Synthesis. What do you like about it? What don't you like?
  - b. What's the worst thing you're doing to your health right now? Do you feel that's a risk worth taking when you consider your overall quality of life?
  - c. If you were to take one more realistically achievable step toward better caring for your body, what would that be – and are you ready to take that step?

## **Psalm 139:13-17**

- <sup>13</sup> It was you, O God, who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- <sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.
- <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
- <sup>16</sup> Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.
- <sup>17</sup> How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!

## **Body Care Options**

*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God and that you are not your own . . . ? Therefore glorify God in your body." I Corinthians 6:19.*

1. Eat a healthier food.
2. Drink healthy beverages (e.g., tea, water, and juices, rather than lots of soda and coffee).
3. Lose weight.
4. Exercise.
5. Get enough sleep.
6. Keep your brain active and stimulated.
7. Drink alcohol moderately or not at all.
8. Abstain from tobacco, drugs, or other harmful substances.
9. Regular doctor checkups.
10. Follow your doctor's advice.
11. Take good care of your teeth, eyes, and ears.
12. Wear sunscreen.
13. Manage stress.
14. Balance work with time to refresh (work/life balance).
15. Refrain from engaging in dangerous activities (e.g., football, skydiving, etc.)