

Carl Lentz: It's a 'No-Brainer' to Reconsider the Theology Behind Getting Tattoos

Hillsong New York pastor Carl Lentz weighed in on the ever-controversial subject of Christians with tattoos, telling World Religion News that it's a "no-brainer."

When asked directly about the Old Testament regulations, Lentz says they died on the cross with Jesus.

He says:

Biblical interpretation is huge, right? So, with tattoos not being allowed you mean Leviticus. We play both sides of the coin; I think that is healthy. Like this paradox of Scripture, interpretation is actually is part of our faith, the tension of it. So, on one hand, we say that is the Old Testament Scripture; there is no New Testament verification of that. That law that had to do with slaves, that identified you as part of a tribe we don't believe that came through the cross. We don't believe that when Jesus died and rose again that old Levitical Scripture applied to our modern life. That is ridiculous. At the same time, there are some things we do believe follow through on the cross.

So, the way we break down we would literally put up the Old Testament and then put a cross in the middle and then we put up the New Testament, and we say anything that comes through the cross is eternal. Anything that stops is Old Testament. For example, blood sacrifices of animals stopped because of Jesus. Honoring your wife as God honors his church, that comes through the cross. So that is our scope for all Scripture interpretation.

If it died on the cross, then it needs to die in our theology. Tattoos are a no-brainer. Are you kidding me? Jesus was pretty clear in every detail. Whether it is diet, whether it's image, whether it's qualification—that stuff died on the cross. Now it becomes a matter of personal conviction. So now if I don't believe these tattoos devalue the temple that is the Holy Spirit, my body, I am doing it. I do, then I don't, but I am not going to turn my conviction necessarily into theology or doctrine.

But other believers say there is more to tattoos than body art.

Beth Eckert, a Spirit-filled woman who was delivered out of the occult, says tattoos could be associated with blood rituals.

In a blog entry addressing the subject, she writes:

I have no hard evidence that tattoos are a part of a blood ritual, but I think we can see from research that tattoos certainly are a part of a deeper spiritual practice that comes from ancient times. The Bible warns against getting tattoos or cutting yourself, because during that time it was common for the Israelites to fall away from God and into the practices of the world around them. The world around them was steeped in the occult—witchcraft, worship of multiple deities, rituals and sacrifices. Even though many people today do not have any intention towards being involved in witchcraft or blood rituals when they get tattoos, does not mean they are inadvertently doing so. The occult is deeply rooted in our world, as it is the tool of the devil to bring us into his kingdom. This world is the devil's domain, and we are just here visiting. It is very easy to get caught up in this physical realm and all that we see and forget there is a spiritual realm that is affecting us every minute. It is also easy to take everything at face value and not look deeper

into the meanings and origins of what we do.

But Eckert says she isn't necessarily opposed to modern tattoos.

Does God hate tattoos? Is He angry at you because you have a tattoo? No. God hates evil, and God knows your heart. If you have tattoos, that does not mean you are evil or against God. You must take your heart before the God of mercy and love, and let Him work it out with you. God will show you what is right before His eyes and what is harmful to you. I am writing this because it has been on my mind for a long time, thinking about tattoos and why the Bible speaks out against them. I have heard many arguments about why the verse in Leviticus about tattoos isn't relevant today, and that is why I wanted to present food for thought.

So do believers have a biblical imperative to avoid ink? Sound off below!