

It's Not Your Body, So It's Not Your Choice

While the abortion debate continues to rage on social media, television and in the streets, there's a phrase none of us seem to be able to avoid: "My body, my choice."

As a Christian, I've become fascinated by this phrase and have wondered, is my body actually *my body* according to God's Word?

The basis of the "my body, my choice" argument is that a person has complete sovereignty over his or her body. Yet, as I've examined this notion through a biblical lens, I find several truths in God's Word which contradict this way of thinking. We don't have as much autonomy over our bodies as we might wish to believe.

1. Our bodies were created in the image of God. A biblical answer begins with a biblical perspective on our creation. A magnificently designed physical body is given to each of us by our loving Heavenly Father. Every person bears the image of God, and He has a purpose and a plan for each one of us (Gen. 1:27, Jer. 1:5). From the point of conception, ultimately, every person belongs to the Lord—body, soul and spirit.

2. Our bodies are a temple. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul teaches that when we accept Jesus as our Lord, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us. We're accountable to the Lord for the choices we make that impact our bodies. Any intentional harm to it is a desecration of His temple.

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

If our body belongs to the Holy Spirit, then it's our responsibility to keep it holy, being mindful of what we put into it (and don't put into it), whether it's food, drugs, the songs we listen to or the images we view. "My body, my choice" takes on a whole new meaning when you consider that we have a choice in how we steward the body that God gave us.

Just as someone renting a property is accountable to a landlord, they may not own the place they occupy, but they're expected to take care of it, per the terms of the agreement. I'm not the owner of my body, I'm the caretaker of it.

3. Our bodies are not our own. Paul understood that his life did not belong to him. Our purpose in life is not self-gratification or self-fulfillment, but to reflect God's glory. Paul was quite clear when he said, "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Furthermore, in his letter to the Galatians he declares, "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul recognized that his life and body were given to him by Jesus, therefore he humbly lived every day through faith in the life-giving power of his Savior.

4. Our bodies are a living sacrifice. In Romans 12:1-2, we learn that we ought to treat our bodies as a living sacrifice: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Paul was referencing the Jewish system that said you must kill an animal for sacrifice to God. By saying that our body is a

living sacrifice, we're giving our living body over to God. When I became a Christian years ago, I chose to surrender everything to God—my business, my family, my finances, my social life—everything. This included my body, which I believe is a gift from the Lord to be used for His glory.

5. Our bodies do not belong to the government. During the time of Jesus, there were many laws the government forced upon its citizens. Roman soldiers could force a citizen to carry its load a mile, and Jesus not only told people to comply but to carry it further. Yet, He very publicly defied laws that said you can't work on the Sabbath when He chose to perform miracles. Never do we see Jesus say, "my body, my choice," but rather, He demonstrated the holiness of certain acts in compliance or defiance of the law.

The government has the right to restrict what we can do with our bodies for the welfare of others, such as prohibiting drug use or enacting speed limits. That said, when the government attempts to mandate anything that impacts our bodies, we have a duty to seek God through His Word and pray for discernment as to whether the law is consistent with the holiness He expects from our use of His body.

Anytime we, as Christians, think our body belongs to us, we're mistaken.

Christians have a higher obligation to honor God with their bodies. Accordingly, we should never say "my body, my choice" in response to any governmental law or self-gratifying behavior that impacts us physically.

We should respond by prayerfully asking, "Does complying with this law or engaging in this behavior make my body more or less holy in the eyes of God?" And then we should listen to what He has to say on the matter. {eoa}

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