

Respecting the Gift of Our Bodies

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T rue success in this life comes in consecrating our lives—that is, our time and choices—to God’s purposes (see John 17:1, 4; Doctrine and Covenants 19:19). In so doing, we permit Him to raise us to our highest destiny.

A consecrated life respects the incomparable gift of one’s physical body, a divine creation in the very image of God. A central purpose of the mortal experience is that each spirit should receive a physical body and learn to exercise moral agency as a dual being of both body and spirit. A physical body is also essential for exaltation, which comes only in the perfect combination of the physical and the spiritual, as we see in our beloved, resurrected Lord. In this fallen world, some lives will be painfully brief; some bodies will be malformed, broken, or barely adequate to maintain life; yet life will be long enough for each spirit, and each body will qualify for resurrection.

Those who believe that our bodies are nothing more than the result of evolutionary chance will

feel no accountability to God or anyone else for what they do with or to their body. We who have an eternal perspective, however, must acknowledge that we have a duty to God with respect to how we treat our bodies. In Paul’s words:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Acknowledging these truths and the direction of modern prophets, we would certainly not deface our body, as with tattoos; or debilitate it, as with drugs; or defile it, as with fornication or immodesty. As our body is the instrument of our spirit, it is vital that we care for it as best we can. We should consecrate its powers to serve and further the work of Christ. Said Paul, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1). **NE**