

How Do You View Your Body? (Part 5)



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by Derek Prince

Now in 1991 I was theoretically having a sabbatical with Ruth and I became critically ill with a heart condition which is called bacterial endocarditis, which means an infection causing inflammation of the lining of the heart. And it is normally fatal. Until antibiotics were discovered there was no remedy. God was gracious to me. I was, I think, 17 days in hospital, six weeks on intravenous antibiotics, and here I am alive. I thank God for the doctors. I thank God for all medical personnel that took care of me.

But, right at the beginning of that, I think the day before I went into hospital, I don't remember, I was awake about 2 a.m. and I began to talk to the Lord. I said, "Lord, I've preached healing. I believe in healing. I've been healed myself. I've seen many people healed. Why am I not being healed?" And very gently and kindly, without ever being condemnatory, He gave me a view of my previous way of living up to that time. I had a series of little scenes. And do you know where most of them were located? In restaurants. And Jesus didn't condemn me, He just showed me this is the way you've been living.

Now I was a preacher. A moderately successful preacher. Accepted by my fellow preachers, accepted by the body of Christ. Just one person didn't accept me: Jesus. I think about Paul. He said, "Lest I become disqualified." I could have easily died then. I wouldn't have been a lost soul as far as I understand. But I would have been a disqualified preacher. My dear preacher friends, you'd better consider that seriously. If Paul could be disqualified, you mean you can't be? He said he could be disqualified because he hadn't brought his body under control.

You say, "Well, Brother Prince, what were you doing wrong?" Really basically, I was not obeying the Bible. It was not what I was doing wrong, it was what I was not doing. Let me give you just one Scripture in Colossians 3 verse 2.

> "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

Now I was preaching. I was active in ministry, but I'll have to say, to a large extent, my mind was set on things below—my

house, my food, all sorts of material issues. In a way, I had lost the vision of eternity. Jesus convicted me of it. As a result I made a U-turn. Looking back, I was like somebody driving a car who was arrested a few feet from a precipice. Being arrested, I made a U-turn, turned round and started driving the opposite way. That's one of the best pictures of repentance I know. It's making a U-turn. You've been going one way; you turn around and go the opposite way.

You see, I've been Pentecostal longer than most of you have been born. I have to say out of my fairly broad exposure to Pentecostals and Charismatics, most of us are not living with eternity in view. We're preoccupied with all sorts of down-to-earth, material issues. Now I want to read the words of Paul because I think they apply to most of us. 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 19:

> "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. [Another translation says, 'the most to be pitied.']"

If all we expect from God in salvation is something here in this life, Paul says we are of all people the most to be pitied. You don't see that. But many of us Pentecostals and Charismatics are pitiable. We are so proud of the fact that we speak in tongues, and dance, and do all sorts of things, all of which I've done at one time or another and I'm in favor or all of them, but it doesn't change our spiritual condition.

Well, I told you in 1986 we started to pray that prayer, "Help us to eat wisely." We had no idea what we were stepping into. I mean, I look back and it's like being in anther world. It didn't all happen at once. In 1987, I had some medical examination and my cholesterol was 280. Now those of you that know anything about cholesterol, anything over 200 is graded unsafe. The doctor said to me, "Do you want diet or medication?" And I said, "Diet." And I got some counsel on diet which helped a little, but I've had to find out most of it myself and through Ruth. But I just want to report to you just last year my cholesterol level was 140. It came down exactly 50 percent. You say, "Well, God could have done that." That's true. But He didn't do it until I did something about it. You see, God says, "If you do this, I'll do that." If you don't do this, God won't do that.

So what are we to do as Christians? Let's go back to Romans chapter 12. I could quote this but I prefer to read it. Romans 12 verse 1:

> "I beseech you [that's Paul pleading out of a deep sense of concern.] I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

The first thing that God requires of us when we have comprehended the gospel and its message is "present our bodies a living sacrifice." Hand your body over to God. Put it on God's altar. After that, as I've said, it doesn't belong to you. It belongs to God. You live in it. You're a steward. You'll be accountable at the end of your life for the way you've treated your body which is God's temple. Then it says, and this is something very important to bear in mind, Romans 8:11. The greatest single contributor to physical health is the Holy Spirit.

> "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

So the greatest single factor in a healthy body is the Holy Spirit. He can make up for a lot of our deficiencies, which He probably is doing for many of you. But, there's a limit. Turn to Galatians chapter 5 verses 16 and 17.

> "I say then: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. [In other words, the Holy Spirit can keep us from being enslaved by our fleshly lusts. But there's a warning in the next verse.] For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

So you have two forces inside you. If you're a Spirit-filled Christian you have the Holy Spirit and you have the flesh, which is your old, carnal nature. And they are in opposition to one another. If you gratify your flesh you are, if I may say so, snubbing the Holy Spirit. You can't have it both ways. You have to make your mind up.

Now if you have never done that and you intend to do it—I want to warn you once you've place your body on the altar it isn't yours and God can send that body anywhere. He may send you to China. He may give you a kind of occupation or job you don't enjoy, but it's His body not yours. So if, in the light of what I've said, you really want to place your body on God's altar with a firm decision of your will, then I'm going to lead you in this prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You are the Son of God, and the only way to God. That You died on the cross for my sins, and You rose again from the dead. Now in the light of what I've heard this morning, I have made a decision, Lord Jesus,

to present my body to You on Your altar. I do it now in these simple words. I present my body to You. I realize from now on I will only be a steward. I will be accountable for the way I treat my body, but I depend on Your grace. If I am sincere and wholehearted, You will give me the grace to go through with this commitment. So Lord Jesus, I submit myself and I commit myself to You as my Savior and my Lord. I trust You with the outworking of this. In the Name of Jesus.

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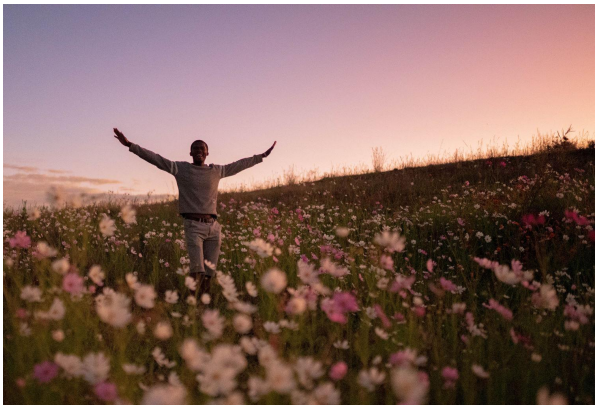


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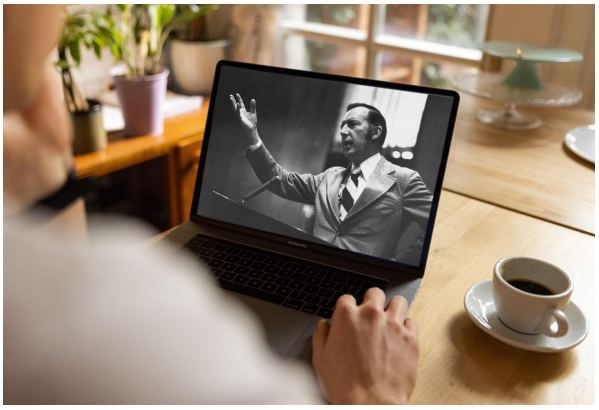
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