



Small Group Discussion



PART I It's All About the Body!
December 31 - January 1st, 2012

Getting Started

READ: Galatians 5:19-21 (pick one or more questions that fit your group best)

- **What kinds of issues does the Church consider “the big sins” both in this list and beyond?**
- **What are some issues that the Bible addresses as sin that we don't treat as sin?**
- **What does this list of what the Bible calls destructive and what we call destructive tell us about where we get our views of what is beneficial and what is destructive?**

How God Tells us to Follow Him...

READ: Deuteronomy 6:5

When God describes how we should love Him and others, what are the three areas He mentions? Love God with all your heart, soul and strength.

What is the difference between these three?

For the Hebrews the **heart** generally refers to the **activities of the mind** rather than to emotions.

The **soul** refers to the **emotions** (see also 4:29).

Might refers to **physical strength**.

In summary, this command means that the people should love God completely—with their whole being.¹

¹ Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Deuteronomy*, UBS handbook series, 138 (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000).



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What are some ways that we can love God in each of these ways?

“One of the reasons so many of us don’t change and are not getting better is simply because we are too tired...too unhealthy...to out of shape. We have not managed our body well and our body is letting us down. (The things we don’t want to do we do; the things we want to do we don’t do. And we are not getting any better.) If you don’t have the physical energy you can’t make spiritual changes; financial; relational; occupational; etc.” Vern Streeter

Balanced and sustainable spiritual growth, or steady growth in loving and trusting God, must include these three parts of the life God created in us. Our focus over the next three weeks is HOW we can love God with our bodies. This part of loving God has been largely ignored by the Church and therefore may sound “unspiritual” to some for the Church to focus on in a Sermon series.

How do you see the deterioration of your physical health impacting your ability to love God and loving one another?

The group discussion could end at this point by skipping to the final question on the next page and the Preparation box to close. This will keep the focus on one principle that God calls us to worship Him through the care of our bodies.

If you have more time continue to the following questions...

READ: Romans 12:1

What are some ways for you to give your body to serving God this year?

How can these gifts to God be worship (12:1 *this is truly the way to worship him*)?

READ: I Corinthians 6:12-20

What two areas of body-care in this passage does the Bible address in serving God with your body? The food I eat and sexual activity.



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While Paul applies principles that help us understand the danger of food-abuse and sexual deviance, let's consider the principles that help us understand how to love God with the body he entrusted to us.

What does 6:12 tell us to consider for any activity we do or don't do?

Consider an activity to start or to stop based on a destructive addiction (*I will not be a slave to anything*).

How is food necessary for the body (6:13)?

How can food be used in an addictive way? How do WE use food in an addictive way?

This same argument is used for sexual deviation (sex apart from a marriage relationship 6:13b). To misuse our bodies in our use of food, sex, or any other practice that is destructive to the health and energy of our bodies, is idolatry! (Idolatry is simply replacing God's leadership and design for our life with our own conflicting plans)

What is the attitude toward the ownership of our bodies that the Bible teaches in 1st Cor. 6:15-17?

How does your health and physical condition reflect this attitude or its absence in you?

What is the general attitude toward the place of physical health and worship within your group? *The question is simply this: Do we believe that the stewardship of our physical health is an act of worship and part of discipleship or an evidence of faithlessness and independence from God? Is this thought new to your group?*

Preparation: This series is going to offer resources for your group to participate in events and training to a more healthy 2012. Close the conversation in your Group with asking how they would like to take advantage of these resources as a group? If someone is interested in or trained in exercise, or nutrition or stress, the healthy mind or in goal-setting, ask them to take time in the group discussing these issues to help the group get better in their area of expertise.



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Check out the resources on the Harvest website that will help you through this series at www.harvestweb.net