



Sermon Discussion Guide

Every Body Matters

Gary Thomas

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“With promises like this to pull us on, dear friends, let’s make a clean break with everything that defiles or distracts us, both within and without. Let’s make our entire lives fit and holy temples for the worship of God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1 (MSG)

It is natural to want to show the whole world what we or our loved ones have accomplished, whether it is running a marathon, our kids’ academic achievements, or any job well done. Working hard to accomplish something requires great discipline. However, we need something greater than our own efforts to live a truly abundant life. We need Jesus’ help. For example, it is natural for us to push back when told we should place a priority on taking care of our physical bodies first, in order to fully serve God and those around us. So, let’s encourage one another, especially in taking care of our bodies, so we can live the abundant life of worship, discipleship, service and mission that God intended for us.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

1. What does “abundant life” mean to you?

“...offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true ...worship.” *Romans 12:1 (NIV)*

2. Why do you think we give in to self-indulgence instead of offering our bodies back to God?

“...God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 1 Peter 5:5 (NASB)

3. Focusing on our health can lead to positive life changes towards living the abundant life God has planned for us. When we are struggling to take better care of our bodies, what keeps us from calling out, “I know I can’t do this alone. Jesus, please help me”?

4. If not secured, a horse will instinctually run back into a burning barn after being rescued in search of familiar comfort, even when it ultimately leads to death. This may sound senseless, but people often turn back to harmful habits during stressful times, as well. Share some positive ways Christians can support each other when someone is headed in the wrong direction?

“I’m running hard for the finish line. I’m giving it everything I’ve got. No sloppy living for me! I’m staying alert and in top condition. I’m not going to get caught napping...” 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 (MSG)

5. What change do you desire for your body this year that will help care for it better and therefore benefit your mission?

6. Having vitality and energy can help us help others. Name something you would do for others with the extra energy.

Diving Deeper (optional)

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

1. What do you think it means that “You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies”?

2. What are the things that defile or distract us, both within and without?

3. What are some things can you do to take better care of your body?

4. Why is self-care important to your purpose in life?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- Ice Breaker: Name a favorite snack people often eat, especially when stressed.
- Goal: Challenge group members to take care of their bodies, so they can fully live the abundant life of worship, discipleship, service, and missions that God intended for them.
- Pray: Dear Lord, we thank you for the many ways we are able to use our bodies each day, whether for work or pleasure, to serve others, or to worship you. Father, give us wisdom to take care of our bodies to live the abundant life you intended for us. Jesus, strengthen us to overcome spiritual and physical obstacles to living a healthy lifestyle and having a healthy body image. Holy Spirit, help us to take care of our bodies so we can fulfill the mission you purposed for each one of us, so that ultimately you would be glorified.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.