

Broken Creation

“God likes matter. He invented it.”-C.S. Lewis

Creation

Temptations

We are tempted to degrade our body.

We are tempted to look solely at the negative.

We are tempted to view our body as our property.

Scripture

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” ²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. (Genesis 1:26-31, NIV)

Implications

We have been created in God’s image.

God called us very good.

God is the Lord of our body.

Broken

Temptations

We are tempted to worship our body.

We are tempted to believe we can achieve bodily perfection.

We are tempted to believe physical health will bring us ultimate happiness.

Scripture

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Genesis 3:6-7, NIV)

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5, NIV)

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:22, NIV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23, NIV)

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. (2 Cor. 4:16, NIV)

Implications

Our bodies are impacted by original sin.

Our bodies are impacted by personal sin.

We now experience brokenness and death.

Prayer Exercise 1

We are going to spend time alone with God prayerfully considering the truth that we are God's creation. This is time for you to be alone with God.

Begin your time by reading Psalm 139:13-16...

¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Read this passage two more times. Take a few minutes to prayerfully consider the truths of this passage. God knows you fully. You are "fearfully and wonderfully made." He "knit" you together. God knew what you would look like before you were even born.

Now, take a 15 minute walk around the campus. Continue reflecting on the truth that you have been fearfully and wonderfully made. As you walk pay attention to your body. Use the three prompts below to prayerfully consider how God has made you.

- Consider your legs and your feet. Watch as they move one in front of the other. God has created all of the muscles, ligaments and bones in your legs to work in coordination as you walk. Your feet have traveled miles beyond counting, and yet they continue to brace the impact of each step.
- Consider your eyes. God has given you sight. You are able to navigate where you are headed. Look around you. Your eyes allow you to enjoy the beauty of God's creation. With your eyes you can see a bird in flight, you can experience the magnificence of a sunset and you can look into the eyes of someone you love.
- Consider your hands. Think about the complexity of your hands. Wiggle your fingers and clench your fists. Consider all that you are able to do with your hands. They enable you to communicate love and communicate ideas. With your hands you can write, you can hold a child and you can paint.

Close your walk by thanking God that He has created you. He has made you beautiful, complex and unique. Thank Him for the blessing of a body.

Use the space below, and on the next page, to write any thoughts or reflections that come up during this time.

Find a quiet place to sit. We are going to take 10-15 minutes to prayerfully consider the truth that sin has impacted our bodies. The truth is that God's creation has been marred and broken. Our bodies don't work properly. In some ways this is probably obvious, but it is important to make the connection between sin and our brokenness. Spend 10 minutes considering sin's impact on your body, and use the prompts below to guide your prayerful reflection.

God, how has original sin impacted my body? I have ailments, pains and challenges I cannot change. God, I want to be honest about the frustration, pain or discouragement I feel about these areas of brokenness.

God, how has my personal sin impacted my body? I want to confess these areas of sin.

Close your time with two prayerful reflections focusing your heart on God's love and care. Use the prompts below to prayerfully open your heart to the Lord. Sit in the truths that you read and use the space below each prompt to write your reflections.

God, thank you for knowing all of my physical pains and hardships and grieving with me. You not only see me and care, but you understand. For, Jesus is well acquainted with physical pain and brokenness. He was crucified.

God, thank you that despite my sin You love me and desire my best. Your love is unconditional. You are not condemning me, but lovingly seeking to redeem my physical brokenness.

Return to the worship center for the next teaching session!

Transformation from the Inside Out

"The Christian life is what you do when you realize you can do nothing."-Dallas Willard

Transformation from God

Temptations

We are tempted to rely upon willpower to achieve physical health.

We are tempted to find our identity in physical health and not in God.

Scripture

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.
(Proverbs 3:5, NIV)

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NIV)

¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:15-16, NIV)

Implications

We must rely upon God for true and lasting transformation.

The deepest truth about our identity is that we are children of God.

Transformation from the Heart

Temptations

We are tempted to forget the heart as we pursue physical transformation.

We are tempted to allow unhealthy beliefs and desires to drive our efforts.

Scripture

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. (Proverbs 4:23, NIV)

As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart. (Proverbs 27:19, NIV)

²⁷ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." (Matthew 23:27-28, NIV)

The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV)

Implications

Physical transformation for God's glory comes from the heart.

We need to be honest about the unhealthy beliefs and desires that drive our actions.

Prayer Exercise 2

Find a quiet place. We are going to spend time prayerfully considering the unhealthy beliefs and desires that are driving our pursuit of physical health.

Begin your time by reading Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)...

²³*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

²⁴*See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Read the passage two more times. Make the verses your prayer. Ask God to search your heart.

Specifically, ask God to search your heart and show you if there are any unhealthy beliefs and desires driving your pursuit of physical health.

For example...

I desire a certain body shape because I believe in societies definition of beauty.

I desire physical fitness because I believe how I look dictates whether I will be loved by others.

I desire physical fitness because I believe amidst the uncertainties of life it is a way to be in control.

Spend 15-20 minutes listening to God regarding these beliefs and desires. What has been driving you? How has it been driving you? You may use the space below to write your reflections. Remember be honest! You are fully known and fully loved by God!

Spend a few minutes inviting God into these places. Use the questions below to explore these beliefs and desires with Him. We want to give Him time and space to move in truth and love in these areas.

God, where do these beliefs and desires come from (culture, parents, experiences, etc.)?

We are all searching for an identity. We are all seeking to anchor ourselves in a place that can shape our value and worth. All of the beliefs and desires you have written down stem from this deep need to ground our identity. So, we want to prayerfully make this connection with the Lord.

God, in what ways have I been finding value, worth and stability in my body rather than in you? In what ways have I been finding value, worth and stability in how people view me as opposed to how you view me? In what ways have I grounded my identity in the wrong places?

We will close this prayer exercise by grounding our identity in Christ. As a result, we will begin to align our heart with God's beliefs and desires regarding our physical health. We want to seek God's guidance as we move ahead in the Daniel Plan. Use the prompts below to center your heart on God.

First, we want to celebrate the places in our heart that God has transformed already. Amidst the *unhealthy* beliefs and desires God has been moving in our heart to develop *healthy* beliefs and desires. Use the space below to write down the beliefs and desires that are from Him and for Him. As you do, celebrate these areas of growth and maturity!

Now, spend 10 minutes prayerfully remembering the truth that your identity is not determined by your body. Begin by reading the verses below.

¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:15-16, NIV)

¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1, NIV)

Your physical health does not ultimately define your value and worth. Rather, your identity is found in Christ alone. Your value and worth are found in being a child of God. Regardless of your physical health God loves you completely and calls you His beloved. You are eternally received and embraced by God. Let Him speak these truths to your heart. Listen! Use the space below to write your reflections.

In light of the fact that we are children of God we want to close our time by considering what it means to depend upon our Father for our physical health. Use the two prompts below to seek God's strength and guidance as you walk forward in the Daniel Plan.

God, if I am honest I have often depended upon my own strength and wisdom in pursuing physical health. How have I relied upon myself rather than you? I want to repent of this way of life.

God, I want to depend upon you. I want to listen to you regarding my physical health. I want you to be Lord of my body. What is your vision for my body? How can I rely upon you to accomplish that vision? Use the space below to write your reflections. Ask Him to show you specific things you can do to posture yourself in dependence upon Him as you continue in the Daniel Plan (ex. Reading Scripture before you work out, take time alone with Him once a month to offer Him your health plan and seek His wisdom, etc.)

Jenny Ross: Practical Tips

Tana Amen: Practical Tips

Prayer Exercise 3

As we leave today we are going to ask God how we can apply these practical tips to our lives. As you do this, remember we want to take action from the heart by God's power.

Spend a few minutes looking over your notes from Jenny and Tana's teaching. As you read underline the points that seemed most significant. What was most challenging, encouraging or inspiring? Once you have done so, create a short list of these significant tips below.

Now, pause to consider why you have gravitated toward these tips. Ask God to search your heart and guide you in His ways. Are these things God is calling you to? Are there any unhealthy beliefs and desires driving you toward these tips? It might be a mixed bag; that's normal! We just want to offer ourselves to Him in honesty and seek His will.

You will now create a shorter list of the things you believe God wants you to focus on most. Remember, physical health is a process. God may want you to apply several of these tips to your life in the months and years to come. However, we can only take action on so many goals at one time. We want to seek God's guidance as we narrow our list into manageable goals we can act on now. Use the questions below to prayerfully consider your short list with the Lord.

God, what are one or two tips you want me to focus on right now? What are the practical action steps you are calling me to take in light of these tips? For example, I learned that there is great value in eating vegetables throughout my day, and as a result I am going to take the action step of changing my diet?

God, what needs to change in my life in order to take action in these areas? For example, do I need to change certain habits, reorganize my schedule, etc.?

God, who do I need to seek support from? Perhaps you need to find someone to participate with you. Perhaps you simply need an accountability partner.

My Plan

Now, you are going to craft the specific details of your plan. In order to take action we need to prayerfully consider all of the details. Use the prompts below to help you establish your plan. Once you have finished, tear this page out and put it somewhere where you will be reminded (ex. On your fridge, in your car, etc.)

What am I going to do?

When am I going to do it?

How am I going to do it?

Where am I going to do it?

How am I going to measure my progress?

Closing Gathering

Group Sharing

Take 15-20 minutes to connect with your group and share what God has been doing. Below are two key questions to focus on during group sharing time.

(1) How did God move today?

(2) What action do you believe God has called you to take?

Spend this time listening to one another and pray for one another. You can use the space below to write your reflections during this time.

Sending Encouragement

As you leave today we want to remind you of one core truth. God is with you! He has an amazing vision and plan for your physical health, and He is committed to leading and guiding you as you walk forward. We want to encourage you to take some time this next week to look back over your notes from today. Put your “My Plan” sheet where you will be reminded of the action steps God has called you to take today.

Please know that we are here to be an ongoing support and resource for you. Don’t forget to continue checking in at DanielPlan.com for ongoing tips and information that will help you during this Decade of Destiny. We would also love for you to join us here at Rancho Capistrano for another retreat. Please go to saddleback.com/retreats to sign up for an upcoming retreat.

In Christ,

Jamin Goggin

Pastor, Retreats and Personal Renewal

Saddleback Church