

Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

Lesson 67 – Honor God with Your Bodies

By Sharon K. Griffiee

While Jesus was speaking on the subject of the “Bread of Life” in the synagogue in Capernaum (John, 6th chapter), he discerned in his Spirit that there were some unbelievers in the crowd. Though they were his disciples, stirred with anger now, they were ready to walk out on him, because of his *hard sayings*. Why? Jesus’ words revealed that Moses bread did not give them lasting life (salvation does not come by the law). He explained that their ancestors ate manna and died, but the genuine life-giving bread Jesus offered was different. Jesus, *the bread of life*, came down from Heaven. Those who would continually feed on Jesus (put their trust, faith completely in Him) would have eternal life.

What was it about his teachings that these hostile Jews could not tolerate? Simple; Jesus was not addressing *their* immediate interest. Through his very words, they saw he was not going to deliver them from Rome. He was not on *their* side. His message was instead about the Son of Man coming to earth from heaven and then ascending again to heaven (See: John 6:62). Jesus’ message was a stumbling block, an offense to them.

Aware that his disciples were grumbling against his teaching, Jesus responded by saying to them,

John 6:63-64 (NIV) – “*The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.*”

Was Jesus really saying that our flesh (our physical) bodies count for nothing? Was he implying that we should *discount* the physical life we have here on earth, focusing only on heaven? Of course not! Brothers and sisters our physical bodies are extremely valuable to God! We are His hands and feet, here on earth in this present age.

Jesus was saying that *human effort, apart from the Spirit*, accomplishes nothing – zilch. In other words, those who are living under the power of a carnal (sensual, worldly) mindset have disconnected themselves from the power of God’s Spirit. It is only *through the work of the Holy Spirit* in an individual, that Jesus’ words provide true spiritual life. Eternal life, the life Jesus freely gives, is by nature received by faith. God places a high premium on the human body

He created. The apostle Paul describes the value of the human body through the following question,

I Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV) – *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. [Emphasis mine]*

The apostle Peter talks of a full, not an empty life,

I Peter 1:18-21 (NIV) – *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

Jesus Took a Human Body, Honoring God.

It is clear that our Heavenly Father did not wait until some suitable person was born, and then decide to adopt him as his son to redeem humanity from their fallen state. Absolutely not! The only one authorized and qualified for this amazingly humble commission was God’s only begotten Son, a lamb without blemish or defect. Jesus, chosen before the creation of the world, was with the Father from the beginning. John, the beloved apostle, joyfully shares this truth in his eyewitness account of the resurrection of Jesus,

I John 1:1-4 (NLT) – *We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.*

Praise God! Those who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection could not contain their joy. In Luke's account, we learn what transpired when Jesus appeared and stood in the midst of the eleven disciples in Jerusalem.

Luke 24:36-39 (KJV) – *Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

The disciples had their proof that Jesus was indeed resurrected from the dead. Standing there in the midst of them, they saw Him and touched the very wounds he had endured for them and the world on the cross. Jesus even ate a piece of broiled fish with them to show that he was not a spirit. He then opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures, instructing them to wait in Jerusalem until the Father's promised Spirit came to them (See: Luke 24:45-49).

Christ Jesus, Fully God and Fully Man.

John 1:14 (KJV) – *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

What an awesome scripture, brothers and sisters. The Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate). Let the truth of this settle into your heart. Christ, the eternal Word, who is God, came to earth as a human being, born of a virgin. It is important to understand, however, that Jesus did not exchange the nature of God, for the nature of man. He was sinless. Make no mistake, His divine nature was intact (whole, untouched). What Jesus gave up when he came to earth as a man, was his heavenly privileges, the glories, all the prerogatives of Deity. It was because of his great love for humanity that Jesus selflessly *seized the opportunity* to become a man, that he might demonstrate the true nature of God. He did this by displaying the nature of God, *in* the nature of a servant. In the form of a humble servant, Jesus honored Father God, giving Him all the glory.

John 14:10b (KJV) – *“...The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”*

We Are to Have the Same Mindset as Christ.

Philippians 2:5-8 (KJV) – *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Christ Jesus is our supreme example of selfless humility and concern for others. As we look over His brief life, we ask ourselves, “How was Jesus able to accomplish such a heart-wrenching successful finish on the cross”? First were His love, devotion and appreciation for His Heavenly Father. Next were His love, devotion and appreciation for His beloved disciples. He truly valued His disciple's steadfast companionship. That is why Jesus could express, after partaking of the Last Supper with His disciples,

Luke 22:28 (KJV) – *“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations [trials].”*

To honor God with our bodies, we need to overcome the temptations (trials) of the world, and become examples of selfless humility and concern for others.

Questions for Personal or Group Study

1. Why were a number of Jews stirred with anger over Jesus' teachings on the “Bread of Life” in Capernaum?
2. What was the real reason these hostile Jews could not tolerate (accept) Jesus' teachings?
3. How did Jesus respond to the Jews who were grumbling against His teaching? (John 6:63-64)
4. Was Jesus really saying that our flesh, our physical bodies, count for nothing? Explain.
5. What is the only way that Jesus' words will provide true spiritual life in an individual?
6. God places a high premium on the human body. How does the apostle Paul describe its value to God? (I Corinthians 6:19-20)
7. Jesus took upon Himself a human body, to honor God. What were His qualifications to redeem humankind?
8. How did Jesus demonstrate the true nature of God, while living in a human body?
9. Jesus is our supreme example of selfless humility and concern for others. How will we respond to His call?