

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

NOW IS THE TIME!
TO LET GOD USE YOU

Handout: 01/08/23

Study Date: 01/15/23

Now is the Time to Dedicate Your Body

The Bible says that the “flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). That’s probably an understatement. My flesh is particularly weak when it comes to eating and exercising. The Bible also says that if you walk in the Spirit, you won’t fulfill the lust of your flesh. That simply means that you will allow God’s Holy Spirit to control you and your intense desires for something.

In all practicality, how does this work? I was used to letting the Holy Spirit guide me when I preached, but not when I sat down to eat. I had to learn to listen for His voice prompting me to make good choices for my body—what I ate and the amount I ate. If I truly wanted a Bod4God, I could no longer stuff whatever I craved into my mouth with wild abandon. I had to stop and think about what I was about to eat.

Many of us have a gap between our beliefs and our behavior. We know what is right, but we don’t do it. James said, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). I had to recognize my abusive eating for what it was—sin. I had to bring my beliefs and behavior together. For me, the first step was to dedicate my eating to God. No more playing the games of, “Well, this one bite won’t hurt” or “I’ll buy this treat for the kids, but I won’t touch it.” I had to finish with all of that. Here is the way I approached learning to honor God with my body.

In Romans 12:1–2, Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Paul is saying, “I am begging you earnestly, dedicate your body to God!” We are to present our bodies as “living sacrifices.”

Someone once quipped that the problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar. It feels that way sometimes. We can “sacrifice” for a time, but after a while we slip up, and then we either give up or have to go back to the beginning and start again.

Sometimes, dedicating ourselves to God is as simple as just saying it. “God, I give myself to You. I give my body to You for Your purposes. I can’t do this on my own. I need the help of Your Holy Spirit to remind me of my calling, to encourage me when I think I can’t go on and when I think things will never change.” After you pray this prayer, God will help you. He can do for you what you cannot do for yourself. He can and must empower you. He can change you from the inside out. He can renew your mind. The change He can bring is not magic, but it is miraculous.

KEY VERSE

Philippians 1:20 (NKJV)

according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Philippians 1:20-21; Matthew 26:41; Romans 12:1-2

Introduction

1. When it comes to dedicating your body to God, what are some challenges that you face?
2. The cover of this Growth Guide is from Pastor Steve's book Bod4God. What are some things you can do to dedicate your body to the Lord?

Tuesday: Philippians 1:20a; Proverbs 23:2; Gen. 2:15; Heb. 12:15

Avoid Shameful Behavior

3. Based upon today's readings, what are some shameful behaviors that we need to avoid? What are some other behaviors that we need to avoid to have a body dedicated to God?
4. How is a Christian able to avoid these behaviors?

Wednesday: Philippians 1:20b; II Cor. 10:5; Colossians 1:16

Think Lifestyle Plan

5. It has been said that the Christian life is a marathon. What is the problem with looking for quick fixes to our health?
6. What are some things that you need to do to dedicate your body to the Lord? What plan do you have to do this?

Thursday: Philippians 1:20c, 3:18-19; I Corinthians 6:19-20

Do Not Procrastinate

7. Are there things that you need to do for your health that you are putting off? How can today's readings, help you to move forward?
8. How are our bodies described in today's readings?
9. How do the things listed above impact the way you live your life?

Friday: Philippians 1:21; Luke 24:41-43; Mark 6:31

Follow Christ's Example

10. What does Philippians 1:21 mean? How can you apply it to your life?
11. How did Jesus dedicate his body to God? What examples do we find in Scripture?
12. How can God help you to dedicate your body to him this year?