

**September 16.** The human body. This topic is of *immense* concern in our culture. Look at the diet ads on television after New Year's Day, the plastic surgeons' advertisements, the latest infomercial touting a machine that can make you look like Mr. or Mrs. Universe in less than two minutes a day. Consider our "body language." Our conversations can so often end up focusing on our bodies and the dreaded "F" word—*fat*. We're always talking about our bodies! Our culture has taught us to be obsessed with our bodies, but in all the wrong ways for all the wrong reasons. Enough about what *we*, the books, and tabloids say about this... what does *God* say about the body? ***I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*** (Psalm 139:14) *Your body is wonderful.* Do you believe that? Could you praise God for *your* body? Do you? That's not a simple question, is it? Many of us praise God *in spite* of how our bodies seem to be made. Some of us can't think of any reason to thank Him at all. As our bodies interact with the world, they often experience pain, disease, injury, and... eventually, death. Sure, our bodies might be "wonderful," but not always in the "good" sense of the word. Is it possible that we have been made in a way that is "full of wonder" in the sense that we might have more questions than answers? In His Word, God tells us the truth about our bodies—all the good; all the bad. I believe He wants you to see your body as He sees it, and to use it as He intended. He wants you to praise Him for the way He has made you, and to thank Him, by faith, for your body. That might seem like a real stretch right now. But if that's what He wants for us, He stands ready to make it happen through us.

**September 17.** Modern technology has uncovered a phenomenal biological world inside the human body. Its complexity far exceeds anything that anyone ever imagined... and in many ways, we haven't even begun to explore it, even with the incredible medical technology available to us. There are 74 trillion cells in the human body. The white blood cells in the lymph tissue can form 10,000-100,000 different antibodies. They fight against foreign tissue and can make these antibodies at a rate of 2000 per second. A single white blood cell can kill as many as a hundred bacteria. Over the course of a lifetime, the heart will pump an average of 52,560,000 gallons of blood. That's enough to fill a New York skyscraper! *Our body is incredible.* **Read Genesis 1:26.** When God sculpted humanity in His image, an amazing amount of detail went into the work, resulting in an intricate masterpiece. He created life the way He did to glorify Himself, but He took another step further with humanity. In His love: He designed us to represent Himself! Isn't it awesome that God has blessed us to be His masterpiece? God also designed us to be inhabited by His Spirit, a personal relationship shared by no other living thing in existence. All of these things work together to create a complex, beautiful creature that cannot be replicated.

**September 18.** These days in Christian culture, we're often taught to look away from our earthly selves and focus on God. This appears most often in response to problems like physical temptations, obsession with personal image, or substance addiction. While it is certainly important that we do not become our own idols and serve our own fleeting wants, let's not forget our bodies are "fairly important" for the act of living on earth (sarcasm intentional). Let's be realistic, you can't live here without it! Counselor Bill Gillham calls the human body an "earth suit." Just as a spacesuit keeps an astronaut alive, the body is essential for our earthly existence. *Your body is indispensable.* **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23.** The Bible says that human beings are made up of a spirit, soul, and body. In God's creation, we are confined to a limited existence so we can reach others and tend to the creation He entrusted to us. While it is really important to pay attention to the growth of your spirit and soul, the body is what sustains those things on this earth. We must treat it in a healthy respect. Each part of us sustains the other, so being negligent to one part of us is just as bad as paying too much attention to it. Paul told us to take care of our whole selves, and that includes our body.

**September 19.** Life is like a marathon. It's a good long race that lasts a long time (Lord willing). But you don't decide on Saturday to run a marathon on Sunday. Marathons take preparation, vision, and training. The apostle Paul says that we're supposed to do the same thing in life. We are supposed to discipline and train our bodies, as the race ahead of us is long. . **Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27.** *Your body is trainable.* That's actually very exciting news because the Scriptures also say that offering our bodies is *worship*: **Read Romans 12:1.** Training and disciplining the body is also *worthwhile*: **Read Romans 6:13.** What a great perspective to have about your body: It is a living sacrifice, an instrument of righteousness in the hands of God! THAT is a good reason to be joyful if I've ever seen one!

**September 20. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.** After God created Adam and Eve's bodies, He said everything was "very good." But that was before sin; that was before Adam and Eve were kicked out of Eden. Sadly, we no longer live in the best place to take care of our bodies the way we want/need to. This is bad news because despite its complexity, despite its importance (or even arguably partly *because* of these), the human body is vulnerable to things it was never designed to withstand. *Your body is susceptible.* God intended for the human body to be used in a certain way. If it's used differently than He intended, there are going to be natural consequences. Too much alcohol, too much food, sex outside of a monogamous life-long union... if you don't follow Scripture, you can bring upon yourself obesity, heart disease, alcoholism, sexually-transmitted diseases, etc. God has our best interest in mind when He commands things like this: **Read Proverbs 23:20.** Because we live in a world bombarded with the effects of the fall and sin, many things may come upon us through no fault of our own. Allergies, Alzheimer's, cancer... many ailments are not always caused by our actions or result from any sins we may commit, but that does not lessen their effects in the slightest. Are you feeling the susceptibility of your physical body today? God's Word puts it in eternal perspective: **Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.**

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