

Honoring God with My Body

Bod4God

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Welcome to Capital Baptist Church. And welcome to our brand new teaching series today entitled Bod4God: Four Keys to a Better Body.

Please take your Bible and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter six and in your program is a study guide and use it as you listen to the message today.

Well, thank you for being here today for our opening message in this new series called Bod4God: Four Keys to a Better Body. And today we are going to be talking about this issue of dedication, honoring God with your body.

Now before we begin, let's realize that your body was created, listen, through God and for God. It is important as we begin today for you to understand the basis of this idea of Bod4God. What is that all about? Well, the Bible tells us that our bodies were created, number one, through God, but, number two, for God. We are to have a Bod4God.

Now there are many Scriptures that focus on this idea, but my favorite is Colossians 1:16. Here the Bible says:

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”¹

Now let's personalize that. Don't just get caught up in the word “all.” Make it personal. In other words, realize that you were created through him. He gave you life. But also not only did he create you, he wants to control your body. You are created for him.

Now a lot of times we are really strong on that first part there. A lot of Christians in particular are really focused on we are made through him that God is our creator. But a lot of times we struggle with that second part and that is not only is he our creator of our bodies he is to be, listen, the controller of our bodies. It is to be for him. We were created for him.

¹ Colossians 1:16.

Now as I began to look at this whole issue of having a Bod4God, what I discovered was that God gives us a lot of help in knowing how to live out a Bod4God lifestyle. In fact, I discovered the word “body,” I studied the word “body” and I discovered it is in the Bible actually 179 times. I mean, God doesn’t just leave us out here and say, “You know what? I want you to have a Bod4God.”

Well, he goes beyond that. He says, “Listen. This is how you do it.”

Now the purpose of this series is to help you achieve a Bod4God lifestyle. Would you circle the word “lifestyle?” That is such a huge part of that sentence. See, it is about achieving a Bod4God lifestyle. What we are going to talk about in this series is something I am going to encourage you to implement in your lifestyle where we are going to be looking at this and I am going to be calling on you to live this out in your life.

Now let me explain to you something. What you are going to hear from me is my struggle. And what my struggle was and still is to a certain degree is that I want to eat whatever I want to eat and I don’t want to exercise. And this is the part of my lifestyle that is so difficult for me. But you have got to understand that Bod4God, listen to me, that is why I am calling it Four Keys to a Better Body. Yes, it is four keys to weight loss, but beyond that it is actually four keys to a better body. And some of you, you are doing ok on the weight thing. You are doing ok on that, but I would encourage you to look at your life and examine your life, because probably there is another area where you might be struggling

See, to have Bod4God you can’t be looking at porn. Pornography is not going to be a person that has a Bod4God. You can’t be putting smoke in your body, cigarettes and stuff. I mean, every time you smoke a cigarette studies tell us you use like three minutes off you life. That is not having a Bod4God. Bitterness. Your body was never designed to house bitterness without serious consequences. You can never say, “I have a Bod4God” and be a bitter person. You can’t honor God with your body in that way. And the list could go on and on. I mean, maybe it is immorality. Maybe it is alcohol. Maybe it is a drug, another drug, or whatever. These are all areas that we need to look at.

Some of you, what I call, skinny fat. Do you know what skinny fat is? We look at you on the outside and we say, “Wow, look at that person. Man, they probably eat right and they probably have an exercise routine.” And listen. That is not true. You are skinny fat. And what that means is you have been blessed with this incredible metabolism and there are some of you that can eat, eat and eat and never gain weight. And you know that you are not honoring God with your body and your lifestyle. You just happen to have these unbelievable [?]. You are really not healthy. You might be skinny, but you are not healthy. Please hear me. When I talk about my weight it is just my sin of choice. I don’t choose pornography. I don’t choose alcohol. I don’t choose cigarettes. I don’t choose bitterness. I don’t choose those things. It is not my area of struggle. So please when I say weight, you fill in the blank, to whatever is holding you back from having Bod4God lifestyle, because really listen, to me. What this ultimately is about is living out the life

that God has designed for you to live. More than anything else, what Bod4God is about is your experiencing the life that God has for you. And whatever is going on in your body that is limiting that, the whole idea here is to help you eliminate it for your life.

Now to do that, you are going to learn how to apply four biblical keys for a better body. We are going to do a message on each of these keys. This first one is dedication. That is today, honoring God with your body. Next week if you can possibly be back, you don't want to miss this message if at all possible, inspiration. Motivating yourself for change. It is not easy to change and I am going to teach you how to motivate yourself for change. And then the third message is eat and exercise and really that is managing your habits. And, again, maybe for your area where you are dealing with it is not eat and exercise, it is something else, but it is managing your habits. You are going to have a better body in that area, there are some habits you are going to have to manage. And then T is for team, that is building your circle of support.

So today let's talk about dedication. Let's talk about honoring God with your body.

1 Corinthians chapter six let's look at verses 19 and 20.

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you? Listen, whom you have from God. And you are not your own. For you are bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.”

Now Paul here is confronting some people that aren't honoring God with their body. Their issue isn't weight. Their issue is sexual sin. These people are not honoring God with their body in that they are having sex outside of marriage. And he tells them in verse number 18, “Flee sexual immorality.”

And then he begins to say, “Hey, don't you know? Can I say to you don't you know that you body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?”

See, here is the deal. From the time you said yes to Jesus, from the time you accepted Christ as your Savior and your Lord, if you have never done that, I hope that you will do that today, but from the time a person makes that decision, from that moment on, listen to me, God moves in. And that person's body actually becomes the temple of God.

See, a lot of people think this room here is like the temple of God. Can I tell you something? This is a special place. Yes. And the reason it is special is because it is a place where we can come and gather and have corporate worship together. But let me tell you something. God doesn't live here. God lives in us. We are his temple. And he actually tells them, if you back up into... and I am not going get into the rest of the passage, but the point is, as he is talking to them about their sexual immorality, he says to them, “Don't you understand when you hop in bed there with somebody that is not your spouse, that you are taking Jesus with you? Don't you understand that?”

He tells them that. He says, "Listen, you know, when you have sexual sin in your life and you are having sex with somebody that is not your spouse, you better realize that God is right there with you because your body is his temple inside of you." And Paul says, "Don't you realize you are bought with a price?"

You say, "What does that mean?"

Well, this relationship that we have with God comes at a great price. What is the price? The price is this. Listen carefully. God, Jesus, left heaven, came to earth, lived a perfect life, never sinned one time, suffered for my sin, your sin, our sin, was nailed to a cross, was crucified for our sin. He was buried on the third day. He rose from the grave to give us eternal life. A price as paid. He purchased you. He bought you. He owns you. You are to have a Bod4God.

And the Bible says because of this therefore glorify God in your body. In other words, honor God with your body. What is the bottom line on this? Your body matters to God.

See, your body, what you do with it and what you don't do with it matters to God. And he is calling us to honor him with our bodies. He is calling us to have a Bod4God.

Now today I am going to give you some very specific steps to take to help you honor God with you body and I am going to walk through each of these points. I am going to be challenging you to a life of obedience. I am going to be challenging you to take some steps in your life to be obedient in this area, because life change begins with a commitment. Do you understand that? None of us change without first of all making a commitment to change. Your decisions determine your destiny. If you want your life to be different tomorrow, you have got to do something today to get started in that direction.

How to honor God with your body, number one, dedicate your body to God. It begins by saying, "You know what? I am going to dedicate my body to God."

Now specifically you are going to have to look at dedicating the area of sin or struggle or weakness to God. You see, honestly, this is the truth. I am telling you. I was sold out to God when I weighed 340 pounds except in one area. I mean, you cannot say I was not dedicated to God. Anybody that knew me, I mean, they would say, "Man, he is dedicated to God." And I was dedicated to God. But there was one area where I was not dedicated to God. And the point I am trying to make is this. You maybe have an area in your life where you would say, "You know what? The truth is, I am not dedicated to God in that area."

And the Bible tells us in Romans 12:1 here is what it says.

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you, listen, underline this, present your bodies..."

God is challenging us to present our bodies, that means present in the sense of dedicate our bodies to him.

Now notice the characteristics of this dedication. Number one, it is a living sacrifice meaning you are going to dedicate your self to God. You are going to dedicate this area of your life to God and you are going to live it out as a sacrifice to him.

Number two, listen to this. Holy. You are going to be a person that seeks to live a holy life when it comes to you body. You are presenting it to him. And then don't miss this one. Acceptable to God. You are going to make the litmus test this. Is this acceptable to God?

For me to sit here and look at this porn on this computer here is this acceptable to God? See, I look in my grocery basket and I have to say because the Bible tells me, "Whether therefore you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God," 1 Corinthians 10:31. And I have to look in my grocery basket and say, "Is this acceptable to God, what is in this grocery basket here? Is this honoring to God?"

Now a part of this is realizing that your body is not for the gratification of self. Your body is not for the gratification of self. See, part of what we have got to realize is that our bodies weren't created to gratify us.

Philippians 3:18-19 says this. "For many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Man, what strong verbiage and language Paul uses. He says, "Man, this is something serious. I am weeping about this. I am broken about this. I am crushed about this." These people are actually the enemies of the cross of Christ. What could be so serious that Paul would make such a statement? He says, "Whose end is destruction." And then note this, "Whose God is their belly and whose glory is their shame, who set their mind on earthly things."

You see, this verse, verse 19 describe my life. My belly was my god. You see, what it was is I was an idolater. See, this was an area in my life that I knew was sin. This was an area of my life that I knew I wasn't doing the right thing. This was an area of my life that I had never been willing to dedicate to God and frankly, listen to me. I didn't care. I frankly didn't care. My belly was my god.

Everything else dedicated to God. I wouldn't get into porn. I wouldn't... I drink zero myself. I wouldn't smoke a cigarette. I wouldn't... you know, I am going to forgive people. I mean, the list goes on. I am only going to have relations with one woman in my life and it is my wife. But, man, this area of my life was far from God, because it was about me.

Let me tell you a little bit about my story. I actually struggled with weight all my life. This first picture shows what I looked like in first grade and, boy, was I handsome, right

from the beginning. I mean, just, I mean, when you look at me now, I mean, you can see it started right from the early days of my life, you know?

Now here is my story. I actually weighed over 100 pounds in first grade. Now these days it is not unusual for children to be that heavy. Childhood obesity is an epidemic. In fact, there are studies that tell us that kids today are actually going to live less time than us. They are actually... their life is actually going to be shorter than ours because of obesity, childhood obesity. It really burdens me to hear that.

But in 1963, honestly, I didn't know any other kids like me. There was a girl named Bernice that came pretty close, but nobody else was quite as big as me, ok?

Well, I got involved in sports. This next picture shows me in my Sheffield yellow jacket uniform. And I loved football in particular and I have played a lot of football. And I ended up becoming a pretty good football player, not the greatest, but I was good enough to get recruited by about a half a dozen small schools. I ended up going to a small, but a school that was moving forward in a big way when it came to academics and sports and that is Liberty University. I ended up going to the greatest university in the world Liberty University. And this picture shows me in my Flames uniform.

Now you have got to understand, yes, they give you scholarship. I thank God I didn't pay a dime for college and I am grateful for that. But I am telling you, I earned it. I earned it. It is not just something you do in the fall. I mean, they literally take over your life for 12 months, year round. And this was a program that there was a lot of pressure to move it forward, because a lot of money was going into this young school and they really wanted to have this huge sports program, football program. So there was a lot of pressure put on us to be moving forward.

And so, of course, I was exercising and then I finished playing ball in college and I made a terrible decision. I guess you could say I was burned out. I made a decision I was never going to exercise again in my whole life. And I kept that promise until I was 48 years old. Other than, you know, every once in while doing a little something with the kids or whatever, I mean, I was... I lived a totally sedentary life. I was not going to be any kind of regimental activity.

But worst than that, I decided a second thing and that was I was going to keep eating like a football player. I was not going to exercise like one, but, boy, I am going to keep eating like one.

Now in 1982 this next picture shows what I looked like in 1982 and that was the first official pastor picture. That was the first picture that was taken to be used related to the church and I was a church planter. I started a new church. I didn't know anybody, just believed God had called us here to being a new church and away we went, away we went. And so the good news is, you know, the church started to grow. The bad news is I started to grow. And the reason I started to grow was my favorite position in life was to sit in a lazy boy chair, ok, and to eat whatever I wanted to eat. Those were some good

days in my life. And what I meant by that, it was fun to come home. I had been working a long, hard day and working on then church trying to build up that church and seeing God changing lives and moving and then to come home and get in that chair and have the kids there and all the... whether it was young kids, man. That... those were some great memories in my life, but I sinned a lot in that chair, ok? I will tell you that much.

And the good news is that baby church started to grow. The bad news is I started to grow and I end up getting up to 340 pounds. Now listen to me. The Bible says, now listen to me carefully. The Bible says you sow to your flesh, you will reap corruption.

I was sowing to my flesh. I was eating whatever I wanted to eat and I wasn't exercising. My belly was my god. I was sowing to my flesh. And do you know what happened? The Bible came true in my life. It corrupted me. I had high blood pressure, the silent killer. I had high cholesterol, the clogging of my arteries. I had diabetes. Think about that. There I am, 340 pounds, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes. I was digging my grave with a knife and a fork and an ice cream spoon, because it was all about me, me gratifying myself, you know?

And what I discovered is this. Christians are actually the most overweight people group. I didn't know. I knew we were having a problem, because I noticed I wasn't the only one struggling because I have learned that what you eat in private you wear in public. So I knew I wasn't alone, because I saw what was going on in public, but at the same time I didn't realize that we are actually the most obese people group in America.

And do you know who is the most overweight among the Christians, the Baptists. We are number one, ok? We are number one. Congratulations, Baptist. You know, we are on the way. That is why we are going to change the name of our church to Presbyterian or Methodist or something. I don't know, you know, non denominational, Bible, whatever you want to call it. But I have spoken in all those churches, too, and I have found there is a lot of fat people there, too.

Anyway, but moving forward here, you know, this was my life. And I had to move from thinking my body was for the gratification of Steve to realizing that my body was for the glorification of God.

See, I had a bod for Steve. That is the kind of body I had. And I had to learn to have Bod4God. I had to learn that it was about glorifying him.

Philippians chapter one verse 20 talks about how that we are to magnify Christ in our bodies and in verse 21 it says, "For to me to live is Christ."

Have you ever thought about what that means in the physical realm? We often say, "I want to live like Jesus. I want to be like Jesus," and we should. He is our model. He is the measure of maturity. So don't' ever stop thinking like that. I want to be like Jesus.

Well what was Jesus like physically? Well, my friend Carol Lewis documents in her book *Choosing to Change* what Jesus was like physically and I am not going to read the whole paragraph. I don't have time. But I just want you to note down there, about three fourths of the way through how she notes from Scripture that Jesus walked for Sidon to Tyre which would have been a 40 mile trip in one day. Jesus was in such good physical condition that he could walk 40 miles in one day.

So when you say, "I want to be like Jesus," just remember having a Bod4God. Ok? Remember that.

So, number one, when you dedicate your body to God, whatever it is that maybe it is bitterness. You know, maybe it is sex outside of marriage. Maybe it is, you know, anger. Maybe it is alcohol or tobacco or some drug or other drug whatever. I mean, I don't know what it is, ok? But would you dedicate that area of your life to God? If you will, why don't you check that box there? Make a decision. Make a decision that you are going to do it, because it is not going to happen till you first decide to do it.

Now once you decide to do it, the next thing you have got to deal with is temptation, right? Temptation. It is kind of easy to make a decision here in this room, but then you have got to walk out, you have got to live it out.

And so number two is deliver your body from temptation. Now the good news is 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that every time you are tempted God promises us that there will be way of escape. Now think about this. You have never been tempted to do wrong when there was not also equally a way to escape. Don't tell me you can't change. You can change. The question is: Which way are you going to go? Are you going to go the way of, you know, control by your flesh or are you going to go the way of escape? God... you got this, the whole premise here. You can change your life.

I know some of you have been in your sin for a long time like I was most of my adult life. But I am telling you you can change and I am telling you God promises you there is a way of escape.

Now let me tell you what I found to be helpful in escaping my sin problem. And the good news is all three of these things can help you with whatever you are struggling with. Number one, you have got to pray consistently. You have got to start making this a matter of prayer. It has got to be a really consistent area of prayer.

The Bible says in Luke 18:1 that we ought to always pray and not lose heart. Now I believe you not only need to pray consistently, you need to pray specifically. And here is what I pray.

"Dear God, help me today to eat less and exercise more," because that is what I believe I have to do to lose weight and keep it off. I have got to eat less and with eating less that means eating more healthy. And not just less, but better as well, and I have got to move my body. I have got to move. I have got to exercise more.

So don't just pray, you know, dear God, help me not to look at porn. That is good. That is a starting point, but won't you be more specific? Dear God, help me to do what I need to do. Be specific. What will it take?

Number two, shop carefully. Now here the basic premise of this is your environment. Right there. Control my environment.

Now for me, my sin problem involves shopping, ok, shopping at the grocery store particularly. Here is what I have discovered. I have discovered the Bible says that I cannot make provision for my flesh. And here is what I have learned. I have learned that if food gets near me, it will eventually get in me. Have you discovered that? So here is how it works. Going back to number one, pray consistently. I can bring in, you know, a big bag of Oreos into my kitchen. And I can pray, "Dear God, holy God, great God, Lord of lords, King of kings, God, you know those Oreos are up in the cupboard there. Lord, you know and I know it. We both know it. And God, help me, help me, Lord. Help me."

Right? I start using King James Version language or whatever. Lord, thou art the greatest or whatever, you know? Help me not to eat those Oreos. I don't know what day it is going to be. It might not be today. It might not be tomorrow. But one day, those Oreos are going down, ok?

How did that happen? It happened because you didn't control your environment. For me, I provided for my flesh.

You know, let's face it. That is the trouble with our weight. We are known at times to actually get in our car and go to the store and buy those Oreos. But a lot of times we say, "Oh, I am just too tired to do that. It is too cold outside. I am not going to go all the way to the store just to get the Oreos," and it passes, you know? It passes. So the deal is I had to learn that the grocery store was a spiritual place, a place where I actually needed God more than this place today.

I found that I was doing pretty good here. My problem wasn't here. It was at the grocery store. And so I had to learn to control my environment.

Are you struggling with porn on your computer? There is all kinds of tools today to make to make yourself accountable online to people. You can do something to your environment. Pull your computer out in a public space where everybody can see it. Get it out there where everybody can look at it with you. Do something about your environment. You can pray all you want to pray, but you have got to do something about your environment.

Number three, think correctly. Boy that is so huge. See, the Bible says, "Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." You have got to think short term pleasure is not worth long term pain.

See, here is how the enemy works. What he does is he puts the pleasure right up here. He says, "Oh, that would be so nice. Yeah, that would be so good, you know."

And we don't see the pain. We don't see the... aren't you tired of the conviction of sin in your life? Aren't you tired? Aren't you weary of the life that you are now living? God is over here saying, "I want to give you a Bod4God, like I want you to live the life that I have for you. I don't want your body riddled with high blood pressure and high cholesterol and diabetes."

And, you know what? One of these days as I age probably there is a good chance some of that might come back. I am not doctor, but I wouldn't be surprised, ok, just by aging. I just want to make sure it is not because I am fat, ok? I am still fat, but not as fat as I used to be.

In other words, I see the pain out there. And I am thinking, ok, yeah that might be good, but where is it going to take me, because, do you know what? If you keep sowing to your flesh, you are going to reap corruption. It might take a matter of months, maybe even years, but eventually you are going to destroy your health. You are going to destroy your body. But one day you are going to go to the doctor and they are going to say, "You know what? You have got diabetes. You have got a problem here."

Think correctly.

And then lastly as we wrap it up and I will say to you and take your card. Will you say deliver your body from temptation, will you make that decision and say, "I will deliver my body from temptation. I will come up with a plan of action to deal with temptation"?

And then, thirdly, discipline your body for good. Now here is the good news. It is not just what you don't do. It is what you get to do. See, the Bible is not just a list of don't, don't, don't. The Bible is a list of do, do, do, ok? Don't miss this. See, it is not just about not doing things. It is about what you get to do.

See, I want to get to actively play with my actually my great grandchildren. I picture my great grandchildren. I prefer to be alive, if possible, I prefer not to be drooling all over myself, ok, if possible. I prefer to be able to actively engaged in their life. That is what I want.

I like to pastor this church for years and years and years. That is a lot of good I want to do in my life. And the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "I discipline my body." Would you underline that? Paul said that. I bring it into subjection. I tell my body what it is going to do. It doesn't tell me what it is going to do. I tell my body. I am not putting that pot in my body any body any longer. I am not going to do it. I bring my body into subjection. Why? Because I want to do good. I don't want to become disqualified. I don't want the good to ever end and if that is going to continue, I have got to discipline myself so I can live that life that God has for me.

A couple of things on this as we wrap up. Walk in the Spirit. This is one of the biggest disciplines of all. To walk in the Spirit literally means to listen to the Holy Spirit and obey what the Holy Spirit tells you to do.

You know, if you are a Christian the Holy Spirit is going to convict you of your sin. Now there is such a thing as hardening your heart. There is such a thing as searing your conscience, but if you are right with God and you are tender to God and open to God, he is going to convict you when you sin. And walking in the Spirit is when you listen and not only listen, you obey. That is called discipline. Walk in the Spirit.

Number two, run away from sin. That takes discipline. The Bible says to flee. Remember this passage from earlier? Flee sexual immorality. Paul told these people, “Man, you have got to flee from it.”

I mean, what do you need to run away from? What is God telling you to run away from? That is called discipline. Will you discipline your body for good?

Now I have said it several times and in this four part series I am going to say it many more times because I don't want you sitting here today thinking this is about weight loss, because it is not. It is not. This is what it is about. Bod4God is really about living the life that God created you to live. That is really what it is about. There is more to life than bitterness. There is more to life than those different things we are struggling with. God has so much more for us and I call it losing to live.

In Matthew 16:24-25 Jesus said this. “If anyone desires to come after me, let me deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life, notice this, for my sake, will find it.”

And for me it was a matter, it still is a matter of losing to live. See, you have to make a choice. The Bible says if I would save my life, in other words, if I would say, “You know, I want this in my life...”

This is a five pound replica of fat. I had 24 of these hanging off of me. I still need to lose probably three or four more. I had 24 of these suckers I was carrying everywhere I went, ok, jiggling around. You could hear me coming.

Now I could have held on to this. I could have said, “This is my god,” because it was. My belly was my god. Remember, I said I knew it was sin. I am talking about sin. And I didn't care. That is the truth. I wish I could color code it and make it sound better. I really would like to, because it is pretty humbling for me to even admit that, but I did not care, ok. I could have just said, “I am going to hang on to this,” but I wouldn't be able to live. And what I had to do is I had to be willing to pick up the cross. And for me it wasn't the cross that Jesus had to pick up. He was the Savior. He was Lord. That was his cross. I can't save anybody. The cross for me was the cross of wellness. I had to choose to lose my life for his sake so that I could live. And do you know what? This is the life that he has for all of us.

And whatever we are hanging on to, I am telling you, it is just not worth it.

Are you willing today to dedicate your life to God in whatever area you need to today?

Let's bow our heads and close our eyes, every head bowed and every eye closed.

Today let me begin by saying this. I mean, you honestly, you can eat right and exercise more, but one day you are going to die. Let's be real. So don't forget what I said right at the beginning. What did Jesus do for you so that you could live forever with him? He died for your sin. He was buried, but he rose from the grave to give you eternal life. And the Bible says if you will turn from your sins and put your trust in him, you could go to heaven. And so today if you have never made that decision, that is more important than any decision you could ever make. It is most important decision of life. And I want to invite you if you have never made that decision to do that right now. Just... the Bible says, "Call on the Lord to be saved." Just call out to him right now to ask him to save you. And today I just want to challenge all of us to dedicate our bodies to him, to decide today that we are going to honor him with our bodies.

Father, we love you and thank you for what you are doing in our lives, in Jesus' name.