

**Continuing in the Word, "Filled With the Fullness of God"**  
**Ephesians 3:19b-21**

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Inherent in the idea of being "filled with all the fullness of God" is the idea that we belong to Him, and this belonging includes our bodies. Romans 12:1 says, "*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.*" We are to use our bodies for the Lord and His glory not for ourselves and our own pleasure.

Another passage in Romans that makes this clear is Romans 6:13: "*And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*" This runs so counter to the American culture which is a culture of independence and freedom. We are encouraged to have no one in charge of ourselves but ourselves and to let our desires be the deciding factor in our choices.

In contrast to this John Stott makes an interesting observation in regards to our bodies that can help us keep biblical perspective on ourselves. "Our body has not only been created by God and will one day be resurrected by Him, but it has been bought by Christ's blood and is indwelt by His Spirit. Thus it belongs to God three times over, by creation, redemption, and indwelling. How then, since it does not belong to us, can we misuse it? Instead, we are to honor God with it, by obedience and self-control. Bought by Christ, we have no business to become the slaves of anybody or anything else. Once we were the slaves of sin; now we are the slaves of Christ, and His service is the true freedom."

This kind of thinking can only come from a true understanding of the cross of Christ and of our being crucified with Him. "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*" (Galatians 3:20). As Christians we live for Him, not for ourselves. Our selfish, God-independent self died with Christ, and through faith in Him we've been raised to new life. Too often we stand at the foot of the cross and try to remove our crucified flesh off it and try to drape it over ourselves as we engage in things which we ought not.

But what are we called to do? Deny ourselves, take up the cross of self-sacrifice *daily*, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23)! This is lived out in what we do with our bodies, these shells that we've been given to inhabit on this earth. Our hands can do nothing apart from what we choose for them to do. Our

eyes can see nothing apart from what we choose to look at. Our mouths can speak nothing apart from what we choose to say. Today, and every day, is the day of opportunity to glorify God in our bodies!

Pastor Jim