

BUILDING A STRONG BODY

1 Cor. 6:19-20

Good morning! We're on a series I'm calling "BTS: Built to Stand". In this series, we're looking at how to fortify our beings in the face of uncertain and sometimes jarring circumstances in our lives. And when I say our beings, I'm talking about the four components like our spirits, our bodies, our minds, and our emotions. How do we strengthen these components of our beings? So last week, we learned that there are weaknesses we need to overcome first in order build a strong spirit, like self-indulgence, resentment, and carelessness. The way to overcome them is by having a daily quiet time with God, fellowshiping weekly with other believers, and spreading the good news everywhere we go. Those are the things that will strengthen your spirit.

Today, we're going to talk about how to build a strong body. So, I've entitled this message, "Building a Strong Body". And it's based on 1 Cor. 6:19-20 which I'm going to read later. However, before that I want to take just a minute to talk to you about *why*. Why talk about this? Why talk about this in church?

One of the things many of us don't realize is that God is just as interested in our body as he is in our spirit. We're a package. He designed it that way. A lot of us think he's interested in our spirit, but he doesn't care about our body. No, he does care. He does care about your body. Why? Because he wants to be glorified in your body. He wants to use it for his purpose.

Now, I have this phone. Right now, it's working. I can use it for my purpose. I can make calls. I can see what time it is, what the temperature is, I can take pictures, I can read the news and all that stuff. What if I broke it? What if it stops working through neglect, then I can't use it anymore, right? And so, I need to keep it clean, and be careful of it so that it's always in tip-top condition.

The same thing with our bodies, if I'm not careful with my body, if I don't maintain it well, then it won't be of any use to God. It'll be nice if I have two bodies but I have only one. And so I must take care of it. Take care of it because God cares for your body.

So I'm going to, just quickly before we I share with you some of these practical things to take care of your body, review **three things that God says about your body**, about my body, to help us understand how much God cares about it. Three simple truths. If you have your bodies with you, I mean, pen and paper with you or phone, please take notes. This is what God says about my body. First,

1. I am to manage my body.

He created it but I get to manage it. He gave it as a gift but I am the steward. I'm the manager of that gift. I'm commanded to manage the body that God has given me. That means there's something behind that. That means that I can't blame anybody else when I abuse or misuse this body. It's a gift. This body is a gift given by God. And he is watching how I use it.

In fact, one day all the gifts that God has given, we're going to be held accountable for the gifts and how we use them that God has given. They're not given for no reason. They're given to make a difference.

When you think about managing this body there's a lot we could talk about. We're going to talk about some practical things later. But there's one verse in the Bible where Paul talks about two different ways of thinking about the body that God has given us. When you look at these two different ways it will really give you some insight on how to manage your body.

Paul says in **1 Corinthians 6:12-13a (CSB), "Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me.' but I will not be mastered by anything. 'Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food,' and God will do away with both of them."**

He's saying there, food and the stomach... they're not going to last. We'll have something different, better in heaven. So why would I let something that's not going to last control my life? He said I'm not going to do that. Now, notice those two words, "permissible" and "beneficial".

Since I get to manage my body that means God permits me to do a lot of things with this body. But the issue is not about being permissible. The issue is about what's most beneficial for me, for other people? Because it may be permissible like eating lechon or chocolates but is it beneficial? That's the number one issue behind "How do I manage the body that God's given me?"

So, the first thing the Bible says about these bodies God's given us. I'm to manage it.

The second truth is this.

2. I am to honor God with my body.

I know some of you, you looked at yourself in the mirror this morning and you're thinking right now, this body? Honor God? How can it honor God?

The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 6:13**, "*The body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*"

If I realize that God gave me this body then I realize I should use it for him and not for my own desires, especially immoral desires. Now, there are two big pictures in the Bible about this to help you and me understand what this means.

First, the Bible says that Jesus died for your body. Not just your spirit and soul but also your body. The whole package. **1 Corinthians 6:19b-20** says, "*You are not your own; you were bought at a price. [He's talking about the cross here. The price that Jesus paid for our sins. The forgiveness that he gave us. You were bought with a price...] Therefore, honor God with your bodies.*" That's one big reason in the Bible. You honor God with your body because it is his. He saved your body because of what Jesus has done for you.

There's also a big reason as you look towards the future. The Bible says one day this body that God has given you, it's going to be resurrected after you die. We think a lot of times of our physical bodies as like a plastic water bottle that once the contents are out it's not worth anything. You just throw it away. But the Bible doesn't say that about our bodies. The Bible says, just like Jesus' body was resurrected after he died, one day God's going to resurrect your body to be a perfect body. That's what **1 Corinthians 6:14** tells us, "*By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.*" God's going to resurrect us as well, our own bodies will be resurrected.

And when he raises your body it's a perfect body. The Bible says it's a glorified body just like Jesus' body. You get a perfect body for all of eternity. He's going to resurrect out of this body a perfect body. You'll have version 2.0 of your body where all imperfections have been removed, no pain, no sorrow, no death. There'll be no 3.0 because 2.0 is perfect.

When we talk about stuff like this – honoring God with our body, the way we treat our body, I'm very aware that some of you right now are going through some real physical challenges. Some struggles. You may have gotten some news from a doctor this last week, so you are not thinking about better health right now. You're just thinking, "How am I going to make it through what I'm facing?" I know it's difficult but since your body is owned by the Lord, he will take care of it. He will take care of you. It doesn't mean he will heal you instantly and he may not, it all depends on his purpose for your body. But take heart because his grace is enough for you. Besides, this present body is nothing compared to the perfect body he will give you.

There's a third truth the Bible says about my body. The Bible says I am to serve in this body.

3. I am to serve with my body.

One of the great things my body can do on this earth is it can touch people. It can serve people. It can make a difference in this world. There's a couple of pictures that the Bible gives about how we serve in this body. One of the pictures the Bible gives is: this body that God's given you, once you come to Christ and start a relationship with him, he puts his Spirit into your body. The Bible says it is a temple of God's Spirit. Look at this next verse. *"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"* (1 Cor. 6:19)

God puts his Spirit in you. He's taken up residence in your life so that you can serve him in the best and the greatest way. That's how God sees your body. You may not see it that way, but God sees it that way.

When you think about that it starts to help you think differently about how you treat this body. In the news, sometimes we read about a church or a synagogue being vandalized like spray-painted with offensive words or something. You think, "How could anybody do that?" But the truth of the matter is your body is a lot more sacred to God than any church building. A lot more. A lot of times we vandalize our own bodies. We do things to our own bodies. So, you start to think differently when you think that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is meant to reflect God and to serve God in this world. That's why God gave us a body.

Another picture in the Bible is a picture of a living sacrifice. Look at this next verse in your outline. *Romans 12:1, "I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."*

What does that mean? How do you offer your body as a sacrifice? Do you have to get up on an altar or something? That sounds pretty strange.

No, it's a living sacrifice. How do you do this? You do in your body what Jesus did in his body while he was here on this earth. He's our example.

So you offer your body to God by doing in your body what Jesus did in his body while he was here on this earth.

And what did Jesus do? He served. In fact, one time Jesus said, “I didn’t come to be served. I came to serve. To offer my life as a ransom for many.” Jesus came to serve so we serve with these bodies.

These three things I talked about, they are the real motivations for better health. I’m to manage this body. Nobody else is going to do it so I’m the one who has to make the decisions. And this body is meant to honor God so it’s not about me. It’s about God.

Maybe the highest motivation of all for this body that God has given me is this: **the healthier I am the better I can serve.** The bigger the difference I can make in this world.

Kuya Alan shared with me a story about a friend and a fraternity brother of his. His name is Engelberto Peynado. He lives in Oregon with his family. Yvette, as he is called by his friends, is a Christian and it was Kuya Alan who led him to the Lord years ago in the Philippines. He has a quite inspiring testimony because his marriage was saved when he became a Christian. Since then he has served God in his church with passion. He conducts Bible studies and has continued it online during the pandemic. Last month, he went to Hawaii for vacation. In Hawaii, being a food lover, he immediately ate to his heart’s delight. Like in one dinner, he gorged two crispy patas and a bunch of chicharong bulaklak. Makes you hungry now, right? Well, when he came back to the mainland, one day he felt differently. He couldn’t move his arms and legs. When his wife, a nurse, came home from work, he described to her what was happening to him and she recognized immediately that he suffered a stroke and called 911 right away. Engel didn’t think it was a stroke because he never had a heart disease.

He is diabetic but it is under control because of maintenance pills. Other than that, he felt fit as a fiddle. He became well after treatment in the hospital and never suffered any side effects.

But this experience taught him something. He realized that he was just living on borrowed time here on earth and, therefore, he must take care of his body if he was going to serve God in the best possible way during the limited time he has on earth. It was a wake-up call for him. If he is to be useful, he needs to be careful. So, now, he's more eager than ever to share Jesus wherever he goes. In fact, he confessed that before, he would cancel his Bible study if there were only a few attending. Since his experience, he never canceled even when there was only one or two people in attendance. And the Lord is blessing. Because his Bible study has grown to include people in the Philippines and the Middle East.

We, too, are living on borrowed time. We must make the most of it. And we must allow God to use us to the max. How would that be possible if we're not taking good care of our bodies? That's why Paul says in **Philippians 1:23-24**, "I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body." Then, he goes on to say that being alive is more beneficial to the Christians because he can disciple them and serve them while he was still with them.

Now, in the remainder of our time, what I want to share with you are some important **principles you can apply in your lives** so that you can put into practice the three things about our bodies that I mentioned earlier. These principles are about making lasting changes in our lives. Because if we truly want to be healthy, and to be useful to God, we need to make drastic changes in the way we think and in the way we live. So, let's begin.

The first one is this:

1. Lasting change requires making wise choices.

Everyone wants to be healthy, but very few people choose to be healthy. It takes more than desire or a dream to get healthy . . . it takes a decision. You won't change until you choose to change. You don't get healthy by accident. It's intentional. It's a choice. Actually, it's a lifetime of choices, but it begins with a decision.

It doesn't have to be a big decision. You can start with small decisions. Like you say, "I decide to stay away from chicharong bulaklak". That will be hard for some of you but you have to start somewhere. Then, next time, "I decide to stay away from soda". Then, you can substitute a diet soda or a zero soda. Before you know it, you will substitute good old water for soda.

I remember Kuya Alex. He told me that when his doctor advised him to go on a diet, it was hard because he liked chocolates. So, he kind of cheated. He ate just a little piece of chocolate whenever he craves it. You know how chocolates are divided into little squares. So, he took a piece after every meal. And I borrowed his style. But I cheated a little more than him because I ate two small squares of Cadbury chocolate. They're cheaper, btw, at Walmart. This went on for several months, the squares became smaller and lesser until my tongue got used to not craving for it anymore. It now wants Hershey's. Just kidding.

As a pastor I have met many people who were praying for God to heal illnesses and sicknesses that could easily be reversed if they simply made healthier choices. Why should God heal you of an obesity-related illness if you have no intention of changing the choices that led to it? God is waiting for you to start making healthy choices. So, if you have been waiting for a sign, this is it!

As you make more and more healthy choices, you will begin to change: The Bible says, "Get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to — the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must

be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness." (Ephesians 4:22 –24 GNT).

Fortunately, God offers you his power to make healthy choices. "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him" (Philippians 2:13 NLT). God has a part and you have a part in your physical health and your spiritual maturity. You do what you can do, and God does what only he can do.

The second principle is

2. Lasting change requires new ways of thinking.

The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act. If you want to change how you act, you must begin by changing the way you think. Your thoughts are the autopilot of your life. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." The biblical word for changing your mind is "repentance." To repent is to make a mental U-turn. It means "I choose to focus my thoughts in a completely different direction." This new mind-set creates new emotions, which give me motivation to change.

Let me ask you a personal question: What old ways of thinking do you need to change? Where do you need to repent? Have you held on to some self-destructive ideas about food, about your body, about sex, or about work that have harmed your health?

To get healthy, you'll need to repent of unhealthy choices. You'll need to think differently about your body — and every other area of your life too. The way you do this is by filling your mind with the Bible, God's truth.

Let me let you in on a secret. The secret of victory over any temptation is simply to change the channel of your mind. Refocus your attention on something else, and the temptation immediately loses its power over you.

Nowadays, it's harder to avoid temptation because they bombard you everywhere. It used to be just on the TV or magazines, now it's ever closer to you, like your phones, or tablets, or computers. If you're a spendthrift, there's ads about coupons, discounts, which are not what they really are, but they hook you in. If you're a man, there's ads about anything with a scantily clad woman beside the product who has nothing to do with the product. What do you do? You take your eyes off it asap. Or you click the three dots on the side of the picture to turn it off. And hopefully it never comes back again. But they do, right? The thing is, learn to refocus. Don't let your eyes and mind linger on it. Don't even think about it, as they say. Instead, as the Bible says, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things." (Phil. 4:8)

Lasting change requires making wise choices. Lasting change requires new ways of thinking. And thirdly,

3. Lasting change requires God's Spirit in your life.

Friend, you need God's power, not just will-power, to change. God's Holy Spirit helps us break free from bad habits, compulsions, and addictions. The Bible says in Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." You see, the more I allow God's Spirit to guide and empower me, the more he grows positive character qualities in my life to replace my bad habits. The Bible calls these qualities the Fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22 – 23 gives a list of them: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Note that last quality: self-control.

You already know how important that one is and the damage that happens when you don't have it. But what most people don't know is that the secret of self-control is to allow ourselves to be Spirit-controlled. This is the exact opposite of what most people think. Ask someone on the street, "What do you think of when I use the phrase 'Spirit-filled' or 'Spirit-controlled'?" and typically people will describe someone acting out of control. But the Bible says that the more I allow God's Spirit to direct and guide me, the more self-controlled I become! As the apostle Paul said, "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13).

Folks, to build a strong body, first you need to know what God says about your body. God says he wants you to manage it responsibly. He wants you to honor him with your body. And he wants you to serve him in your body. Now that you know these three truths about your body, you then need to apply three principles to keep your body healthy. These are lasting changes requires making wise decision. Lasting changes require new ways of thinking. And lasting changes requires God's Spirit in your life.

If you're a Christian, God's Spirit is already in your life. He is at work in you. You just need to cooperate with him as he makes changes in your life. You need God's Spirit to build a strong body.

If you're not a Christian and you want make changes in your life, you can't do it on your own, you need God's help. His help comes when you allow the Holy Spirit to come into your life. He comes into your life when you receive Jesus in your heart as your Lord and Savior. Only Jesus can save you and change you. Maybe you've tried the ways of the world. You've tried to avoid temptations, whatever form it is, and you always fall short. As the Bible says, "Your spirit is willing, but your flesh is weak". If that's how you feel and you want victory over your sinful desires, turn your life over to Jesus.

The reason you're weak is because of sin. Every person on earth sins. And sin is the reason why our bodies die. But your body will live, in fact, you will be given a new perfect body in heaven when you put your trust in Jesus. He died for your sins, he was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead. He did that because he loves you so much. He wants you to be with him in heaven. And on earth, he wants you to live a life that is filled with joy and grace.