

# Our Bodies and Creation

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Preacher: Kevin Murphy

[ 0 : 00 ] If you don't know me, my name is Kevin. I'm one of the leaders here, and we are going to dive into our sermon for today. I want to introduce it a little bit, and then Rachel's going to read the scripture to us.

The human body is the most fascinating and yet infinitely complex, whatever you want to call it, piece of machinery, ingenuity, or creation.

When I was in high school, I didn't do very well at high school at all for two reasons. One, I didn't have the brains to do very well. And two, I was a very terrible student. I didn't work hard.

But if I had the brains, and if I had worked hard and done well at school, the only job that might have rivaled my interest in being a pastor would have been to be a medical doctor.

I would have loved to have been able to be a doctor. When I was at university, I stayed in a house or an apartment with a med student, another doctor. He was in his final years of med school.

[ 0 : 58 ] And every night at dinner, I would say, Okay, Justin, tell me, what did you get up to today? What patients did you see? What diseases did you diagnose? What surgeries did you watch?

What diagnoses did you offer to your professors as you were doing your hospital rounds? I loved asking my buddy Justin about med school. And I wish I could have been a doctor.

But God did not equip me to do that. The human body is a fascinating and remarkable piece of creation. And even if most of us don't really know anything of what's going on inside of us, here are a bunch of facts for us.

Did you know that your body has 100,000 miles of blood vessels in your body? If you were to string those all together, that's halfway between here and the moon of blood vessels in your body.

Every second, you produce 25 million new cells in your body. Amazingly, the human eye can detect between 7 and 10 million different colors.

[ 2 : 02 ] I'm going to ask Professor Chris Leung to verify that later after the service. He's an eye professor. But that's what I read. 7 to 10 million different colors your eye can determine.

And Bill Bryson from his book, *The Body*, he says this, The most remarkable part about your body is your DNA. You have a meter of it stacked into every cell in your body.

And so many cells that if you formed all the DNA in your body into a single strand, it would stretch 10 billion miles, which is beyond Pluto.

Think about it. There's enough of you to leave the solar system. You are, in the most literal sense, cosmic. Bill Bryson. Okay? And so far from being the product of random chance, our bodies are nothing short of utterly remarkable and amazing.

And the more our scientific technology advances, the more we discover, the more we're able to find out and look into the smallest pieces of the human body, the more we are blown away and astounded all that goes into it.

[ 3 : 08 ] I just recently read Peter Atiyah's book called *Outlive*, and it was way too technical for me. But just thinking about at a sub-cellular level, all the different bits and pieces that are going on, that are opening cell walls and closing cell walls and lying protein molecules in and other molecules out, it's absolutely astounding what our human bodies do.

And so for the next six weeks, we're going to pause our series on 1 Corinthians, and we're going to do the series on the human body. And we're going to be looking at the idea of what does the Bible say about our bodies.

Now, typically at Watermark, we want to systematically work through books of the Bible, like 1 Corinthians or Ephesians. And we call this expositional preaching. It's the best way to find out what is God saying to us.

But from time to time, we want to take one topic, one theme, and look at it systematically across the Bible and say, what does the whole Bible say about this theme? And so for the next six weeks, we're going to look at our physical bodies.

And we're going to look at, what does it mean that our bodies are created by God? What does it mean that our bodies suffer and are broken and are subject to pain and disease? What does it mean that our bodies and our identity, our bodies in heaven and glory, will we have a body in heaven one day?

[ 4 : 23 ] And finally, we're going to look at our bodies and gender. Now, if you're in the youth, if you're in high school, you're going to be part of us for the month of July, hopefully for the whole series.

And I hope that this is really applicable to you as you think about what does God have to say about you and your physical body and the way that God has made you. Okay, so to do that, we're going to look at Psalm 139.

And I'm going to call Rachel up to come and read our scripture reading for us today. It should be in your bulletin or in your Bible. Grab one of those, open that up, and let's listen to the scripture reading for today from Psalm 139.

Good morning. Feel free to read along with me from the screen or from the bulletin. Psalm 139 reads, O Lord, you've searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

[ 5 : 30 ] Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in behind and before and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, surely the darkness shall overcome me and the light about me be night. Even the darkness is not dark to you.

The night is bright as the day. For darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb.

[ 6 : 37 ] I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works. My soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw me, my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. How vast is the sum of them. If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake and I am still with you. Oh, that you would slay the wicked, O God. Oh, men of blood, depart from me. They speak against you with malicious intent.

Your enemies take your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred.

[ 7 : 49 ] I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me.

And lead me in the way everlasting. Okay, great. Thank you, Rachel. Let me pray for us briefly. Father God, as we come to your word, we want to see what your word has to say. As we think about this topic, Lord, we really do want to think your thoughts after you. Even here at the end of Psalm 139, David expresses the desire to think your thoughts after you, to love what you love and to hate what you hate.

God, we want to be the same. And we want to think your thoughts. So help us to do that, God. In this topic that is so conflicted and challenging for many of us, I want you to help us to really see ourselves at the way you've made us, to appreciate what you've made us, to love what you've made.

And God, to think rightly and biblically and correctly in this way. So I pray, God, as we look at your word, speak to us and encourage us. Lord, those of us that maybe are downcast, I want you to

encourage us from your word this morning.

[ 8 : 59 ] In your great name we pray. Amen. Just to say, sorry, I meant to say earlier, there are a couple of copies of this book on the piano called What God Has to Say About Our Bodies by Sam Aubrey.

It's a really great book. I encourage you to grab one of those if you want to find out more. Okay, so I wonder how you feel about your body. I think it's safe to say that most of us have a conflicted relationship with our physical bodies.

And I think there's three reasons for that. The first one is personal. Most of us feel personally conflicted about our bodies. Most of us, if you had a magic wand that could change any one thing about your body, most of us would grab that wand and want to do something.

Maybe you want to be a bit taller. You want to be a bit shorter. Maybe you want a smaller nose. You want straighter teeth. Maybe you want that back pain that you suffer with all the time to go away. You want that irritable gut to be cleared up. Some part of our bodies, we all struggle with to varying degrees. Now, some of it can be humorous, like my receding hairline.

[ 10 : 07 ] And we can laugh and joke about that. Or if you're my kids, you can cry about it. But for others of us, it's a bit more serious. There's deep pain in our bodies. We live with constant pain, some of us.

Some of us, maybe the way we feel about ourselves causes stress or anxiety or angst. So there's personal conflict. There's also cultural conflict. I think our culture is very confused about how do we think about our physical bodies.

On the one hand, our culture tells us our bodies are nothing really particularly special. They have very little bearing on who we are and on our identity.

And we're told that our most true self, who you really are, is who you feel to be. This is obviously a huge assumption behind the transgender movement, right?

That your makeup, your physical body has zero bearing on who you are. But who you really are is who you most feel yourself to be inside. And so we're told that our bodies are actually nothing at all.

[ 11 : 07 ] It doesn't matter. You can chop it. You can change it. It's completely irrelevant. But on the other hand, our culture also tells us that our bodies are almost everything. And that place such high premium on our physical bodies that you almost culture attaches one's identity and self-worth to it.

And so just think about how much pressure and how much stress goes into people thinking about the way that we look. Or the way we come across. Or how successful we are. Or think about the insane amount of money spent in the cosmetic industry.

Either cosmetic surgery or cosmetic products. And so on one hand, our culture says, your body's nothing. It doesn't matter. Just chop and change it. On the other hand, it says, it's everything. It's everything.

And you should put a lot of attention to it. So we live in this constant conflict. But then I think a third reason why we feel so conflicted is, for those of us that are Christians and followers of Jesus and take the Bible seriously, I think we're conflicted about what the Bible says.

And part of that is because we feel that the Bible places so much emphasis on our hearts and our inner life that maybe God is not that interested in our outer world and our physical bodies.

[ 12 : 17 ] I think of how Jesus will say, or how the proverb says, guard your heart, for above all it is the wellspring of life. And so one author put it like this.

He said, most Christians tend to see the soul as the true core of who we are. And the body is just an empty vessel that will one day die while our souls will live on forever in heaven.

And of course, we read things like in the New Testament that Paul says, he seems to contrast the flesh versus the spirit. And he says, put to death the things of the flesh, but so to the spirit.

And so we tend to think the immaterial is good and the material is bad. Now, just by the way, when Paul is doing that, he's using flesh to talk about our sinful nature and the spirit to talk about what is alive to God.

And he's saying, don't sow to your sinful nature, sow to your relationship with God. The contrast is not material versus immaterial. It's what is done in rebellion against God versus what is life lived in surrender to God.

[ 13 : 19 ] And so for all these reasons, personal conflict, cultural conflict, biblical, theological conflict, I think we feel confused about how are we meant to think about our bodies. So let's consider the scripture.

And if you've got the scripture in front of you, open it up. I want you to see something. Psalm 39 is made up of 24 verses and it's broken up into four sections. Each section has six verses. And so the first section, verses one to six, David speaks about God's perfect knowledge of us. He says, oh Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up.

You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my line down. You're acquainted with all of my ways. God says, David says, everything about us. Our thoughts, our moods, our emotions, our private actions, our secret desires, our conflicted feelings are perfectly and intricately and meticulously known by the sovereign God who is Lord of everything.

He knows absolutely everything there is to know about us. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He says that even before a thought is, even before a word is on my tongue, behold, you know it altogether.

[14:33] Then in the second section, David takes comfort in the fact that there's no place in life, no experience in life, physical, mental or emotional, that is beyond God's reach or God's control.

So he says, where shall I go from your spirit? Where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to the heavens, you're there. If I go down to Sheol, the place of the dead, you are there. There's no place, physical, mental, emotional, no sphere or experience of life that is beyond God's reach and ability and interest to be involved in that.

Your child is sick. You lose your job. You feel physical ache and pain. Diagnosed with cancer. Your loved one passes away. God is there with you in that time and season.

But then in the third section is the section we're really going to look at today. And here David says, the reason why we can be confident that God knows every sphere and experience of life and God knows us so deeply and personally is because he made us.

Look at what verse 13 says. It says, for or because, it says, God, you know me perfectly and you're always with me. Why? Because you formed my inward parts.

[15:48] Those minute subcellular particles that until recently we didn't even have any idea existed. God knows every single one of them and he's known them for thousands of years and every single human being.

You know my inward parts. You, God, knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I'm fearfully, wonderfully made. Wonderful are your creative works.

My soul knows it very well. My frame, that means my body, is not hidden from you. When I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Think about that. David is saying, before anyone knew of my existence, before your mom even knew that she was pregnant with you, when all you were was a tiny zygote, I think that's the right way of saying it, a minuscule cell that multiplied and multiplied and multiplied and multiplied and eventually formed the biological process to become you, in that tiny moment, God knew you, he planned you, he formed you, he knew exactly what he's doing to bring about you.

Intricately woven the depths. Verse 16, And the point that David is making here is that our physical bodies are not random.

[17:11] They're not arbitrary. They're not just sperm and egg came together and voila, out popped you. God was intricately involved in bringing together those two parts and forming your DNA in who you are and bringing you about.

Everything we are, including our physical bodies, is the consequence of the eternal, sovereign, creator God's intentional care. There's a Dutch theologian called Herman Bavinck.

He lived many years ago. And listen to how he says it. He says, It is the essence of humanity to be both physical and conscious. The body is not a prison, but a marvelous piece of art from which the hand of God Almighty, from the hand of God Almighty, and just as much the essence of humanity as the soul.

So notice what Bavinck is saying there. He's saying we typically think our body is just this outward box, but the real part of me is my soul. That's who I really am.

And the box will get discarded one day and my soul will live on forever. And he's saying, no, actually a human being is made up of body and soul. Both of these together are what God has made you and are intricately part of who you are.

[18:24] Now contrast that to the view of our Buddhist friends, who typically would say the goal of life is to reach nirvana or enlightenment, that state of life where we are free from the desires and the entrapment of the body.

We want to be free from the body and reach that state of enlightenment where we're not constrained by our physical desires and our physical body. But Biblical Christianity says, no, actually your body is an important part of who you are, just as much as your soul. Here's another author, Kelly Capuch, writes and he says, Unlike Plato's philosophy, Plato said the soul was trapped in a box. The Bible frames original human goodness within our bodily experience, not apart from it.

Our physicality is not a problem to be overcome. It's a gift essential to our existence, our essence, our being. The Bible presents a unified picture of the whole person, body and soul, with communion with God and others, always meant to take place in and through our physical bodies, not apart from them.

This is our created state. This will be our ultimate hope. Now there's a lot in there. We're going to pick up on some of this over the next few weeks. But two things I want you to notice that Kelly Capuch is saying.

[ 19 : 41 ] The first is this. He says, The physical body is not a consequence of sin entering in the world. Like we were made these disembodied immaterial beings. Sin entered the world and now we've got a physical body.

And one day we're going to go back to an immaterial disembodied being in the heavens. Actually our physical bodies is part of how God created us and something we're going to get in glory, in heaven.

You know in heaven you're going to have a physical body. And so our physical bodies are not just something fallen and broken we've got to put up with in this world, but one day Jesus is going to come and deliver us from it. That's actually part of how God has created us.

This is our created state. It will be our ultimate hope and glory. And then the second thing he says is, The Bible presents a unified picture, body and soul, of one human being.

And what this means is that our bodies are not incidental or arbitrary to our Christian faith. The point is, God is not only interested in the immaterial parts of our lives, but in the totality of us.

[ 20 : 40 ] Body, mind and soul. They all belong to Him. They're created by Him. We are to enjoy Him, to be used in His worship and His service. Now we're going to come back to this in a few weeks time, but just look at these two scriptures that reinforce this.

Look at Romans chapter 1. Paul writes, he says, I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, present your bodies to God as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.

This is your spiritual worship. Paul doesn't just say, present your souls, just your heart to God. No, present your body to God. This is part of your worship. Or in Corinthians, Paul writes, he says, The body is not meant for immorality or sin, but for the Lord.

And the Lord is for your body. God raised Jesus bodily. He will also raise us up bodily by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit?

You are not your own. You were bought with a price. So glorify God, not just with your heart, but with your body. And so the point here is that all of us, our heart, soul, mind, our bodies are part of who we are, part of our being, part of what God is interested in, part of what we meant to worship Him.

[ 21 : 56 ] We belong to Him. I think as Christians, sometimes we can take our thinking more from Plato and culture than from the scriptures. And we tend to think of, the immaterial disembodied as good and holy and righteous and the body as bad, material as bad.

And in scripture, it says the opposite. And many commentators have pointed out that when God Almighty, the eternal uncreated one, wanted to come to earth to redeem us and rescue us and save us from our sin and from hell and to bring us back into relationship with Him, how did He come?

He came as an embodied being. Jesus Christ came. John 1.14 reminds us, the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us and we have seen His glory.

Friends, in order for Jesus to come to us, He had to become a human being. In order for Jesus to be a human being, He had to take on a physical body. And so while most religions, especially religions here in Asia, Eastern religions, want to flee from the body, Christianity says, no, actually you need to embrace it.

This is an important part of who you are. I think this is one of the reasons, if I'm honest, why in the West, Asian religions like Buddhism and transcendental meditation and even yoga to a degree are growing so quickly because in the West, we feel so conflicted about our bodies.

[ 23 : 25 ] We don't like our bodies. We feel the aches and the pains. We are comparing ourselves to social media. We feel so conflicted with our bodies and Eastern religions typically give us a way of escaping the body and thinking, the body doesn't matter.

You can hate your body, change your body, just if you meditate, what's in your soul is what really counts. I think that's why Eastern religions are growing so much in the West. But Christianity says, no, your body is part of who you are.

Jesus died bodily or came bodily, died bodily, rose again bodily, ascended into heaven bodily, is seated at the right hand of the Father bodily and will return again in a physical body and will bring us, give us renewed bodies and take us to a renewed creation where we will live in physical bodies. And so the point of all this is that our physical bodies are not secondary. They're not inconsequential. This is part of what it means to be human. Our bodies and our humanity. Now here's the second thing. Our bodies and God's delight. So look again at Psalm 139 with me and we're going to look at verses 13 onwards.

[ 24 : 39 ] Look at what David writes here. He says, You formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works. My soul knows it very well. I remember the day that we brought our first daughter, Sierra, home from the hospital. And she was born on the 4th of April.

This isn't her, actually. This is Google. Sorry to disappoint. I remember standing outside the hospital. Sierra was in this little carrier thing and I went to go get the car and driving her home and the fear and the dread of the responsibility of taking care of this most fragile and most precious thing we've ever laid our hands on.

Right? And I've never driven so slowly and so carefully in all my life. The thought, the dread of what happens if I do something wrong.

I can't imagine what it's like in Hong Kong if you have a baby and then you've got to take a taxi home. Right? You want to tell the taxi driver, listen, just slow down, buddy, just careful here. We've got a newborn baby. Maybe if you haven't had a child but you've got a new car, right?

[ 25 : 54 ] And the first time you drive that car you drive like a 90-year-old granny that's just so careful and you're looking all around you. Why do we do that? Things that are precious to us we treat with a sense of dread, a sense of awe for fear of damaging them or doing anything wrong.

Well, David says here that we are fearfully made and the opposite of this, of course, is something that's dispensable or worthless. So, you order something from Taobao and you get a whole bunch of packaging and what do you do with the packaging?

You slice it and you rip it and you throw it aside and you trample it and maybe you use it to clean up the dog's mess or something, you know. It's worthless. It's dispensable. So, you treat it like trash. David here says our bodies are fearfully made. There's a sense of awe and trepidation about them. They are so precious. We don't treat them just arbitrarily or like trash.

They are awesomely made. And then he says here that they have been wonderfully or marvelously made. I think the most astounding thing about this is when you consider what the Bible has to say about creation in Genesis 1 and 2.

[ 27 : 04 ] So, the Bible's account of creation is not meant to be a scientific description of how exactly the world was formed. The Bible's description of creation is who created the world not how it was created.

And, Genesis 1 and 2 the six days before God rested are broken up into two parts. Days 1 to 3 God is creating the world. Days 4 and 6 God is filling creation.

Okay? These two parts. And then on day 7 God rests from his creation and enters into his rest to enjoy it. Now, incidentally, day 7 is the only one in Genesis 1 and 2 where it doesn't say it is morning and evening and God and the seventh day.

Right? So, remember day 1 morning and evening the first day. Morning and evening the second day. Et cetera, et cetera. The seventh day doesn't say that. Why? Because the seventh day hasn't ended. God is still at rest and he invites us into his rest by being in a relationship with him.

But, so, but the creation order has a flow to it. It starts off wide, it starts off broad and it narrows and it narrows and it climaxes and climaxes and becomes more and more important and the climax of creation is day 6 human beings.

[ 28 : 20 ] So, day 1 God made this and it was good. Day 2 God made it and it was good. It was good. It was good. God makes humanity and he says it was very good. The climax of the whole of

creation is mankind, male and female, you and I made in God's image.

It's the high point, the pinnacle of creation. But, but think about the totality of creation. Think about how insanely intricate and majestic and glorious creation is.

I mean, think of what David says in Psalm 8. When God creates the galaxies and the stars and the universe, God's point of creation is that humanity made in his image is even more important than the galaxies and the stars.

It is climactic above that. And so, in Psalm 8, David says, when I look at your heavens, the work of your fingerprints, the moon and the stars and if David was made today, he might say, solar systems and galaxies and nebulae and supernovas.

What is man that you're mindful of him? The son of man that you care for him. You have made us a little lower than heavenly beings. Just a little lower than angels. You've crowned us with glory and honor.

[ 29 : 32 ] You have given mankind dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet. David is saying, friends, I'm not a cosmologist by any stretch of the imagination.

But one of the things I'm astounded by is the images of outer space. And especially in the last few years as the James Webb telescope has been sending back images of space. I think we've got a picture here of this Carina Nebula.

It's 7,500 light years away. This is a star forming, star birthing kind of galaxy. David is saying, and Genesis is saying, that the creation of humanity, male and female, in God's image, is even more spectacular than this.

Than the stars and the galaxies and the sun and the moon and solar systems and nebulae and supernovas. God's creation of our physical bodies is even more climactic, more important, higher, than all of the solar systems and outer space.

That's astounding. I praise you for I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works out there in those galaxies but in here as well.

[ 30 : 44 ] My soul knows it very well. And of course, the Bible says that each one of us is purposefully made. Each one of us is uniquely made. God doesn't just simply put 36 trillion cells into a press, hold down the handle and out pops another human being.

No, each one of us is intricately made. Now our bodies are broken the result of sin and the fall and that none of us have perfect bodies. Only in heaven will we get perfect bodies so they're subject to decay and disease and problems and pains and aches.

We'll talk about that in two weeks time. But yet, each one of our bodies, the DNA strands, God has purposely made them together. It's not like an Ikea table or bookshelf which we all have in our houses, right?

Or an Ikea pan that you have the same one as the other 7 million people in Hong Kong. No, no, your body is unique. It's intricate. I remember a few years ago our family went to Chung Chao for a weekend and we stayed at a guest house there and on the bed was a handwritten note and it said this, I've still got the card, it says, Dear Murphy family, Happy Easter weekend.

We're so glad that your family will retreat here. Please enjoy the gardens, the food, and rest well and may God meet your family in a fresh way this weekend. You compare that to when you go to a hotel chain, right?

[ 32 : 06 ] And there's a card on your bed that says, Welcome. We're so glad that you're spending time with us. If you need anything, call us. And you know, you and the other five million have all got that personalized card, right?

You just took it from the stock room, put it on your bed, nobody really cares whether you're there or not. Versus a handwritten note. God says that each one of our bodies is hand formed by the creator God.

He cares about us. As Herman Barbing says, Our bodies is a marvelous piece of art from the hand of God Almighty. Okay, so that's what we're going to look at today.

So, how should we respond? What does it look like to live in light of this this week? Let me give us three brief thoughts. First one is this, be surrendered.

Be surrendered. We spoke about Psalm 139 has four parts to it. Part one says God knows us. Part two says there is no place in all creation that we can flee God's presence.

[ 33 : 08 ] Part three says that the reason this is true is because God has made us perfectly and intricately. But part four is a bit challenging and interesting, right? I don't know if you winced a bit

when Rachel read it to us.

In verse 19, David says, Oh, that you would slay the wicked, O God. Men of blood, depart from me. He says, Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? I loathe those who rise up against you.

I hate them with complete hatred. I count them my enemies. Okay? Not very nice. But part of Christian maturity is growing to love what God loves and hate what God hates.

We typically think as Christians we shouldn't hate anything. But actually, growing in maturity is thinking God's thoughts after him and loving what God loves and despising what God despises. It's why it's right to be angry and to be hateful towards wickedness and injustice. When someone's body is violated in something like rape, it's right to be angry and to hate that because God hates it.

[ 34 : 07 ] But then, David says, verse 23, Search me, O God. Know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. If there is any grievous way in me, lead me, O Lord, in the way of everlasting.

Friends, the fact that everything we have and everything we are belongs to God. We belong to body, soul, mind, and strength means that we should bring all of our totality before the Lord and say, Lord, if there's anything about me that is grievous to you, anything about the way I'm living, my mind, what I think, my soul, what I love, my heart, what I do, my body, what I do with my body, anything about me that is contrary to your ways, O God, lead me in your ways.

God, have your way in my life, mind, body, and soul. Jesus, have your way. Jesus, you are my king. I crown you with many crowns. You've died for me. Jesus, have your way in my body.

Live surrendered. Secondly, be intentionally grateful. As we said at the beginning, most of us have an unhealthy relationship with our bodies. We dislike the way that we look.

We compare ourselves to others. We wish that we looked different. Many of us struggle with pain or sickness or disease and therefore, sometimes we don't see our bodies as blessings but as working against our joy.

[ 35 : 31 ] Scripture wants us to see that our bodies are an important part of who we are. It's a gift that God has given us. In two weeks' time, we're going to consider the fact that our bodies are broken. But for now, to consider that they are a gift from God.

They're not to be idolized and worshipped in front of the mirror but they're also not to be despised or rejected, abused or hated. Typically, we don't think about how amazing our bodies are until they don't work so well and age creeps up on us.

But next time you scoop to pick up a child, either your child or a grandchild or another child, next time you go to the gym, next time you carry something heavy, next time you strung a guitar, strum a guitar, next time you play the piano, next time you are intimate with your spouse, think about the wonder of the human body, how amazing and delightful it is, the God who made you fearfully and wonderfully.

Friends, next time you feel pain or you look in the mirror and your hairline is receding further, you experience age creeping up on you, just consider how the fact that for 99% of our lives, we don't consider how amazing our bodies are and thank God, rejoice and thank God for the gift of a body that works.

Here's the third thing and finally, be intentionally present. One of my favorite movies in the world is a movie called A Good Day in the Neighborhood and it's about Tom Hanks plays this actor, this character called Mr. Rogers and in the movie, Mr. Rogers is a TV personality and there's this journalist from some kind of pretty small newspaper that has assigned the project of going and interviewing Mr. Rogers and the journalist is a bit upset because he thinks this is a lame assignment.

[ 37 : 14 ] I mean, who wants to interview poor old Mr. Rogers, this doddery old man on TV and so he's not interested but he has to do this project and so he gets hold of Mr. Rogers and he gets to have a conversation with him in between sets while Mr. Rogers is filming these two shows.

So he's in between sets, he's at the studio and he has a conversation with this journalist and the journalist says, listen, you've got things to do, I've got things to do, I've just got to ask you a few questions, let's just get through this quickly and we can both get back to what we really want to do and Mr. Rogers stops him and says, hey, just by the way, son, do you know what is the most important thing to me in the whole world right now?

And the journalist rolls his eyes and says, what? And he says, this conversation and I've always been astounded by that. When I'm talking with people, I must confess, quite often my mind is somewhere else.

Things I need to do, emails I need to send, that conversation. I think it's one of the reasons why we don't remember people's names. People introduce themselves, hi, I'm Kevin, hi, I'm Joe and where's our mind?

It's somewhere else and 30 seconds later we can't even remember who it is that we're talking to. What it would look like to be intentionally present. To be a human being is not just to have a heart and a soul, not just to have a mind on a stick.

[ 38 : 35 ] It's to be present, it's to be intentional, it's to be an embodied human being. I must confess that I thought about this as the start of the service walked in, I was on my phone because I was checking something about the parking and Joseph walked in and as Joseph walked towards me, rather than me looking him in the eye and saying, hey Joseph, good to see you, welcome, I was on my phone thinking about somebody else that's not even in the building.

And so one of the problems with our phones is that we are so susceptible to being digital beings in a digital world, we're not even present to our children, our loved ones or our family members. And I'm the worst at this.

How often am I at home and I'm sitting at home in the lounge and my children are around me and I'm watching, taking the sports score and the tennis results and then the football results and then the Formula One results and then the cricket results and then the election results and I'm not even present with the most important people in my life because I'm in some other digital world.

So what does it look like to be intentionally present in our lives? So friends, what do you think about your body? Do you love your body? Do you despise your body? Do you hate your body? Do you not care about your body?

Friends, you may not love your body but the sovereign God who created a billion galaxies and more, who created the solar systems, He made you. He made you heart, soul, mind and body and He loves all of you.

[ 40 : 02 ] He loves your body. And so this week as you go into Hong Kong, don't despise your body, don't abuse your body, take care of it but more than anything, thank God for it. Be present and worship God with the body that He's given you.

Let's do that now as we come to Him in prayer. Let me pray for us. Heavenly Father, Scripture constantly amazes us. It tells us things that we wouldn't have thought about ourselves but God, Your Word is often what we need to hear and we live in a world that is so conflicted, so confused about what it means to be a human being, what it means to have a body.

God, we pray, we want to think Your thoughts after You. We want to think like You. We want to have the mind of Christ. And so God, I pray help us. Help us in this area in particular.

Help us as we go into Hong Kong this week. Maybe as some of us travel this week and board an airplane and fly somewhere else, may we be amazed at the intricacy of the body that You've given us.

God, may we worship You and thank You. I pray God when we wake up tomorrow morning, we will once again say, praise be to God for the body that He's given me. God, for those of us that struggle, maybe we've had comments our whole life, maybe our parents have said things to us, friends, colleagues, for those of us that struggle.

[ 41 : 22 ] God, I pray, by Your Spirit and in Your power, God, Lord, I pray that where words that people have spoken have been harsh or hard or derogatory, I pray God that those words will lose their sting.

I pray God that we won't think of ourselves according to what people say about us but what the sovereign, glorious, eternal, uncreated God says about us.

That You've made us and You love us and that we are precious and fearfully made and wonderful in Your sight. God, I pray those of us that struggle with our bodies, God, won't You set us free?

I pray we'll leave this place today convinced that we are made by You and loved by You and precious in Your sight. Help us, I pray, in Your great and glorious name. Amen.

Amen. Amen.