

TATTOOS AND PIERCINGS...

Primary Texts: **Leviticus 19:28; Isaiah 44:5; 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; Revelation 19:16**

Disclaimer: This study is going to take us to biblical passages that involve other subject matters (Old Testament laws and culture, New Testament roles concerning men and women, interpreting Apocryphal literature such as the New Testament Letter of Revelation, etc.), but our goal is going to be to stay on the task of our specific subject. These passages will be visited again at some point and these subjects will be addressed at another time. But both now, and in the future, we shall be guided by at least these two directives in our interpretations...

1. We must examine the passage or verse in the light of all other scripture; the whole of scripture must be considered in any interpretation.
2. We must examine the passage as it relates to the culture and context of its original time and intent, and distinguish between principles meant only for then, and those designed for universal and timeless application. [Never an easy task; the intention/motives of the original author, and if God is speaking/what God is saying, isn't always clear, but the question must be considered.]

Introduction: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, says, *“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”* ... This passage says a lot, but it doesn't answer everything about our subject.

- Leviticus 19:28 ... In context: Leviticus 19:17-34
 - Forbids cutting your flesh and permanently marking your bodies... But Why?
 - Probably because of its association with other religions
 - Probably because of health concerns
 - Probably because piercings and tattoos were associated with slavery
- Isaiah 44:5 ... In context: Isaiah 44:1-8
 - Seems that some will proclaim such dedication to “The LORD” they'll mark themselves on their flesh with God's Name.
- Other Old Testament Mentions:
 - Genesis 24:22 ... Nose Ring used as a gift or currency
 - Isaiah 3:18-23 ... A prophetic warning of a day when the “finer things” will be snatched away.
- 1 Peter 3:3-4 & 1 Timothy 2:9-10 ... In context: 1 Peter 3:1-9; 1 Timothy 2:1-15
 - Requires modesty and no jewelry for women... But Why?
 - Association with worship of Diana (Artemis)
 - In a chauvinistic, male-dominated society, jewelry was considered to enhance sexuality... *can't have our women attracting other (better) mates...*
 - Principal of inner beauty and not drawing attention to sexuality of the flesh is sound, but should apply to both male and female... but no REAL NT command against tattoos and piercings
- Revelation 19:16 ... In context: Revelation 19:9-18
 - Did Jesus have a tattoo?
 - Probably not... Revelation is all about metaphors and symbolisms (see verses 12, 13, and 15)
 - Thigh muscle considered strongest muscle on the body, declaration of title/name is “strong”
 - Some interprets as name/title on clothes, not on skin... but that's a null argument