

# TATTOOS:

**‘To do or not to do?’**

Today I received an email inquiry concerning the subject of **‘TATTOOS’** – the practice of adding these ink markings to human bodies has to be honest reached ‘epidemic’ proportions. So how do we as Christians react to this current fad? Well, herewith is a copy of the email I received together with a copy of my reply and I hope it may be helpful to fellow Christians if asked about this subject.

## **Email received 13 September 2016**

Mr. Andrews,

I am writing to you to understand your opinion on receiving a tattoo as a Christian.

Recently one of the youth in my group received a tattoo that reminded them of a scripture verse that means a lot to them and they have been able to create a lot of conversations with their friends through this. It is a personal addition to them which they have found an encouragement and has helped them further with their walk for God.

I was just wondering what the view of your ministry is towards this as I personally have not developed a view on it. Obviously there are verses in Leviticus that talk about markings but these were markings that people were getting to identify their 'master' and in Leviticus 19:28 God tells them not to as He is their master and they are not slaves anymore. I have seen this verse quoted as a means to tell people not to get tattoos today but I don't see the relevance and feel it is a misquote of Scripture.

I look forward to hearing from you.

XXXX

## My email reply of 13 September 2016

Hello XXXX,

Thank you for your email. Obviously this is not really my normal 'line of ministry' but setting that aside I'll share with you my own personal views on the matter.

As the line in a well-known song says "**Let's start at the very beginning**" and in **Genesis 1:28** we read of the creation of human beings and I think it is correct to believe that we were created without any added skin markings such as tattoos. That being the case it is significant to note that as God reviewed the handiwork of His creation in **verse 31** His verdict on it was that it was "**very good**". Everything was permanent, in place and just as He intended it to be. Our physical appearance was a permanent testimony to our bodies being in God's view "**very good**". Sadly because of the fall and the entrance of sin human bodies are often not as "**very good**" as when first created but still fallen humanity are born with bodies devoid of markings such as added tattoos.

In relation to the **Leviticus 19 verses** you are right that they relate in particular to pagan practices and idolatry. Some markings related to expressing grief and respect for those who had died. Tattoos were usually linked to specific pagan deities and in general were regarded by God as signs of apostasy. Unregenerate people today are unwittingly servants of '**the god of this world**' as Paul outlines in **Ephesians 2:2-3** and so it comes as no surprise to find that many unsaved/unregenerate people today add tattoos and often they are linked to something or someone they 'idolise'. That being the case I think a Christian should always think long and hard about adding a tattoo knowing the 'idolatrous' history associated with them.

In many ways my final point follows on from the last one. The prevailing 'culture' is steeped in adding tattoos (it is a 'boom' industry) and everywhere there is evidence for this whether it be as you walk down the high street, or watch sport on TV or a multitude of other scenarios – tattoos are 'in' and VERY trendy.

Paul tells Christians not to be "**conformed to this world**" (**Romans 12:1-2**) and specifically mentions our "**bodies**" in **verse 1**.

I like what John MacArthur says about this verse – **‘Under God’s control, the believer’s yet unredeemed body can and must be yielded to Him as an instrument of righteousness’**. As Christians we are called not to follow the fads of this world if they could be construed as dishonouring our Creator God.

Not for one minute do I doubt the sincere motive of the young person in question but I believe they are wrong on this issue and I would never recommend a believer to add a tattoo to their body which when first created by God was declared by Him to be **“very good”**.

I hope these few thoughts are helpful.

Your servant for Christ

Cecil Andrews  
‘Take Heed’ Ministries  
[www.takeheed.info](http://www.takeheed.info)