

# — Lesson 2 —

## CAN I GET A TATTOO?

### *Opening Prayer*

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

#### **LEADER**

*Father in heaven, you made our bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit clothed in dignity to reveal your glory. May that reality increase our sense of reverence and inform all of our decisions. Today and every day, may we glorify you in our bodies in all that we do. Give us gifts of wisdom and discernment. Give us balance and clarity. Remove from our hearts impulses of discord and distortion. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

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## *Fr. Mike's Thought Train*

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### —BIG QUESTION—

Is there anything sinful  
about getting tattoos?

### —SHORT ANSWER—

Not inherently, but there are definitely  
many limitations and considerations.

## THE BREAKDOWN

➔ **There is no prohibition against tattoos, but there are limitations.**

➔ **Some content is unacceptable for a tattoo.**

- \* *We can't get an evil, satanic, or lewd tattoo.*
- \* *We have to consider where on the body to get a tattoo; we can't get tattoos that are placed in a way that disrespects or misuses our sexuality.*
- \* *We should also consider the total number of tattoos.*
- \* *We should also ask, "What am I saying or seeking when I mark up my body?"*

➔ **So, should I get a tattoo?**

- \* *Good question to ask: What would you have gotten ten years ago? Would you still want it ten years from now?*
- \* *Experiment: Have your tattoo silk-screened onto a T-shirt and wear it every day for a year. If you get bored with the design on the shirt, don't have it tattooed on your body.*

➔ **What if I want to mark my faith with a "Catholic"-themed tattoo? Perhaps a cross, or an image of the Blessed Virgin or one of the saints?**

- \* *The way we live speaks a much louder message in marking our faith.*
  - \* *A tattoo is a onetime decision; living our faith is an everyday decision.*
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## WRITE IT OUT

### 1. Is it always morally wrong to get a tattoo?

- a. Yes. It is inherently immoral to get a tattoo, as is explicitly stated in the book of Leviticus.
- b. No. There is nothing inherently immoral with tattoos, so there is no prohibition against all tattoos.  
However, there are some important moral considerations regarding permanently marking our bodies.
- c. No. It is always morally permissible to get a tattoo since God gives us bodily autonomy.
- d. Yes. It is morally wrong to get a tattoo because tattoos violate the principles of artistic integrity.

#### Discussion Starter

Why or why not?.....  
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### 2. Which of the following is *not* one of the four things to consider before getting a tattoo?

- a. Tattoos are permanent and visible, so we should carefully consider what message a tattoo may convey to others.
- b. We should consider where on our body we get a tattoo, ensuring that we do not disrespect our sexuality.
- c. We should ask ourselves, “What am I really seeking by marking my body with a tattoo? Is it something worthy and compatible with human dignity?”
- d. We should consider how much we have to spend on our tattoos and how skilled the tattoo artist is.

#### Discussion Starter

Are there any other considerations about getting a tattoo on your personal checklist?

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**3. What advice does Fr. Mike give when we consider whether we should get a tattoo?**

- a. Fr. Mike advises a trial run: for one year, wear a T-shirt screened with the design of your potential tattoo.
- b. Fr. Mike advises picturing a grandparent with the proposed tattoo on their neck. If it seems silly, then don't get it.
- c. Fr. Mike advises spray-painting your potential tattoo on the sidewalk in front of your home to see how it sits with you after a month or two.
- d. All of the above

**Discussion Starter**

How long do you think someone should sit with a tattoo idea before permanently inking it on?

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**TALK IT OUT**

- 4. Have you ever considered getting a tattoo? Does this discussion help you to think more clearly about it?
- 5. What advice would you give to a friend who was thinking of getting a tattoo tomorrow?
- 6. What are some things that you want to mark permanently in your character—not necessarily as tattoos, but as commitments and convictions?

*Hands On* .....

Create a silhouette of your face that is filled with images of the most important things that “identify” you. Choose mottoes or symbols that express how you want to live daily.

*Food for Thought* .....

What are the most important symbols and images for you? Why? Sketch some of those images. This is not meant to be an exercise in tattoo inspiration but rather a chance to consider what signs you want to carry within and live out day by day.

How can you honor your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit in more profound ways?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## *Closing Prayer*

### **READER (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20)**

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

### **LEADER**

*We consider the truth that God has stamped his image and likeness into our very bodies, and we ought to honor him in the way we treat and even mark our bodies. We ask him to help us to express our identity in our actions and to make clear and wise choices with our bodies. Let us reflect on this question of tattoos and ask the Holy Spirit to open us to a deeper reverence for our bodies and to instill a deeper sense of their goodness and purpose into our hearts.*

*(Pause for reflection)*

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*