**The Word On Tattoos**

**Small Group Questions:**

(1) If you came home with a tattoo what would your parent/guardian say or do to you?

(2) What does the Bible say about tattoos? Check out Leviticus 19:28.

(3) If you decide to get a tattoo what questions should you ask yourself?

The Bible mentions Tattoos only once: but it is a strong verse against marking your body: “You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:28)

So it is a simple matter, right - Tattoos are clearly wrong - so don’t ever get one, and if you have one - Oh, dear you are in big trouble!

Hang on a moment - when we read the Bible we always have to see what it says in the verse, and the surrounding context and also see what the rest of the Bible says as a whole.

The context of Leviticus 19 shows that God is warning the Israelites to avoid the pagan practises of the surrounding nations - which included things like: Eating bloody meat, fortune telling, certain hair cuts related to the priests of false cults, cutting or marking the body for dead relatives, cultic prostitution and consulting psychics. All these practices would lead God's people away from Him and toward false gods that were not Gods at all. In the midst of this context we find the word translated “tattoo marks” in verse 28. It is important to note here that the context of this passage is not one of body décor but one of marking one's self in connection with cultic religious worship. The practice of making deep gashes on the face and arms and legs, in time of bereavement, was universal among the heathen, and it was a way of showing respect for the dead, as a way to make an offering to the deities who presided over death and the grave.

The comment against Tattooing in the book of Leviticus is surrounded by other laws that include: Not eating shellfish or pork, not wearing clothes made from two different fabrics, or even eating cheese on hamburgers. Clearly none of these are viewed as wrong for Christians today.

Today tattooing is a decorative means of self-expression and personal decoration. In our current culture people modify their appearance for beauty in many ways such as clothing choice, makeup, plastic surgery, haircutting and colouring, weight loss, body-building, and ear piercing.

We should remember that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) - so we do have a responsibility to ensure that we don’t do anything that would dishonour the Lord.

If you are considering getting a tattoo maybe there are some questions you should work through:

\* Am I legally of an age to get a tattoo?

\* If I live with my parents, would my parents support my decision?

\* Would I be defying the authority God gave my parents over me at my current age?

\* Would I still want this particular image when I get older?

\* What if my future mate wouldn't like having to see this image for a lifetime?

\* Would this tattoo be in an area of my body that would be plainly visible? (Sadly, many people do unfairly judge people with tattoos).

\* Would this image bring God glory?

\* Do I feel fully convinced that tattoos are allowable for Christians?

So think before you ink, but don’t worry too much that tattooing is a shortcut to hell!

Thoughts from Charl:

Ask yourself: Why are you doing it?

Figure out what are you expressing with the tattoo?

Tattoo your mind with Jesus before you tattoo your body.