

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BODY AS INTERPERSONAL

Virgil Warren, PhD

The material realm does not stand in opposition to the spiritual realm but in subordination to it. That arrangement can be the case because the material realm derived by creation from the spiritual, or personal, one. Our bodies, then, stand in a subordinate relation to ourselves/spirits/personhood as the creation does to God.

So the body is not to be depreciated as in Gnostic thought, deprived as in asceticism, glorified as in humanism, or satiated as in Epicureanism. It is not to be made the whole picture as in materialism. It is to be subordinated in Christianity. This arrangement Paul calls “possessing the vessel” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; cp. 2 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 8:13; 12:1, 2). The body is the instrument by which people express themselves.

No bodily drives are in themselves sinful. They are sinful only when not fulfilled appropriately. God has not given any bodily desire for which he has not also provided a satisfying way of fulfilling. Difficulty comes when other people’s welfare is forgotten, or the transcendent self does not control the material body.

christir.org