

An Exercise in Practical Theology: Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Step One: Identify some specific examples of what your relationship with your body is like?

Are there parts of yourself that you hate or wish were different? What kinds of things do you say to your body or tell yourself throughout the day? In what ways do you take charge of your body and in what ways does your body take charge of you? Are there desires or impulses you have that you suppress? Are there desires or impulses you have that you allow to be gratified? How much do you listen to your body and how much do you ignore it? How do you serve your body and how does your body serve you?

Step Two: The second greatest commandment that we get from Jesus, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," also means, "You shall love yourself as your neighbor."

Thinking about those specific examples you identified in Step One, consider the ways in which you love yourself the same as you would love a neighbor and the ways in which you treat yourself differently than how you would treat a neighbor.

Step Three: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Thinking about each of the specific ways in which you relate to your body throughout the day... ask yourself: Does that relationship produce in me more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?

Is your relationship with your body growing the love that you have for yourself? Because if not, then how can your love of neighbor grow? Are you finding more and more joy in the things that your body is capable of doing? Do you marvel at all of God's creation, *including* yourself? Do you try and help your body to find peace? Are you patient when you're trying to teach your body something new? Or when your body is going through a new change? Do you find a growing patience with yourself, or only frustration? Are you kind to your body, always? Are you generous to yourself? Are you faithful in your relationship with your body? Or do you treat your body well one day and then poorly the next? Are you becoming more and more gentle with your body or do you try to force it to do your will all the time, maybe in kind of a harsh way? And when you go to be upset with your body, are you increasingly able to exercise self-control instead?