



My name is Frank Figueroa, one of the speakers for Reasons For Hope, and I just wanted to respond to your encouraging and well-thought-out feedback about our new DeBunked video regarding tattoos. Additionally, I want to thank you for your dedication to teaching God's Word in the pulpit. I was a pastor in Hawaii for 25 years and know how rare it is to find someone who really wants to dive in and teach expositionally with hermeneutical accuracy. Thank you for your faithfulness to Jesus' Church.

That being said, I want to begin by saying that I am someone with one foot in the camp that says that certain principles of the Law set a good precedent for application but the other foot in the camp that says that Jesus has fulfilled the requirements of the Law, making it no longer compulsory that we follow it to the letter as He did. For instance, I no longer believe observance of the Sabbath (*Shabbat*) is required for those who are in Christ. How can I support this biblically? According to God's Word, the Sabbath is not the Lord's Day. The day of the week for worship shifted unequivocally when Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday, and the church as a whole has embraced this new day of the week to worship since His resurrection.

I believe the Bible validates that the Sabbath is ceremonial but not moral—Paul explicitly refers to the Sabbath as a shadow of Christ in Colossians 2:16–17, meaning it is not binding for believers in Christ. I am convinced that our rest is in Jesus and that there are no New Testament commands of Sabbath observance for believers because it was a law for the nation of Israel. Do I believe we have sabbath principles that can be applied, such as having a day of rest? Absolutely! But nowhere in the Old Testament are Gentile nations asked to keep the Sabbath, and the New Testament never admonished Christians to keep it either.

I am pointing out this example because you say most people differ from you regarding civil and moral law perspectives. I wanted to acknowledge these differences to validate that you and I may approach things from different perspectives. And, although we may disagree on some issues, we need to have conversations regarding all issues so that we may come to agreement on the ones that are salvific in nature, i.e., our eternity must rest in agreement with what the Word of God has emphatically stated.

Like yourself, I agree that tattoos are trivial at best when it comes to things dealing with our salvation, which rests in Christ's redemptive work on the cross for the propitiation of our sins by His grace alone. And, for those who are genuinely saved, our desire should be to implement as many of God's directives taught consistently throughout His Word. You drive home this point clearly, and it is to be commended, and I wish more would take it to heart. I personally do not have any tattoos and have advised against them to all who have asked my advice. I believe most tattoos are fleshly and are meant to draw attention to a person's body, not the Lord. But can I then infer that

"ALL" tattoos are sinful? No, any attempt to answer that question emphatically would not be solely biblical.

For instance, I was recently asked regarding this same DeBunked video, "Is the body not truly the Temple? Are we not called to be holy and righteous before God? Would we spray graffiti on a church?"

To answer: Yes, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. However, our definition of "graffiti" may differ greatly from another person's. On another note, some say you need to be a vegetarian. Some say you shouldn't take medications. Some say you shouldn't consume caffeine because it's a drug. And most who make these claims use the same passage and wording to say that we shouldn't get tattoos. Simply stated, the Bible is not referring to tattoos in the context of the passages noted in the video, which you also acknowledged.

To summarize, I believe you and I are after the same thing: to live a life glorifying to God, which will be evident in our conduct and the way we respect the bodies He gave us. Romans 6:12–14 states:

*"Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body,
that you should obey it in its lusts.
And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin,
but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
For sin shall not have dominion over you,
for **you are not under law but under grace.**"*

So yes, we must not let sin reign. And yes, we must present ourselves as instruments of righteousness. The end of this passage says that we are no longer under the law but under grace. Because of that, we have to be governed by the Holy Spirit and not legalism, the opposite of grace. Our desire in producing this DeBunked video was to give a biblical and reasoned response to the questions being asked by young people regarding tattoos. However, your feedback has brought up some salient points that we want to include in further discussions.

May we include your letter (or parts of it used in the proper context as you have written it) to encourage those we engage with as we study these things further? (This can also be done anonymously if you prefer.) Open and respectful conversation is vitally important. I firmly believe in what Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary said: "People don't care what you know until they know that you care." And true care is presenting all facets of the topics we discuss, even if they may have dissenting views.

Jesus told us in John 8:32, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you

free.” We at Reasons For Hope feel that your letter helps push people toward wanting to know the truth on a deeper level, and we would be blessed if you would allow us to share it to accomplish that end.

I thank you so much for your time and pray that your day is blessed.

Sincerely and In Him,

Frank L. Figueroa Jr.