ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY
A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN BODIES

Part of a reformed education is looking at all subjects as inspired by God. Each subject tells us something about God, His creation, and His plan for the universe. It shapes our worldview so that every part of our life is an opportunity to see God and worship Him (even homework!!!).

Since Anatomy and Physiology deal with studying the human body and the brilliant design that is apparent all over in our bodies, we’re going to take the time at the beginning of the trimester to find out what the Bible says about our bodies.

The study of Anatomy and Physiology can also help us better understand our responsibilities as God’s stewards in this world. We can become better equipped to take care of ourselves and also to learn the care of helping and healing others.

Assignment:

Part 1) Read the following 4 sections from the Bible. (I also included footnotes for each section if you want to read them to gain a better understanding of the passage.) In the space after each section, write some comments on how each section refers to the body. For example, how it should be used, what will happen to it, what it is analogous to, etc.

Part 2) Also read the section titled, “In God’s Image.” Pay attention to the author’s opinion of how we are created in God’s image. You don’t have to write comments about this section.

Follow-up:
1. Turn this packet in to Mr. Falk with your comments written after each of the four passages.
2. Write a paper that’s a page or more in length where you comment on the assignment. Did anything in particular “strike” you? What was the author’s opinion of what it means to be created in God’s image. What do you think of his opinion? Etc. Make sure to follow the WMC Style Sheet for format. Email your paper as an attachment to Mr. Falk at mrfalk@wmchs.net when you’re done.
Romans 12:3 – 6

Humble Service in the Body of Christ

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

Notes (optional):
12:4, 5 Paul uses the concept of the human body to teach how Christians should live and work together. Just as the parts of the body function under the direction of the brain, so Christians are to work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12 – 31; Ephesians 4:1 – 16).
12:4-8 God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must (1) realize that all gifts and abilities come from God; (2) understand that not everyone has the same gifts; (3) know who we are and what we do best; (4) dedicate our gifts to God’s service and not to our personal success; (5) be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God’s service.

Write your comments in the space below.
1 Corinthians 6:12 – 20

Sexual Immorality

12 “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Notes (optional):

12, 13 Many of the world’s religions teach that the soul or spirit is important but the body is not; and Christianity has sometimes been influenced by these ideas. In truth, however, Christianity takes very seriously the realm of the physical. We worship a God who created a physical world and pronounced it good. He promises us a new earth where real people have transformed physical lives—not a pink cloud where disembodied souls listen to harp music. At the heart of Christianity is the story of God himself taking on flesh and blood and coming to live with us, offering both physical healing and spiritual restoration. We humans, like Adam, are a combination of dust and spirit. Just as our spirits affect our bodies, so our physical bodies affect our spirits. We cannot commit sin with our bodies without damaging our souls because our bodies and souls are inseparably joined. In the new earth we will have resurrection bodies that are not corrupted by sin. Then we will enjoy the fullness of our salvation.

6:18 Christians are free to be all they can be for God, but they are not free from God. God created sex to be a beautiful and essential ingredient of marriage, but sexual sin—sex outside the marriage relationship—always hurts someone. It hurts God because it shows that we prefer following our own desires instead of the leading of the Holy Spirit. It hurts others because it violates the commitment so necessary to a relationship. It often brings disease to our bodies. And it deeply affects our personalities, which respond in anguish when we harm ourselves physically and spiritually.

6:19, 20 What did Paul mean when he said that our bodies belong to God? Many people say they have the right to do whatever they want with their own bodies. Although they think that this is freedom, they are really enslaved to their own desires. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit fills and lives in us. Therefore we no longer own our bodies. “Bought at a price” refers to slaves purchased at auction. Christ’s death freed us from sin, but also obligates us to his service. If you live in a building owned by someone else, you try not to violate the building’s rules. Because your body belongs to God, you must not violate his standards for living.

Write your comments in the space below.
1 Corinthians 15:35 – 49

The Resurrection Body

35 But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?”
36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

Notes (optional):
15:35ff Paul launches into a discussion about what our resurrected bodies will be like. If you could select your own body, what kind would you choose – strong, athletic, beautiful? Paul explains that we will be recognized in our resurrected bodies, yet they will be better than we can imagine, for they will be made to live forever. We will still have our own personalities and individualities, but these will be perfected through Christ’s work. The Bible does not reveal everything that our resurrected bodies will be able to do, but we know they will be perfect, without sickness or disease (see Philippians 3:21).

Paul compares the resurrection of our bodies with the growth in a garden. Seeds placed in the ground don’t grow unless they “die” first. The plant that grows looks very different from the seed because God gives it a new “body”. There are different kinds of bodies – people, animals, fish, birds. Even the angels in heaven have bodies that are different in beauty and glory. Our resurrected bodies will be very different in some ways, but not all, from our earthly bodies.

15:42 – 44 Our present bodies are perishable and prone to decay. Our resurrection bodies will be transformed. These spiritual bodies will not be limited by the laws of nature. This does not necessarily mean we will be super people, but our bodies will be different from and more capable than our present earthly bodies. Our spiritual bodies will not be weak, will never get sick, and will never die.

15:45 The “last Adam” refers to Christ. Because Christ rose from the dead, he is a life-giving spirit. This means that he entered into a new form of existence (see the note on 2 Corinthians 3:17). He is the source of the spiritual life that will result in our resurrection. Christ’s new glorified human body now suits his new glorified life – just as Adam’s human body was suitable to his natural life. When we are resurrected, God will give us a transformed, eternal body suited to our new eternal life.

Write your comments in the space below.
3 John 1:2

2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

Notes (optional):
1:2 John was concerned for Gaius’ physical and spiritual well-being. This was the opposite of the popular heresy that taught the separation of spirit and matter and despised the physical side of life. Today, many people still fall into this way of thinking. This non-Christian attitude logically leads to one of two responses: neglect of the body and physical health, or indulgence of the body’s sinful desires. God is concerned for both your body and your soul. As a responsible Christian, you should neither neglect nor indulge yourself, but care for your physical needs and discipline your body so that you are at your best for God’s service.

Write your comments in the space below.
In God’s Image

The Bible says surprisingly little about what creation in God’s image might mean. We might be tempted to assume that creation in God’s image is what it means to be different from the animals – our rational capacity, our personhood, our capacity for language. But the term refers to a relationship first, and must be seen as a way of defining what we are in relation to God. We are, as Genesis 1 makes clear, creatures of God who live in a world he created. But to image God means that we are, in Blocher’s words, “to be the created representation of [the] Creator, and here on earth, as it were, the image of the divine Glory, the Glory which mankind both reflects and beholds.”

What is it about us that images God? Surely not our physical bodies (God is a Spirit!); indeed, Genesis 2:7 symbolizes the transfer of God’s image as an in-breathing by God into a body previously formed “from the dust.” Imaging God is thus related to the spiritual attributes of God – not in any sense exactly, for we are only an image, but in some measure we demonstrate what God is like. We do this when we search for truth and beauty, when we are concerned about justice and other ethical issues, when we recognize the high importance of morality; these are God-like qualities.

Perhaps the best way to understand this mystery is to look to Jesus Christ, whom the apostle Paul refers to as “the image of the invisible God…For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.” (Colossians 1:15 & 19). Christ is the best representation of God, and if we would image God in our lives, then we must become like Christ. In this light, being created in God’s image means that we have the possibility of becoming like him – in a reflected way, for we are still mere creatures. But think of this possibility: Although God wants us to see his glory in the creation, he has specifically crated humankind to reflect his glory, in ways that the rest of creation simply could not. This is the clearest basis for human dignity, for the high value we place on human life. For this reason, the severely impaired, the senile, the most degenerate human beings deserve to be treated with respect. All humankind bears God’s image to some degree; and although that image has been affected by the Fall, we are never in a position to judge that a human being is so completely devoid of humanity that he or she can be treated inhumanely.

James Houston (of Regent College, Canada) believes that it is our capacity for sovereignty that most closely demonstrates how we image God. He has given us capabilities that equip us for sovereignty over our environment, other creatures, and over ourselves – the characteristics that make us human. But these are the consequences of being in God’s image rather than the definition of it. We image him in how we exercise that sovereignty. And as we read on in Genesis, we begin to understand what it means to image God as sovereigns. We are given, in Genesis 1:28, the responsibility of ruling over his creation – of having dominion. And in Genesis 2, Adam (as our representative) is given the task of cultivating the Garden of Eden – of using and developing this part of God’s creation. Psalm 8:3 – 6 gives us an eloquent picture of the relationship between imaging God and ruling over his creation:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet…

The writer of Hebrews tells us that this passage also refers to Christ, in keeping with the concept that we are to be like him as we image God. (Hebrews 2:5 – 9)