

fearfully and wonderfully made: service

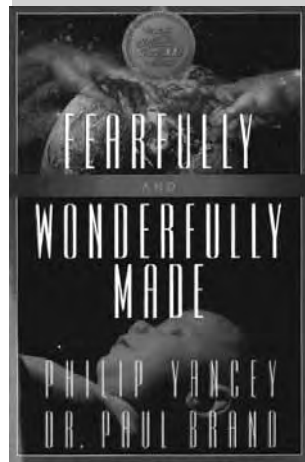
I cannot help but try to think of my own happiest moments. In spite of being a young man, my greatest moments of personal fulfillment have been those spent in sacrificial service of others. The tasks undertaken were in no way noble or grand in the eyes of the world, but still felt like they were exactly what God wanted from me. It is in those rare moments when one truly experiences what being part of one body in Christ is like.

Paul urges us to offer ourselves as 'living sacrifices'.¹ He talks about how he 'gladly gives up everything' for his companions² and encourages us to do 'nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves'.³ Yet our Western culture exalts self-fulfillment and autonomy. Success and happiness are pursued through the accumulation of wealth and goods, often at the expense of others. Living sacrificially opposes the core of what our society dictates as the path to contentment; a path that echoes principles of self conservation and survival of the fittest above the interests of others.

The body of Christ must work together, much like our human bodies. The body works in harmony when individual cells adhere to their purpose in serving the rest of the body, even at times when such purpose might demand sacrifice. The macrophage may engulf enough bacteria to cause its own demise; the adipocyte dispenses rich and much valued sources of energy to the rest of the body in times of need. The list is seemingly endless, and the consequences of cells not acting as they should - be it denying the body of an essential function or acting in disunity - form a large proportion of the pathology we may encounter in our future patients.

Paul reminds us it is the Lord we are serving,⁴ and that he, rather than men, should be our motivation. Jesus said 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'.⁵ It is a sobering thought that should be kept in mind for when we get to treat patients: each one of them was made in the Creator's image and whatever we do for them should be done in a manner fit for him. Moreover, this attitude

This article is inspired by a chapter from Yancey P, Brand P. *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. The authors expand on the New Testament analogy of the Body of Christ, linking it to the human body.



should not be one that we seek to maintain exclusively in our future professional lives. It should be present throughout every act of service, no matter how insignificant or negligible it may seem to us.

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REFERENCES

1. Romans 12:1
2. 2 Corinthians 12:15
3. Philippians 2:3
4. Colossians 3:24
5. Matthew 25:40