

Tattoo

By John Vansloten

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OPENING VIDEO/SONG... This week > came across a 'Tattoo Story' on Net... written by a man > Andrew... as I read it > "cool" > glimpse into the **psychology of Tattooing**> why people tattoo selves... READ/5 PICS

Before getting into his **positive** reasons > NB to note **what wasn't motivating him!!** > "...never intended to be a **fashion statement** or reaction to a **fad**." < not at all about **showing off!!! Or self attention...**

NB points to understand... esp for younger set... (those who might, right now, be engaged in a battle with parents, re: tattoo's or piercings)... **PAUSE...**

"Which reminds me... Our lawyers drafted this up... "The following sermon may contain opinions that are not agreeable to all listeners. New Hope Church, the Christian Reformed Church of NA and all of their heirs and successors shall not be held liable for any youthful misunderstanding or negligent misappropriation of the comments contain herein. Parental guidance is advised."

PAUSE... Come on!... think I'm gonna touch this topic without 'covering my butt?'... SNL CLIP(no snd)

Besides kids... your parents are right about one thing! "you really have no idea what a tattoo might look like or feel like 20/30/40 years from now!" << **(wait on clip)**

So > what were Andrew's positive reasons?

1. Celebrate/mark a turning point in life... 2002!
2. Move away from mainstream... unorthodox!

POMO Theologian, Thomas Beaudoin says a tattoo is 'proof that something marked me, something happened...' he says > way of marking transformative experiences! (in a pomo, multi-sensory way... see/feel/touch/design)

TB also affirms > 'move away from mainstream' motivation

Cites> Dr. Andrew Ross says that some tattoo/pierce because they **empathize with the socially outcast**... the 'marginalized marked'... 'semi-criminalized codes of the outcast.' << in a way > it is an **act of rebellion! (& in some strange way – confession?)**

Beaudoin > then goes on to make spiritual connection > where we used to find 'markings' in our **religion** (baptism, first communion/communion, church rites)... **now self imposing instead... PAUSE**... hmmm... not sure people conscious of that... but perhaps...

Whatever reason > **society is increasingly tattooing/ piercing itself!** << core rationale > 1. mark some significant/transformative event in life!... 2. mark it in a permanent (read> "I'm very serious about this" way!) **Indelibly! LONG PAUSE...**

Question > bugging me all week > **"Why a mark? Why this intimately physical phenomenon?"**

Is this a 'human being' kind of thing? Something God designed and built into us? **PAUSE...**

Perhaps... if you think about it > 'markers make scene in all kinds of places in the Bible... some quite intimate' [**JACOB**/dream/met God/stone... **JOSHUA** /river/ stone memorial/ God kept promise... Or what about mark > **baptism?**... **circumcision?** << signs of being God's people... intimate markers! (every day male Israelite > reminded)... (OT people of God were 'cutters!')

PAUSE... Yeah > but doesn't bible also explicitly say > not to tattoo bodies!!!... "Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD ." Leviticus 19

(but... vs 19 > " 'Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. " 'Do not wear

clothing woven of two kinds of material.... Vs 26 > 'Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it... vs 27 > 'Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard... **PAUSE**... so unless willing to > **quit farming/ take off clothes/ give up medium rare/ and look like Willy Nelson** > you're not following the Bible!!!

(Be careful > prooftext poker' with bible > make it say what you want!!) ... broader message > **markers are NB part of spiritual/life journey!!!**

NB > not to say they have to be tattoo's/piercing!!

But BACK to the Question>> **Why mark?...**

Marks give us perspective – in a 'here today/ gone tomorrow' fleeting world... where time flies by... sensory overload... life can become a blur > **yearn for** 'permanence'... unchanging reality... frame of reference! (meaning to time) < marks give us that... >> reference points for life... '**more significant**' places from which> mark time/progress ...Maybe > increasing freneticism > need a Reference Point! (sense > some bigger meaning/plan behind all!)

Marks > also indicative of fact> **something worth remembering**... we all yearn for that right? Experiences that are significant/count... times of epiphany... great chapters in our stories where we did encounter NB TRUTH... God help us if > end up living a life > where nothing is worth remembering!!...

PAUSE... Is this what's subliminally playing out in our often 'cynical' new world?... Is tattooing a cry for both **permanence** and something worth **remembering**?

Maybe... **PAUSE** yeah>there's **trend/fashion/rebel!** Maybe is something more... innately human/ God built

Certainly > Whole faith journey > does meet those two basic needs!... [**STORY of GOD** we fit into]... [FILLED WITH **MEMORIES**... both within and without our lives]

Its a reality > comes with its marks... most indelibly a mark God puts **onto** us... **into** us... Holy Spirit!...

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.

That Spirit > **'tattooed on your heart'**... huge sense of perspective! Sense that **'old stories'** are yours!.. **'your stories'** >very much worth remembering!' **PAUSE**

HS mark > also opens eyes to another reality>> every bit **of your life/ who you are /your place** > worth remembering... "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;" Isaiah 49:15-16

God marks **you onto himself!!** you want **Permanent? Significant?**... need to recognize/ by faith/ two marks of God... HS in you... You on his hand! [**NEVER CHANGE... <ie: only one see whole picture>**]

Recognize these marks through Christ... God's indelible mark onto his creation... his sign... symbol... divine reference point... 'Alpha and the Omega' (cite Greek) ... Beginning and the End << one John envisioned>>... enthroned above all others... both now and forever > "On his robe **and thigh** was written this title: King of kings and Lord of lords." Revelation 19:16

GREG KEOGH...

Andrew's Story

For my birthday I decided to celebrate the fact that 2002 turned out to be a big turning point in my life by getting a tattoo. I've always wanted one, probably from my interest in Japanese Artwork ([Ukiyo-e](#) and [Horimono](#)) during my studies in University. I was minoring in Japanese History: The [Tokugawa Bafuku 1603-1867](#). During my studies, I gained a basic understanding of the ritual behind tattoo-ing that goes beyond the artwork itself. Consequently, I decided to wait until something more significant happened in my life before indulging my desire to acquire one.

Now that I am 42, things in my life have come together in such a way that I

was interested in symbolizing it in some way (much as my ear piercing was part of graduating from University and entering mainstream life). What about that tattoo I've always wanted? I told myself, once I got divorced, that I would start actually doing the non-mainstream things I've always wanted to do.

I figure I've had plenty of time to think about the permanency of applying a tattoo as well. It was never intended to be a fashion statement or reaction to a fad. Come on, I've been thinking about getting one for over 20 years. So when putting together my design, I wanted something that would not be normally visible - one of the advantages of a tribal arm-band design. It was being applied for my pleasure and remembrance, not to show off to others. Though I must admit, it's quite interesting to see the reactions of people when the design happens to slip into view..

(Andrew goes on to describe the meaning of his design)

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