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# TATTOO: The Mark of Regret

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One of the businesses booming (*along with the medical profession and pharmaceuticals thanks to the "hepatitis C-tattoo" alliance*) as a consequence of the tattoo-craze is the dermatology industry. **According to the American Society of Dermatological surgery, over 50% of everyone receiving a tattoo wants it removed.**

Tattoo removal via laser surgery is among the fastest growing areas of the dermatology industry.

Depending on the size of the tattoo and colors used, the laser tattoo removal surgery can be very painful and very expensive. Tattoos performed by commercial tattoo parlors are much more difficult to remove because the tattoo is deeper, the ink more complex and thicker. It normally takes between 10 and 15 laser surgery sessions to remove the average tattoo, but 25-30 sessions are not uncommon, depending on the complexity of the tattoo. When you consider the average single session costs between \$400 - \$800, the removal surgery can be very expensive, costing as much as \$20,000. That \$25 tattoo might cost \$5000 to remove. And may I remind you, health insurance does not cover tattoo removals <sup>2)</sup> this is strictly out of the pocket expenses. And yet despite this enormous personal cost, most people are so disgusted with their tattoo they <sup>2)</sup> literally pay any cost to have it removed.

Plastic Surgeon Tolbert S. Wilkinson, of San Antonio, Texas, who has removed tattoos warns:

**"If people only realized how difficult it is to remove a tattoo, understood how costly and how painful tattoo removal is, and recognized that society as a whole still views tattoos as a stigma, maybe they would think seriously before getting one.**

Laser removal costs a minimum of \$7,000.00 (national average) per tattoo, and takes at least 10 to 15 treatments, spread out over two or more years. Even with this treatment, the tattoo is still visible."  
<http://www.heloise.com/tattoo.html>

Tattoo author Laura Reybold, writes that ". . .an ever rising number of people are so unhappy with their tattoos that they are willing to pay anything to have them removed."

**"Yet an ever rising number of people are so unhappy with their tattoos that they are willing to pay anything to have them removed.** Tattoo removal laser surgery is becoming big business for the dermatologists who perform it."

(Laura Reybold, *Everything you need to know about the dangers of tattooing and body piercing*, p. 30)

Ronald Scutt, says in *Art, Sex and Symbol* that even among sailors in the Royal Naval, over 50% regretted ever getting a tattoo. And among the married it rose to over 70%

"From the statistics of the Royal Naval survey, **the most significant factor to emerge was almost certainly the incidence of regrets.** Out of the whole sample, **more than half admitted that they wished they had never been tattooed.** In the married group, the figure rose to around 70 per cent."

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 179)

**One article claims that as many as 80 percent of people with tattoos regret their tattoo.**

([www.spacecom.af.mil/hqafspc/News/News\\_Asp/nws\\_tmp.asp?storyid=02-93](http://www.spacecom.af.mil/hqafspc/News/News_Asp/nws_tmp.asp?storyid=02-93))

**We received the following email shortly after we published this article on the web.  
(Used with permission).**

I've just completed reading your article on tattooing and the truth of it all deeply troubled me. I am a Christian, and like most I've back-slidden several times throughout my life. During one of these times, I received two tattoos.

One is a "tribal" band on my left arm, though it doesn't fully circle the whole upper-arm. The other is on my right shoulder, the letters "MSC" in cursive writing signifying the names of my best friend, his wife, and their little daughter. Even though I love my friend and his family, I deeply regret getting their initials tattooed onto my body. Moreover, I seriously and gravely regret with all my heart getting my other tattoo (the tribal band on my left arm).

Being a few years older now (29 and married) there is not a day that goes by that I don't regret getting these tattoos. When I dress, I'm forced to see them in the mirror. When I shower I'm forced to see them.

What makes matters worse, is that I knew all along that it is was wrong. I justified it with a back-slidden mind by thinking such things as "God only considers the heart and mind", "physical sins don't compare to spiritual sins", and so on, and so on. With my depraved and back-slidden mind, I justified an abomination to God Himself, who instructs us through His divine law not to print any marks on our bodies (Leviticus 19:28). If this is the law that will be used to rightly judge the world, how much more should we as Christians observe and uphold it?

The woman doing my first tattoo (the tribal band) had to stop several times for mysterious reasons. She was visibly shaken and could not concentrate. She kept saying, "man, I need a break." Though It wasn't for my sake, I hid the pain very well and tuned it out for the most part--but this woman could not wait to get me out of that chair. She claimed that she drank quite a bit the night before (I was getting the tattoo on a saturday afternoon), and this seemed to be the most logical reason that she was having such a tough time. I can't help but wonder, however, if there was

more to it. Even then my diminished discernment was working, and I sensed a spiritual conflict taking place. When the woman had finished, she made a disturbing remark that will forever echo in mind, "there ya go, you're no longer a virgin." Of course, she spoke not of physical sexuality, but of spiritual defilement against God in the form of marking my flesh. Now I was "one of the gang", one of the "cool people", and one of the rebels who shakes their fist at the law of God.

I'm still troubled, even knowing that I'm forgiven. My only hope is for the glorification of the body, when the Lord shall raise us uncorruptable. My tattoos stand as constant reminders of my past depravity when I forsook truly walking with God, and only rendered Him lip-service. They will continue to be my marks of shame for the rest of the time appointed. Thank you for your article. Hopefully this message will get out and all the right people will hear it, and save them from the fate of my shame and regret. It would bring great solace to know that another person would read your article and avert my mistakes--which I would take back in a second if only I had the chance. Through my own research, I've drawn all the same conclusions you have concerning tattooing, body modification, and other self-destructive practices.

May the Lord bless you and grant you peace and understanding,

Before you let that ink "mark" you for life you <sup>21</sup> ~~21~~ d better think very careful about the possible health, spiritual and social consequences. Most people later regret, and even hate, their tattoo. The cost of getting a tattoo can be very high among social and health risks.

"Emotional risks include negative feelings you might have as a result of getting a tattoo or piercing. **Social risks are those that could damage your relationship with others, including friends, parents, teachers, and employers.** . . . For example, body modification can affect your chances for future employment. **Certain jobs are not available to people who have visible body art.**"

(Bonnie B. Graves, *Tattooing and body piercing*, p. 43)

"**The fact that so many people change their minds** should lead you to think carefully about whether you want to lock yourself into a fashion statement that might cause you a lot of aggravation and heartache later in life."

(Laura Reybold, *Everything you need to know about the dangers of tattooing and body piercing*, p. 32)

"**What so few realize, tragically, is that such a mark [tattoo] becomes the albatross around the neck for all time.**"

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 181)

21 **Prove all things**; hold fast that which is good.

22 **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul **and body be preserved blameless** unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-23

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