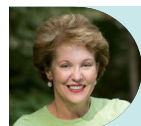


Physical Matters

We're called to live into redemptive transformation in every aspect of our lives—from race and rest to sexuality to fitness and nutrition. So we asked Navigators and some of our friends to talk about how they see their physical selves affected by the goodness of God.

Upfront Online takes these topics deeper. Ready to explore?



The "Wow" of Spiritual Sexuality

Why is sexuality so integral to our identities and our experience of God? NavPress author Paula Rinehart (guest contributor) discusses what sexuality and gender teach us about God.

Embodied Spirituality: *Giving Up Prayer for Lent*

What difference does it make that we're both physical and spiritual? Stacia Littlefield (guest contributor) talks about a time when God asked her to change her faithful spiritual practices.



Does Fit = Faithful?

Lyndi Lee Markus (Editor, Upfront, TDC) reveals a false equation that results in disordered thinking and neglect of balanced, kind care of our bodies.

Presence: *Face to Face*

Dave Molascon (TDC, Colorado Springs) survived his EDGE years, a mission trip, and most of his dating relationship with his wife... all without a cell phone. Why does face-to-face really matter?

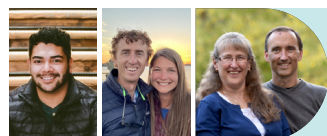


Eight Hours of Sleep and A Whole Lotta VUCA

Rest is so important for our physical bodies—Marie Hatch (Military, Colorado Springs) discusses what happens when we just don't get enough. Also, in times that are Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous...can we fight VUCA with VUCA?

Hospitality for the Life of the World

Jody Byrkett (guest contributor) shares how hospitality regardless of resources helps us join God in bringing healing.



Hospitality Stories

iEDGE specialist Alyssa Spencer interviewed Daniel Medina (TDC), Adam and Renee Sperling (Collegiate), and Carol and Steve Rugg (TDC and FSC) to get the scoop on classic Navigator hospitality.

Strength in Masculinity

Jason Johnston (Associate Regional Director, Clemson) shares a teachable moment he experienced as his young son learns about what it means to be strong.



Knowing and Slowing

Bill Miller (Campus Director, Nashville) shares how finding margin and pace for our physical bodies allows us to know God more deeply.

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Real-Life Stories and Practical Tools to Advance The Navigators Calling

Glorious Eggs and Toast

How Embodied Spirituality Counteracts Trauma

STACIA LITTLEFIELD, LPC, NCC

Colorado Springs, CO

After working through a layer of trauma in my story, I distinctly remember being ridiculously excited about eggs in the morning. Somehow, the prospect of being able to wake up and make myself scrambled eggs filled me with a deep, irrational joy. It was as if God had enriched all the colors of life, quickening my soul to beauty and opening my physical senses to a place of rest and enjoyment. My journey of healing was affecting every part of me.

As a trauma therapist, I'm honored to come alongside people as they courageously journey toward wholeness. What a gift to witness how their lives, relationships, and particularly their bodies respond to breakthrough in this work! Bessel van der Kolk describes trauma as being "primarily remembered...as isolated sensory imprints: images, sounds and physical sensations that are accompanied by intense emotions, usually terror and helplessness."¹ To that end, he states that "all trauma is preverbal."² We need to find words for what happened, but it is our body, through those sensory imprints, that holds the impact of the trauma. Just talking about trauma is like describing a roadblock—our words might be accurate, but the obstacle is still there. I am thankful for experiential trauma treatments which integrate the body, emotion, and mind; they can yield incredible results in actually removing the roadblock of trauma.

This reflects the sanctity of the body. God divinely created us to image and love Him through the devotion of the mind and also through the body and emotions. I love exploring the emotions of God throughout the Bible; I am always struck by the depth and passion of our God's feelings. And through the incarnation, Jesus forever dignified what the Godhead created and imbued with the very breath of God: the human body.

Trauma also fragments and distorts our perceptions and relationships; biological changes to the body's stress response mean a traumatized person may see danger where none exists. In order to survive, we disconnect from people or situations, and sometimes even disconnect from our own bodies through a coping mechanism called dissociation.

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Physical Dependence, Spiritual Freedom

DAVID BROWN, MABC (with JILL BROWN)
Pastoral Care Team



I don't remember breaking my neck, but I've heard the basic story. As I bicycled home from work twelve years ago, another cyclist cut in and sent me spinning off the trail to land headfirst on a rock. My spine was crushed rather than severed, so I can breathe without a ventilator and have some use of my arms and legs.

I'm thankful for that. It's harder to be thankful for how much help I need.

At work one day, a teammate asked if she could do anything for me. I had just realized that the bag strapped to my lower leg needed to be emptied, so I asked her to do that. "Sure," she said. She got the "stealth urinal" I keep under my desk. Then, smiling and cheerful, she knelt at my feet and emptied the bag. Watching, I had a powerful sense of Jesus' delight in her. And as she carried the urinal away, a guest in our office came over to my wheelchair and put a hand on my shoulder.

"That was a holy moment," she said. "Thank you for sharing it with me."

I don't like being dependent, but it's good for my soul. I don't like being weak, but it sets other people free to see God.

We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us ... keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling short-changed. ROMANS 5:3-5 (MSG) ◀

GLORIOUS EGGS AND TOAST

continued from cover

Just as Adam and Eve's sin resulted in leaving the garden where vulnerability and intimate relationship dwelled in harmony, so trauma ruptures relationship.

How comforting that God has provided salvation in every way! Even as we find ourselves estranged from our very being, Paul assures us that God fully knows us even when we do not know ourselves (1 CORINTHIANS 13:12). Embodied spirituality simply aligns with the truth that God is viscerally present with us. He will never leave us nor forsake us, and is continually reclaiming our bodies beyond the isolation of trauma to reunite us to Himself, others, and even to ourselves. ◀

¹ Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 2014, p. 70.

² Ibid, p. 43.

Stacia E. Littlefield, LPC, NCC is a therapist at North Family Counseling in Colorado Springs, where she specializes in trauma and works with adults, teens, and kids. She has a background in ministry, growing up in Asia as a missionary kid and serving in non-profit work prior to her career in counseling, and also enjoys freelance writing and training. Stacia loves traveling, being part of her local house church community, and drinking copious amounts of green and oolong tea.



Postures and Progressions of the Gospel

Reflections through Art and Race

KORRYN SHOGE
University of Central Florida
Associate Campus Director



During my sabbatical in 2020, my friend Robin (Klapheke) Jones excitedly asked me if I had any ideas stirring for the painting I now had time, space, and motivation to do. Her question and enthusiasm spurred me out of my laziness, and several months later, out came a four-piece series on the progression of the gospel inspired by Bill Tell's teaching, as well as dance concepts from a close friend. As part of my process, I physically posed in each of these positions. For me, these hands—our hands, represented by my hands, Black hands, brown hands—beautifully depict our relationship with God and a physical reality of faith.

physical reality of faith.

I painted the first one, *Justification*, in June of 2020. That was a time of much racial tension, injustice, and pain in our country. As I was painting, I noticed a parallel with my racial identity, one that connects deeply with the spiritual reality we all experience. Initially, when we experience the truths and realities of the gospel, saying yes to Christ, He breaks our chains. We don't know what to do with such freedom! We are justified, but do we truly experience it? We can easily remain in positions of bondage.

With minorities, I grieve that all too often, unjustly, freedom is proclaimed, and maybe the chains are cut, but other obstacles line up to prevent true freedom. If the chains have been cut, then the door is still locked. If the door is ever opened, there's a hateful mob blocking the doorway. Even one additional obstacle can prevent us bringing our full selves, and it surely prevents our nation experiencing the wholeness the gospel could bring to our whole community and culture if we all lived it out.

As we know and experience God more, learning to trust Him and believe His promises, we begin to open up (*Sanctification*)—but we may still get stuck in doubting our worth and value. We connect with God through prayer and other disciplines, but our posture toward Him is pleading, crying out for Him to do things for us, rather than resting and abiding as we lift requests up to Him and trust His good answers. As we continue to learn and grow, trusting God more, we experience transformation and our posture changes. In this third depiction (*Transformation*), we lift our hearts and hands, palms up, to God in worship and surrender. And finally (*Adoption*), as we embrace the truth and reality of God making us His very own, stepping into our identity as adopted, we extend our hands straight up in beautiful dependence.

I'm still growing to express my full self, to embrace my identity, to step outside of the chains and bondage of expectation from others in the sense of what is good, acceptable, or expected. I occasionally glimpse Adoption, but I look forward to living in that position constantly with my hands, my body, and my spirit. I hope as you see these images, you might feel this transformation in your own body, recognizing the areas of painful bondage you can surrender as Christ becomes more and more at home in your heart. ◀



ART TITLES: ¹ Justification, ² Sanctification, ³ Transformation, ⁴ Adoption

In each piece, we see progressively more and more light. In the first two, the hands are directed away from the light. The last two pieces, expressing more experienced freedom and wholeness, turn toward the light.

The Embodied Experiment

Want to see how your physical posture affects your spiritual experience? Try this contemplative exercise to increase awareness of your body in worship.

- ① Pull up Psalm 46 in your favorite Bible-listening app (YouVersion, YouTube, etc.), or ask a friend to try this with you.
- ② Sit comfortably—perhaps with your feet flat on the floor.
- ③ Take a centering breath. Feel the air fill your lungs, and hold your breath at the top before releasing it. Ask the Holy Spirit to be present with you.
- ④ Listen to the Scripture three times.
 - First, with your arms folded
 - Second, with your hands flat on your knees
 - Third, with your hands open, palms up.
- ⑤ Notice the sensations in your body during each reading.
 - What changed between each posture change?
 - What effect did your body posture have on your experience of God's voice in Scripture?
 - How can you incorporate this new awareness into your times with God?