

## *Saturday "Sermon"*

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## **Skeletons**

I really enjoyed taking "anatomy and physiology" in college. Although I struggled to make sense of physiology, I was fascinated by the wonder of the anatomy of our bodies. I especially remember one night when I was in the science building alone, studying our one real skeleton in preparation for an exam. I wondered what the person had been like whose skull I held ("Alas, poor Yorick!").

Strangely enough, Kathleen Parker's column in the paper this morning (May 4), "What Kind of People Should We Be," set me to thinking about skeletons. You probably remember that there are two types of skeletons, "endoskeletons" and "exoskeletons." An endoskeleton, like our own, is internal, giving shape and strength to the tissue surrounding it. An exoskeleton, like a crab's, gives shape to the internal tissues from the outside.

Both the daily news and my everyday experience as a pastor keep reminding me of President John Adams's statement that "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." That's a way of speaking about a moral and spiritual "endoskeleton" that gives shape and strength to life.

Rather than having such a "moral endoskeleton," though, we've become "the Litigious States of America," continuing to increase the number of lawsuits we bring against one another, many of which might be funny if they weren't so sad. Having rejected God's moral compass, we now find ourselves forced to resort to police, lawyers, courtrooms and prisons as an "exoskeleton" of sorts by which we attempt to force each other into some semblance of moral behavior.

Best-selling author George Barna recently warned that the United States is experiencing a serious moral decline that shows no signs of reversal. "We have shifted our energy from a willingness to work hard toward achieving significant outcomes [endoskeletons] to an attitude of entitlement [exoskeletons]," Barna noted.

Long ago, the prophet Ezekiel "was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with dry bones. [God led Ezekiel] around among the old, dry bones that covered the valley floor. Then he asked, 'Son of man, can these bones become living people again?'"

"O Sovereign Lord," [Ezekiel] replied, "you alone know the answer to that."

The good news is that God has told us where "moral endoskeletons" can be found: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right" (2 Timothy 3:16).

May God give us such "backbone"!