

Mortifying and crucifying a Rebellious Flesh

We can see that we feel certain genetic impulses and impediments that compel our inactions or actions in certain directions. Certain directions that our rationale mind may, or may not, consciously choose to go. We feel the effects of this instinct, or 'Old Man' everywhere we turn. When we feel hunger, is it not a genetic mechanism telling us to feed? If the choice to eat were solely a conscious one, why the need to feel such a compulsive urge? Shivers and Chills, are they not an instinctual message telling us to cover ourselves? Fear, which evokes a flight or fight response, can we not feel the unconscious pulls to act in certain preprogrammed patterns? We don't consciously control the secretion of adrenaline into the nervous system after all, any more than we control the lustful hormones that guide us to act when certain situations arise between man and woman arise. We find ourselves in certain situations, and instinct begins to rear its head.

Not all instinct is bad. There are definitely are beneficial aspects of our genetic preprogramming that may definitely have aided in the survival process.

But then too, there are a multitude of others that are outdated. There are some that are harmful to ourselves or others, and still others that are downright illegal, or deadly.

Running on instinct as opposed to rational thought is also addicting. It creates certain habits of relying and acting outside the realms of conscious thought and solely on animalistic behavior. It 'empowers the flesh' as the Bible would say. And when the flesh is empowered and we develop such habits of acting instinctually, we weaken more and more the control that our mind (or Spirit) has over our day to day affairs.

When a lot of us begin to live the Christian Life, we feel discouraged when we find that we can not so easily follow the commandments that we will to do. We sometimes assume that we are just evil or bad and that it is hopeless for us to fake and pretend to be something that we are not. What we are witnessing when this occurs is the truth that we are just discussing. We are seeing how little control our conscious mind has over ourselves, and how much is, in fact, in the solid control of instincts, of passions, of fears, attractions, aversions, and lusts.

Paul speaks of this as not being able to do what he 'wills', and doing what he does not want to do. It's the flesh dominating the behavioral agenda.

If we ourselves do not have control over our actions, it is impossible to subject our whole being, mind, body and soul to the Will of Christ. Simply because we don't have control of our bodies to offer Him.

So first off, we need to get control. We must learn to bring our bodies in obedience to our conscious Spirit. Our Will. We have free-will, and we can see this as we can choose and plan anything we want. We just can't do what we plan. So how do we reign in, conquer and crucify the flesh and make it obedient to our minds so that we can offer the whole unit to Christ to be fit and ready for His use and service?

This is one use of Pennances. When we sin by obeying the flesh, instead of our Will, which should desire to be obeying Christ, we weaken that control just a tad bit. Our mind has less control, and our genetics take back a little more control. So it becomes necessary to wrest back control. People say it's pointless to forego meat on Fridays, to give alms, to fast, but all these actions are contrary to what the Flesh desires. It's like imposing the dominace of the Will right back over the flesh. Taking back lost territory.

It's only when we have solid control that we can be obedient to Christ, Mind, Body, and soul. We dont have to stop at such routine pennances. Anything we do to weaken the fleshes control will make it more obedienbt. Cold Showres, forced physical exertion, foregoing sleep, overriding fears, anything we feel compelled to do, we can obstinately refuse, and do the opposite. Provided of course, that it is not harmful to us. But every act however small, will weaken the control of our bodies. Over our actions and will empwower our will in guiding decisions and actions. Then, it just becomes a matter of choosing to obey Christ, which becomes alot easier, because it becomes possible.

A large, stylized handwritten signature or set of initials, possibly reading 'C. W.', is written in the lower half of the page. The ink is light and the strokes are fluid and cursive.