

Turn Your Thoughts to Him

The believer who is utterly in love with the Lord will not even desire the things that might offend the object of his affection. It is only by complete abandonment, however, that it is possible to reach a total victory in subduing your senses and your desires.

Why is this so?

The reason is obvious. Where do your five senses draw their life and energy? From your soul. It is your soul that gives life and energy to your senses; and when your senses become aroused, they in turn stimulate your desires.

Christians have employed different means to overcome their desires. Perhaps the most common approach has been discipline and self-denial. But no matter how severe your self-denial is, it will never completely conquer your senses.

No, self-denial is not the answer! Even when it appears to have worked, what it has actually done is to change only the outward expression of those desires.

When you deal with the externals, what you are really doing is driving your soul farther outward from your spirit. The more your soul is focused on these outward things, the farther it is removed from its center and from its resting place! The result of this type of self-denial is the opposite of what you sought. Unfortunately, this is what always happens to a believer when his life is lived out on the surface.

If you dwell on the desires of your outward nature—paying attention to them—they, in turn, become more and more active. Instead of being subdued, they gain more power. We can conclude from all this that although self-denial may truly weaken the body, it can never take away the keenness of your senses.

Then what is your hope?

There is only one way to conquer your five senses, and that is by inward recollection—by a turning of your soul completely inward to your spirit, there to possess a present God. Your soul must turn all its attention and energies within, not without! Within to Christ, not without to the senses.

When your soul is turned within, it actually becomes separated from your external senses; and once your five senses are separated from your soul, they receive no more attention. Their life supply is cut off! They become powerless.

Now let us follow the course of the soul. Your soul has learned at this point to turn within and draw near to the presence of God. The soul becomes farther and farther separated from the self. You may discover that the outer man becomes very weak as you are powerfully drawn within to seek God in your spirit (some may even faint).

But your main concern is with the presence of Jesus Christ. Your main concern lies in dwelling continually upon the God who is within you. Then, without particularly thinking of self-denial or “putting away the deeds of the flesh,” God will cause you to experience a natural subduing of the flesh.

You can be sure of this: The Christian who has faithfully abandoned himself to the Lord will soon discover that he also has laid hold of a God who will not rest until He has subdued everything! He will put to death all that remains to be put to death in your life.

What, then, is required of you? All you need to do is remain steadfast in giving your utmost attention to God. He will do all things perfectly. The truth is, not everyone is capable of severe outward self-denial, but everyone is capable of turning within and abandoning himself wholly to God.

It is true that what you see and what you hear are continually

supplying your busy imagination with new subjects. They keep your thoughts jumping from one subject to another. Therefore, there is a place for discipline concerning what you see and hear. But be at peace; God will teach you about all this. Just follow His Spirit.

Two great advantages will come to you if you proceed in the way I have described. First of all, by withdrawing from outward objects, you will constantly draw nearer to God. The closer you are to God, the more you will receive His nature. The more you receive His nature, the more you will draw upon His sustaining power.

Second, the nearer you draw to the Lord, the farther you are removed from sin. So you see, simply by turning within to your spirit, you begin to acquire the habit of being near to the Lord and far from all else. These are the great rewards of turning your thoughts to Him—and Him alone.

Jeanne Guyon (1648-1717) was a French Quietist who had a tremendous impact on church history. She was a mystic who was imprisoned for her writings, which were considered heretical in her day.

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