

Submission

by

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“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ”..... “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:1-6, 10

Ok *Star Trek* fans, I have some interesting trivia for you. Why was Spock so disciplined and guarded with his emotions? Why was his race of Vulcans the same way? Answer: It was because they had begun life as a savage race, and when their emotions ran wild, they wrecked havoc, even killing their closest friends as an example. When tempted to violence, they would instead choose to follow a code of emotional control by attempting to live by reason with no interference from emotions. The problem is when someone hit the right button, they resorted to the old ways ... their instincts. When that happened, the Vulcans had a choice to either go with their natural leanings or stand against them with meditation and such. Now we know *Star Trek* and Spock are creations of science fiction. They are not real. But I think we all know some people on earth that we would be convinced are from Vulcan. Does Spock's personality remind you of someone? It does me. I had about three old maid schoolteachers who fit that description. It might have helped me understand them better if I had known they were from Vulcan instead of ascending from a very hot place that I swore they came from. What's my point? It is this. There are instincts that are in our corrupted created human natures that will surface if our hot button is hit in a special way. Unless we have a plan for dealing with it before it gets out of hand, we could fall. What is your plan?

Speaking of instincts, I had the misfortune of watching a brutal attack and killing of an old dog by a young pit bull this past weekend. Before I could interrupt the vicious attack, the deed had been done. When the pit bull ran away from me, I saw that the old dog was traumatized from blood loss. The owner had to put his old friend down as a result. To see the pit-bull in his own yard, you would not have suspected such primal, killer instincts could surface from that animal. It is barely a year old, and half the size of the old lab that was attacked. It is friendly and non-aggressive when I've been around him. But when I drove up on the carnage by the road as the pit-bull was attacking his victim, it was a different dog than I had known that was killing the old dog. It was not a dog fight but the killing of another dog as the pit-bull remained on top catching his breath, until he could complete the kill. We could be angry with the dog and I was, but that was what he was bred to do. He was doing what comes natural for him. Now most of you know that a pit-bull is bred to be a killer. It is in its genes. It is an instinct. It will happen that this breed will return to its nature and become

what has been hidden out of sight when the right moment comes. Sure, I know I will hear from some of you about your super sweet pit-bull and it is the human that makes the dog mean. But the nature hidden deep within the breed will eventually make its way to the surface if a certain provocation happens. There is something deep within the dog that will come out at the right time. It is a matter of time. It is in their instincts, no matter how civilized they appear to be. But, it is also true with humans.

Similar to a Vulcan and a pit-bull, humans have imbedded instincts that are also dangerous. It is that corrupted nature we are all born with. The scripture above points out that our nature is to follow the course of this world, which has been inspired by Satan. That is what lies deep within us. Now if you think people are becoming better over time, you do not live in the world I see. After all, we are only a generation removed from the Holocaust and the massacre of his own people by Stalin and his cronies. How many ethnic purgings around the world have we seen only in the last 50 years? No. It is a fact. Humans are not getting better through civilization. There is as much violence and debauchery as ever before. The Apostle Paul points out the problem in the verse above: *“We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”* He is describing our primal instincts as humans ... like Spock ... Vulcans ... pit-bulls ... and you and me. This is our basic nature, and this nature must be under control, or a “yoke,” or it will emerge like the pit bull and create damage if the right moment comes along ... if the right trigger is pulled. Jesus spoke of just such a yoke that will control this nature within us:

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:19 (ESV)

When Christ comes into our life, He gives us forgiveness not perfection, except His own. I like what I often see on church billboards that declare, *“Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven.”* Although forgiven and destined for heaven, the process of the life of a Christian called sanctification is a growing process of submitting to Jesus' yoke every day. It is an act of surrender ... every day. It is a choice we make ... every day ... all through the day. It is not attaining perfection, but moving toward it. Because of that *sin* nature we carry within us, and because of the world we live in, we will never attain to perfection in this life, or even get completely free of the struggle against our nature until we leave this life and world behind. Then our nature will be changed. We will have natures fit for heaven. Until then, we must have a plan to go to when our natural instincts are triggered.

I mentioned choice. It is always a choice to either go with our instincts or submit to Christ's yoke and allow Him to walk us through our temptation. That is something we can control. We cannot control a temptation. It comes on us even when we try to avoid it. We cannot control our nature, for unlike the fictional Vulcans, we do not have the capacity to simply “meditate” ourselves through those appeals to our fallen nature. If we try to will ourselves through it, we will eventually fall. But, we can choose to submit to Jesus' yoke and He will teach us how to stand firm with Him and resist. After all, He did it Himself and He will show us how to follow His lead. It will be a winnable fight for us. But it is won not by our might, but rather Christ's right, and our submission to Him. The “yoke” is a volitional act on our part. We choose to take it. Ask Jesus right now to place it on you. Then the pit-bull within you will not get out, for He will *yoke* it.