

Our Dual-Natures

Galatians 5:17

For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do.

I often say, in fact, I've already said it today, that we are hybrids – spiritual beings with physical bodies. While we are walking this earth, we are both physical and spiritual beings; we are dual-natured creations of God.

And although we are purely spiritual much longer than we are physical beings, we typically focus more on our physical and human natures than we do on our spiritual. Both are important; both deserve our attention. We cannot ignore our human bodies and focus solely on our spiritual attributes, nor vice-versa. There must be a balance and focus on both natures.

Challenges occur when we are out of balance. Usually, we are preoccupied with our non-spiritual perspective. We think about worldly things – possessions, people, food, clothes, wealth, control, getting our way, coming out on top. From our animal perspective, we focus on reproduction and survival as an individual, family, and as a species. We focus on looking good,

attracting a suitable mate. This is all a normal part of being homo sapiens.

Yet, we are more than just these physical bodies and our human awareness. We are also Children of God; spiritual in nature and beyond these physical forms. We are intended to pay attention to our spiritual growth and developments, as well as our physical.

These two natures express themselves differently. Galatians 5:19-26 says this: *What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; 20 in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; 21 they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these.*

The physical part of us wants to mate, survive, and even thrive at the expense of others. Our “thrival” instincts sometimes take over and we want not just to survive, but to dominate, control others, and simply take from others what we want. We can be aggressive, domineering, intolerant, and insensitive. Our foremost thought is, “What’s in it for me?” We form packs, and attack others outside our pack. We establish tribes and enact wars against other tribes. This is our human instinct at its basest: mere animals living amongst other animals in the most tenuous relationships.

Our spiritual natures express differently. Again, Galatians 5:22-23 tells us this: *22 But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 humility, and self-control. Our*

spiritual nature, then, is tolerant, accepting, and appreciative of others. It exhibits an attitude of service, forgiveness, and wants to reach out, not retract; offer, not take. Where our human nature is fed by fear, our spiritual nature is fueled by love.

The truth is that we are hybrids; we are both fear-based and love-based. From the human perspective, we can rise above our fears through our intellect; our highest form of the human perspective being that of science-based thinking and scholarship in all areas of study. This intelligent mind is searching, examining, analyzing, and categorizing. It is the part of our human nature that asks questions and asks seeks answers, always from the logical perspective. Three of the most important questions our higher-level human minds ask are: Is there a God? What happens after we die? Are we alone in the Universe? The first two questions will never be answered from the scientific perspective. It is like asking why fish doesn't run as fast as a cat. The question just doesn't make sense; the question and answer are incompatible.

It is my belief that the third question, whether there are other life forms somewhere 'out there' will be answered in due time, through scientific methods.

I look to science when I want to learn or know something about our physical universe. I can read Galilei, Newton, Darwin, Einstein, Faraday, Tesla, Plank, Bohr, Alan Guth, Ashoke Sen, James Watson, Elizabeth Blackburn, and Stephen Hawking. The late Stephen Hawking was a brilliant mind, a theoretical physicist, and an atheist, but I respect and believe whatever he wrote in his

fields of physics and cosmology. I do not, however, believe anything he said about the existence or non-existence of God. He dealt with the physical dimension exclusively. He said he did not believe in God because he could not study God; there was no means of acquiring verifiable evidence to offer either way, so it was a useless endeavor.

So it is with every scientist and academician. The spiritual domain lies outside the scientific domain; they are not at this time compatible. But that doesn't mean that they aren't both important or that they can't be conjoined.

If I want to investigate the spiritual nature, I can go to the ideas of Jesus, St. Paul, Buddha, Confucius, the Bhagavat Gita, Laozi, Mohamed, St. Francis of Assisi, Paramahansa Yogananda, Gandhi, the Dali Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Father Thomas Keating, Riane Eisler, Ian Lawton, Robert Thurman, or Richard Rohr.

Scientists are sometimes easier to appreciate because they publish books and findings and can point their fingers to something and say, "Look at this. It has been analyzed; there is evidence of its existence."

The spiritual nature is not so openly demonstrable. It takes years of 'doing nothing', inner work, prayer, and meditation before any results are evident. And even then, there is nothing to show in a physical manner. Spiritual results are felt, perceived, and experienced beyond our primary senses. Spirituality affects our hearts; physical logic affects our minds.

Ask most scientists if there is any higher power or existence outside the physical, and the answer is “no”. Ask one of the monks at a monastery, or the Dali Lama and the answer is in the affirmative. Is one right and one wrong? I say they are both correct from the perspective of their thinking and searching. We can’t examine the ocean and expect to find a herd of sheep grazing on kelp. It is difficult for a science-based mind to explore the spiritual domain because they rely on the physical world to guide them. Yet, the spiritual realm offers no physical landmarks. Although the spiritual domain is available to any seeker, the physical and the divine are mutually exclusive environments.

Our two natures are mutually exclusive environments. Most atheists are moral, kind, tolerant, loving, and express all the attributes of a Child of God. Why? – because they are a Child of God, whether they believe in God or not. Simply because someone doesn’t believe in God because there can be no physical evidence is insufficient reason for God not to love that person. One’s belief is not a requisite for the existence of a spiritual nature.

In contrast, not all religious or spiritual people are moral, kind, tolerant, loving, and express all the attributes of a Child of God all the time. Why not? – because they are Children of God – living within marvelous bodies with a lifelong challenge in front of them.

Love, tolerance, and compassion – qualities of the spiritual nature - will always express at some point, even from the most despicable of people. Even clinically ill people whose minds are devastatingly

damaged can show gentleness and compassion toward a little kitten. We are a spiritual/human hybrid, regardless of how damaged we are mental, physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

Although our human nature, out of fear, will tell us to kill one another, our spiritual natures will tell us to love. Although our human nature can tell us that we are separate from the other, our spiritual nature whispers that while that may be true, we belong together; we are family. Our human nature defiantly shouts that we are independent individuals, as our spiritual nature lovingly offers that we are each a piece of God's puzzle of Life; we are important, we belong, we have a place and a purpose.

It is the answers to the questions that we ask ourselves that define who we are in this moment, and our answers change over time as our consciousness grows. I have a list of questions that I will hand out at the end of the service; questions to ask yourself in your quiet time. I recommend that you spend time considering each question carefully for a thorough answer. Try to allow Spirit to speak directly to you, rather than rely on old teachings and assumptions given to you by other people. Enjoy the process; there are certainly no wrong answers.

Part of our purpose on earth, in these bodies, is to maintain the balance between our spiritual natures with our human natures. This is our challenge: to live through these bodies but not be enslaved by them; think through these brains but not lose our way. We are to be in the world but not be of the world.

Life is about love, connection, and balance. For most of us, we are not so spiritual that we must be reminded to engage the world. No, our challenge is the opposite: we must be reminded to engage our spiritual nature and loosen our hold on the physical world as our only self-determinant.

As our spiritual nature expands, we begin to see each other from a new perspective. We begin to see the journey we are on as similar to their journey. Our challenges are their challenges and they face the same struggles of connection and balance. We are simply at a different point of awareness, but we are all on the same journey of awakening.

Job 32:8 says: *But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding.* We can have all the knowledge of the Universe and all subject matters, but until we touch our spiritual natures, we do not understand. There is a light that enters our hearts, minds, and souls when we allow our spiritual nature to express. This is the Light of Christ. It can appear with or without our awareness. My prayer is that we can consciously open our hearts, minds, and souls in order to accept and understand our dual natures and willingly love and connect with each other, this world, and with God.

Let us pray....

