

Dissonance

How to respond

Thomas Carlyle

(writer, historian)

“Nothing is more terrible than activity without insight.”

John Newton

(hymn writer)

“I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be. But still, I am not what I used to be. And by the grace of God, I am what I am.”

Dissonance
is a part of life
in a fallen world.



Dissonance
has some hidden
blessings.



Dissonance can bring toxic stress and carnal responses.

1. Most human beings and institutions are going to do everything in their power to **reduce dissonance in ways that are favorable to them**, that allow them to justify their mistakes and maintain business as usual.
2. Many folks try to reduce dissonance by relaxing the expectations - **blaming the standards**.
3. Some try to reduce dissonance by relinquishing responsibility - **blaming others**.
4. Most Christians try to reduce dissonance by trying to change - **blaming ourselves**.

The Stress of Dissonance
will be relieved by

walking
in the light.

walking
in the Spirit.

**#1
seeing ourselves
as God does.**



**#2
seeing the Cross
of Christ
as God does.**

**The first challenge
is to give up all hope
in our flesh to remove
the dissonance.**

Romans 7

“²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”

**The second challenge
is to find our hope
and freedom “in Christ”**

Romans 8

“¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,”

**#3
a new way
of thinking.**



**#4
a new way
of living.**

Satan

**is a
Messenger**



**not a
Monster**

The Holy Spirit



**is a
Paraclete**

**guide
teacher
comforter**



**not a
Surrogate**

Romans 8

“4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled **in us**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

“**in us**”

could have the sense of

“**for us**” or “**through us**”

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who **are according to the Spirit**, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the **mind set on the Spirit** is life and peace, . . . 9 However, **you are** not in the flesh but **in the Spirit**, if indeed the Spirit of God **dwells in you**. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.”

The third challenge is to renew our minds.

Romans 12

“1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Two mental postures

1. Talk to self (sow to the Spirit)

2. Listen to self (sow to the flesh)

Import the Word of the Cross

Surface the lust of the flesh

Telling yourself the truth

Rehashing the lie

- 1. Your identity “in Christ”
- 2. Your death by baptism
- 3. Your paraclete power

- 1. Satan’s word to Eve
- 2. Satan’s word to Jesus
- 3. Satan’s accusation

Two views of making peace with the law

1. Obey the Law

2. Fulfill the Law

This is what humans try to do apart from the Gospel.

This is what God has done in Christ through the Gospel.

We resolve the dissonance by managing the Law

We resolve the dissonance by faith in Christ

- 1. Lowering the bar - redefining sin
- 2. Extending the time - purgatory
- 3. “Cooking the books” -

- 1. Confessing our sin - Affirming the Law
- 2. Hoping in Christ - Believing the Gospel
- 3. Longing for heaven -

“Walking in the light” means “walking in the Spirit”

When we see self but do not see Christ

When we see self in the context of Christ

Death



Life

“If heroes live long enough they find out that they are villains.”

“It is not fair but he can take it”

The fourth challenge is to authentic living.

Galatians 5

“¹⁶ But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ¹⁸ But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law. . . . ²⁵ **If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.** ²⁶ Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

Hypocrisy

Claims vs. Conduct

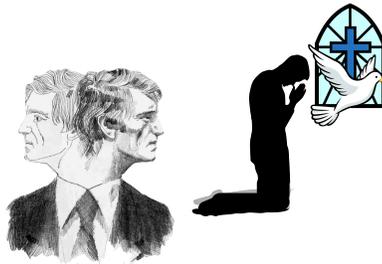


- ✓ We are to bear witness to Christ not to the church or to us.
- ✓ When the focus is on us (our conduct) rather than Jesus, we invite hypocrisy.
- ✓ Hypocrisy does not discredit our aim but rather our claim.
- ✓ Hypocrisy is removed as we lower our claims and raise our conduct.

I will be a hypocrite to one of my two natures.

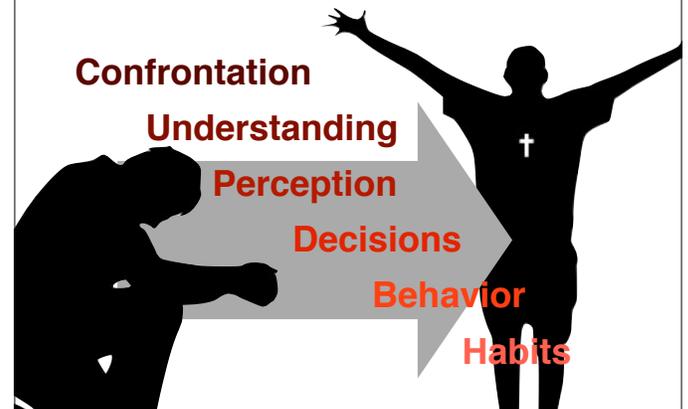


The Flesh



The Spirit

Repentance - a process



The church's pastoral role in managing Dissonance

1. Institutions can be designed to **reward admissions of mistakes** as part of the organizational culture.
2. Preach and demonstrate the **Gospel of Grace**.
3. Become **aware** that we are in a state of dissonance.
4. We must give up the **need to be right** in the eyes of everyone.
5. We don't help others by **lecturing** them about their "stupidity." They need respect and support.
6. Give people **room to repent** of their mistakes with dignity not shame.

Gospel strategies for resolving Dissonance

1. **Telling the truth**
2. **Affirming the Law**
3. **Receiving the Gospel**
4. **Living under grace**
5. **Humble holiness**