

A friend is struggling with his neediness in relationships and is in turmoil trying to love all parts of himself, including those he judges bad. As I know they are deeply spiritual persons, I asked the authors to address these concerns. While the words of Michael McManus and John Spiesman call upon Christian sources, I feel they touch upon universal truths common to all the spiritually minded and thus may be helpful to non Christians suffering the same concerns as my friend. You are encouraged to contact the authors with questions at JMConsulting07@aol.com

All Things Work Together For GOOD

By Michael McManus & John Spiesman
For Everyman.org

We all have needs throughout our lifetime - it is our *human-ness* that drives us to strive to get our needs met one way or another. A feeling that our needs are going un-met can cause us to become very anxious and on -edge. One of our basic human needs seems to be the need to be loved. And this often drives our need for relationship, because feeling loved provides a great sense of fulfillment and joy. We feel a need in our relationships to be shown affection and of course attention. When either of these is missing, we feel isolated or un-cared for. One of the most important things that we ALL strive for in life is a complete comfort with ourselves. When we become at ease and *comfortable* with ourselves, the neediness we show in our lives seems to become less intense. How do we get at peace with ourselves?

We become at peace with ourselves when we ultimately become at peace with God - remembering God loves us, *no matter what*. Our feelings of not being at peace with God can stem from many circumstances that we may be facing in our life's journey, Especially difficult for us is dealing with needs of the body and the pleasures that the body seems to desire. This can be a real struggle! The cycle seems to work like this: Our body lusts for physical pleasure, we

respond to those physical needs, and almost instantly this leads to feeling of shame and guilt. Many of us beat ourselves up to the point that we [mentally] draw BLOOD. We really struggle with the shame and guilt, forgetting that God created the human body *in his image, for GOOD*.

The temptation to abuse certain body parts in certain circumstances can be so great, because we are so driven by human desire. This human desire causes us many times to give in to temptation, starting the shame-guilt-drawn blood cycle to begin once again for the act they have engaged in. The shame and guilt we feel come from those times that we feel that we have *misused* our body parts. This misuse is often seen as “bad” and immoral. St. Paul reminds us, *God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other [1 Corinthians 24]*.

We, in our human-ness have to realize that God gave us each body part for a reason and he meant for those to be used appropriately. If we misuse our bodies, the acts we engage in can become a habit – a learned behavior – that can lead to temptation, and even addiction.

The New Testament clearly states how we should offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Paul writes in Romans 12;1-2 to “*not conform any longer to the pattern of this world* (which is where addictions come from) *but be transformed by the renewing of our minds*”. This as well as most other teachings and instructions in the New Testament are very difficult to *live up to*. The need for physical attention can be so overwhelming at times that, due to the pleasure it is associated with, it can lead us to strive to fulfil physical needs, rather than living as if our bodies *are temples*, as Paul teaches. Our human need to fulfill physical desires can cause a real neediness within relationships - often lived out physically - leading to the *shame-guilt-draw blood cycle*.

We can transform our mind in regard to physical temptations and habits by consciously making a sacrifice, a holy sacrifice. We will then see [and feel] the guilt, shame, and confusion become less of a burden in our lives.

Paul writes in Romans 12, “*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. But rather of sober judgment,*” Paul points out here that when our bodily desires come first we are putting ourselves and our needs before God’s desires. When we indeed put God first place in our lives we feel a true connectedness [to God], and discover that the feeling is beyond all human understanding – but nonetheless *tremendously* comforting.

A connection with God makes us able to deal with the temptations better because *we* are putting God in control and trusting *Him*. Also, when we establish a relationship with God, we begin to live up to the expectations that God has for *us*, – that we live as *his children*, adopted by Him, and thereby *loved* by him.

We as human beings must remember that our greatest temptations will NEVER go away, and that we must work with God through prayer to be able to control and manage them. This is no easy task, because these temptations come from our physical desires which we are *physically driven* to fulfill. Paul writes in Romans 13 that we *must* clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ to overcome these desires. Reading God’s word and living it in the *here and now* is how we clothe ourselves with Jesus Christ, God’s son, who stated that *He* came into the world not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). We may feel we have sinned and that is perfectly normal – the good news is that our God calls sinners and is full of forgiveness.

When we acknowledge God’s desire to forgive us it creates a tremendous *empowerment* within us to live according to his word. Normally when our human desires become so great, we often like them so much that we in a way want to hold on to them and the pleasure they create. Looking within ourselves, however, we can realize that many of these desires are merely physical

needs which can be controlled by a deeper spiritual relationship with God. God promises that, *if we remain in him and his words in us, whatever we wish will be given to us.* (John 15:7-8). If we will be obedient to God, and if we really want our true habits to be broken, then they will be. *“Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”* (John 16:24. Remaining in God’s Word will empower us to conquer our addictions and no longer feel the guilt and shame.

And we know, states Paul, that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Remember, Our God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Father of all compassion and comfort who comforts us in all of our troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3). There is nothing too big for Our God but we must do our part and try to live in his word and according to that word. This involves great sacrifice, but the rewards are truly worth it. God forgives always. We must learn to accept that fact and forgive ourselves. For more than often we hold ourselves back in life and, most importantly, shut God out of our lives. When we truly want to live the best life possible, and be free from the addictions and faults that bring us down in life, we must remember that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only begotten son that WE may have life through him and that life is a relationship with him. When that relationship is established it empowers us to overcome the things in life that cause us to stumble.

Needs are normal and natural, we all have them, but it is truly how we control these needs so that they don’t become a hindrance to us and to others in life. Having a relationship with God can enable us to transform our minds and our hearts so that these needs can be controlled rather than them controlling us.