

Dissonance

How to respond

Thomas Carlyle

(writer, historian)

“Nothing is more terrible than activity without insight.”

John Newton

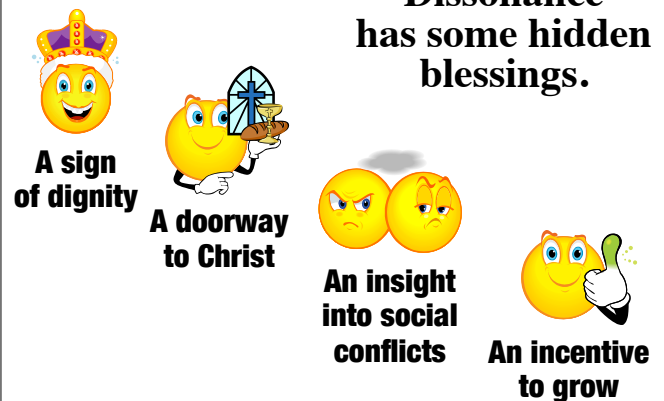
(hymn writer)

“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)

**Import
the Word
of the Cross**

Telling yourself the truth

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

2.
Listen to self
(sow to the flesh)

**Surface
the lust
of the flesh**

Rehashing the lie

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

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

*We resolve the
dissonance
by managing the Law*

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

2.
Fulfill the Law

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

*We resolve the
dissonance
by faith in Christ*

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**



Death

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

**When we see
self in the context
of Christ**



Life

“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.”

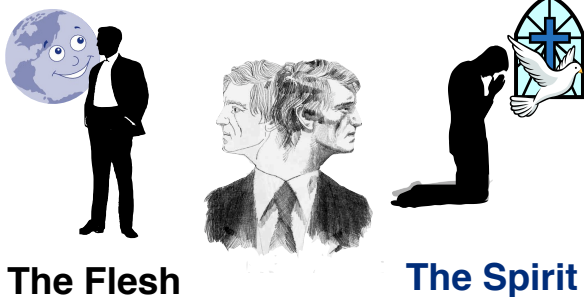
Hypocrisy

Claims vs. Conduct

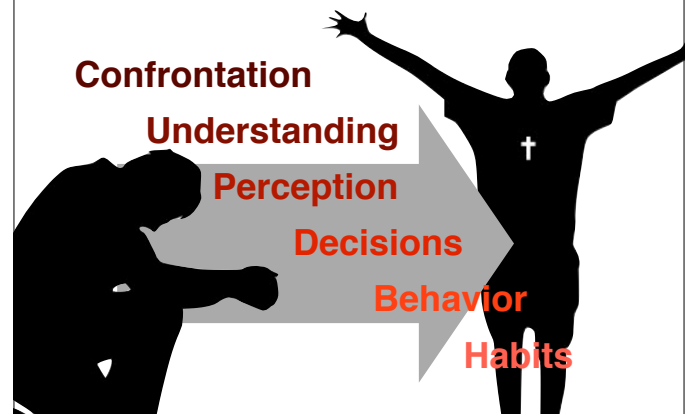


- ✓ We are to bear witness to Christ not to the church or to us.
- ✓ When the focus is on us (our conduct) rather than Jesus, we invite hypocrisy.
- ✓ Hypocrisy does not discredit our aim but rather our claim.
- ✓ Hypocrisy is removed as we lower our claims and raise our conduct.

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



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**