

Nature Abhors a Vacuum

Matthew 12:43-45 (KJV)

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. **44** Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. **45** Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

In 350BC, the Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that if a vacuum existed, then a human could run at infinite speed. Since Aristotle did not believe in infinite speed, he stated the philosophical truth of horror vacui, that “nature abhors a vacuum.” For many years Aristotle’s statement seemed to be true. Whenever anyone tried to create a device to pump the air out of a container, the container itself would collapse. To many this was proof that God hated vacuums so much that the container would be pulled into the center of the vacuum with an irresistible force. In 1650 A.D., a German named Otto von Guericke was able to demonstrate that if one took two hemispheres and created a vacuum within them, then the force against the spheres is so great that teams of horses could not separate them. So, von Guericke proved that a vacuum did not “pull” things into it, but rather it was the air molecules forcing themselves into the void that did the damage.

Twenty years later, an Italian monk named Francesco Lana de Terzi, proposed a sketch for a flying machine that used copper spheres containing a vacuum. de Terzi reasoned that since air had weight, then a sphere containing nothing should weigh less than the air and therefore should float.

The interesting thing is that de Terzi was correct; a balloon filled with nothing would float very well. The problem is how to create a balloon filled with nothing that is shaped like a balloon. Many people tried, but eventually gave up and began to fill their balloons with other gasses that could take the place of air. Hydrogen works best, but is highly flammable. If you want to make a blimp fly, the best thing to use is Helium.

Nature abhors a vacuum. If you are going to take something away, you need to replace it with something else.

I went through that little science lesson for one reason, I want to illustrate this message in Matthew 12.

We see the evil spirit that is forced out of its home in a person. The spirit is forced to wander in the desert places, looking for a new home. While he is gone, the man cleans up his act. He gets the spiritual house cleaned up. It says that the house is “clean, swept, and garnished.” That last word, garnished, implies that the house is not only clean, but has been decorated to welcome a new tenant. The imagery here is that the man has not just a house, but an apartment. He grows tired of the evil spirit living in his apartment, so he evicts it. He cleans and redecorates and waits for a new tenant to move in. The spirit, however, returns to find the apartment clean and presentable. So, the spirit does what any reasonable person would do, he moves into the clean apartment. Not only that, he is like college students on Spring Break: he brings a ton of his friends along to help him trash the place.

Remember I said that a vacuum does not have force because it is drawing things into itself; rather it is the air outside that pushes itself into the empty space. So, it is in this story; the apartment is not drawing the evil spirit into itself, rather it is the evil spirit that forces his way into the empty apartment. The man in the story does not ask the evil spirit to return, but he creates a vacuum within himself because he has not filled the apartment with a new tenant.

The Goodyear blimp flies not because it is filled with nothing, but because it is filled with something (in this case, helium.) The helium forces the air out of the blimp. Because the air wants the space that the blimp occupies, the air pushes the blimp out of the way and up into the sky. The blimp flies because the air forces its way under the blimp.

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In spiritual terms, we learn that we cannot simply keep our spiritual house clean if we want to remain free. Many people think that if they simply keep their spiritual house clean that that is the same as being spiritual. I have heard so many people say, “I don’t believe I need to go to church; I’m a good person.” They are making the mistake of the person in the parable; they have cleaned their spiritual

apartment to the best of their abilities and are sure that is good enough. They are relying on their own power to save themselves.

But if you want to keep the evil spirit from returning, you need to find another tenant. Removing the evil from your life will only create a vacuum of power. You may live a good life, but this only creates a vacuum of power over your life. There are too many evil spirits roaming the desert countryside looking for a place to stay.

Acts 2:38 (KJV) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We know that being baptized in Jesus' Name will remove the sins from your life. We know that the cleansing power of Jesus name will remove sin from your life more effectively that you can ever do on your own.

Mark 9:3 (KJV) And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

When we go into the waters of baptism, we are cleaned whiter than we ourselves could ever do. We are clean to our innermost being. No amount of "living right" or other efforts on our own part can ever make us as clean as we are on that day.

...and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

That is, once your spiritual apartment has been cleaned, God is the one that desires to take up residence there. The waters of baptism create a spiritual vacuum within us. If we do not fill that void with the Holy Ghost as our new tenant, then the pressures of the world will eventual force their way in. Nature abhors a vacuum. If you are going to take something away, you need to replace it with something else.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (KJV)

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: **5** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. **6** And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **7** And thou shalt

teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. **8** And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. **9** And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

With All Your Heart

The Hebrew word translated “heart” occurs 858 times in the Old Testament. However, it does not refer to the source of emotions as it does to modern readers. In the Old Testament, the word “heart” refers to one’s perception, reason, discernment, memory, and logic. In other words, the Bible calls “heart” the thing that we would call the “brain.”

Consider the following passages:

1 Samuel 25:37-38 (KJV)

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. **38** And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died.

Isaiah 6:10 (KJV) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

1 Kings 4:29 (KJV) And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

Matthew 9:4 (KJV) And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

Luke 2:19 (KJV) But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Some people say that Christians are people of faith, but Scientist are people of knowledge. The popular notion in the world is that science is the purview of logic and people cling to religion because they lack the ability for logic.

The Bible says quite the opposite. While it is true that one cannot find God without faith, we are expected to worship Him with our intellect. We must use the mental faculties that God has given us to work for Him. If we use our intellect only for secular purposes, then we have created a spiritual vacuum within that part of ourselves.

Anyone who tries to keep God out of their intellect has made themselves open to the enemy. When our intellect is not given to God we are open to thoughts and logic that are counter to God's plan.

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With All Your Soul

Everyone has a spiritual nature alongside their physical nature; the 'soul' refers to our spiritual nature. What many people haven't figured out yet is that you cannot permanently fulfill spiritual matters with physical actions. Many people try to fulfill their spiritual needs with something material. They satisfy themselves for a short period, only returning to a feeling of emptiness.

In January 2008, a group calling itself 'Sea Shepherd' tried to stop a Japanese whaling vessel. They attempted to block the ship's access to whales and fuel. According to the Japanese, they even tried to ram the whaling ship Yushin Maru with their own ship, the Steve Irwin. The group 'Sea Shepherd' is so radical, that another environmental group that goes by the name of 'Greenpeace' has distanced themselves from them. Two members of the Steve Irwin were taken hostage when they tried to forcibly board the Yushin Maru.

I fear that this group has filled the spiritual vacuum in their lives by becoming worshipers of whales. They have even taken to making themselves martyrs for the cause of their religion.

There are all types of things that people try to substitute for God. Religions of all types surround us. Yet most of the world's religions attempt to find spiritual fulfillment within one's self.

Genesis 1:27 (KJV) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

They have tried to make God in their own image rather than trying to make themselves in God's image.

With All Your Might

The last part of worship is perhaps the most interesting. The Hebrew phrase, "bechol me'odecha," has several interpretations.

With Your Physical Body

The first and most obvious is of your physical body; your physical strength. This might involve any number of physical endeavors from feeding the poor, to visiting the sick, to cleaning the church toilets.

Luke 10:38-42 (KJV)

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. **39** And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. **40** But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. **41** And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: **42** But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

There has always been a conflict between the Mary's and the Martha's in a church. The Mary's will point out that they just like to sit and listen to Jesus, but not contribute anything. "After all," they reason, "Jesus called that the 'good part.'"

Martha's on the other hand, are quick to point out that Jesus didn't tell Mary to stop either. It is likely that when it came time to eat, everyone was glad that Martha had labored in the kitchen.

When You Don't Feel Like It

Another interpretation of the Hebrew is that you should worship God physically even when you don't feel like it emotionally or spiritually. There are many times that I come to church and the last thing I want to do is to be challenged. I am tired. I have worked all day. I just want to sleep. And yet if I will give God the worship he deserves, my emotions will soon follow. My physical body will lead my mind and my spirit into the presence of the Lord.

Luke 5:5 (KJV) And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Simon was tired. The last thing he wanted to do was to get his nets all dirty again and then clean them – again. Yet he obeyed God and was rewarded with the exact thing his mind wanted.

With Your Money

Money is power. This is true in this verse as well. If someone wants to know what you love, all they have to do is look at your check book register. There is an old phrase, “follow the money.”

I heard a story from a security expert on the radio. He was taking calls from people who were worried about the government finding out too much about them. People today are worried about things like the Patriot Act. Yet this security expert, years before 9/11, said something that gave me chills; “The government would love to know as much about you as Visa does.” Visa and MasterCard know what each of us loves.

We have a business doing income taxes. There are two kinds of people who come into our office: those that give tens of dollars to charity every year, and those who give thousands of dollars to charity every year. Rarely is there anyone in the middle. People who make \$200K per year may give just \$100 in charitable contributions. Then there are people who make \$40K per year and give \$5K of it to charity.

Do you love the Lord as much as you love your car? Is your car payment bigger than your tithe check?

With All Your Heart

Deuteronomy 6:8 (KJV) And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

Some Jewish believers have taken this scripture literally. They place little boxes on their forehead and arms containing these scriptures. The boxes are known as 'tefillin' in Hebrew, or 'phylacteries' in Greek. Males over the age of 13 wear them. Some groups wear them all the time, while others wear them only during holidays.

If you love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might, then you should keep that love at the forefront of yourself. Keep it as a sign to yourself and to everyone around you. Keep your intellect filled with the knowledge of God. Keep your spirit filled with the Holy Ghost. Keep your body busy with the work of God.

Revelation 13:15-17 (KJV)

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. **16** And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: **17** And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

As I have said numerous times this message, "nature abhors a vacuum." If you fail to put the word of God between your eyes and on your hand, then the "beast" will fill that space.