

Reflections

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Freedom from Imperfections and from What Is Dangerous

We should not only try to secure eternal salvation, but also grow in authentic love for God, not offending Him in the least.

We should avoid imperfections, which properly said, are not sin, and also avoid what is dangerous, that is, all which can lead to sin.

1. Imperfections. They are, especially, those acts which objectively would be sins, but subjectively, are not. They are not because they lack: the clear understanding of sin or the free consent (free will) to sin. Two types of imperfections appear: through carelessness or through a weakened will. We will look at both types because the way to overcome them is different.

1.1 Imperfections because of carelessness. These appear when at the moment of committing them, I am not aware of it, for example, when I use holy names in vain, or when I lie by exaggerating things. Shortly afterward I become aware of what I did. What can I do to overcome this type of imperfections?

When I discover one of these faults within myself, I should begin a campaign of awareness, analyzing in which moments or in which opportunities I fall, and cultivate the attitude or the contrary positive value. What complicates the matter is that often behind this carelessness, there are feelings or emotions neither directed nor purified.

1.2 Imperfections because of a weak will. The will does not achieve avoiding or dominating the imperfections, for example, impatience, anger, depression. In general, they strongly influence the instincts, often inclusively from the area of the subconscious. It is not enough to fight with the will against these imperfections.

All instinctive and subconscious life has to be ordered and integrated in order to be able to overcome this type of imperfections.

Important for this struggle are motivations, both ethical (self-control) and religious (spiritual progress, apostolic fruitfulness, heroism).

In addition to the ascetic struggle, there still exists a complementary way to overcome imperfections: the way of love. It is based on the resembling and transforming power of love.

Let us recall the phrase of St. Augustine: “Love God and do what you want!” That is, love will protect us from sin and will make us more like God. In this way, freedom from imperfections is a consequence, the fruitfulness of love. As our love grows, the integration of our instinctive and affective powers also grow. These two ways – love and the ascetic struggle – must then unite in order to achieve freedom from imperfections.

2. From what is dangerous. Man can be decided to sin no more. But at the same time, perhaps, he is disposed or inclined to go to the final limit of what is permitted. In this way he wants to overlook, consciously or unconsciously, the attraction for the dangerous stimuli. But when human desire is put in movement for something, it is difficult to stop it right at the point where sin begins.

Whoever plays with fire, sooner or later will get burned. Then the solution is to give up all that is dangerous without exception. In that disposition to avoid all that is dangerous consists a new advancement in the struggle against sin. The will to renounce has broadened. Man has to deprive himself of more things. Sacrifice becomes more difficult, but the fruitfulness of this struggle is also greater and more lasting.

Questions for reflection

1. Am I aware of my imperfections?
2. Do I usually play with fire?
3. What resolution could I make in this area

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