

## Let Nature Take Its Course

**Commentary for November 15, 2018 —Dr. Ernest Martin, June 1991 Communicator**

Environmentalists are those who want to protect nature. Some insist nature is the creation of God that all humans can enjoy and that the things in nature show forth the finest principles of God's requirements for man's conduct and social activities. After all, as some state: "If God made the natural things the way they are, and He said in Genesis that all his creation was 'very good,' then we humans can confidently follow the laws that govern nature in our conduct and social activities." If this is the case, then none of us needs an inspired revelation called "the Holy Scriptures" that often tells us to do the very opposite of what we find the animals, plants and the inanimate objects doing. The truth is, mankind needs the biblical revelation that tells us NOT in all cases to act like the animals, plants, and other natural elements.

Some insist that nature alone is a sufficient teacher to guide our personal conduct and our social responsibilities to humanity and the rest of creation. They do not feel we need a divine revelation from God to tell us how to conduct ourselves. Those who love the Holy Scriptures, however, believe that the instruction book for human conduct is the Old and the New Testaments. For Christians who understand the fullness of the Gospel of Christ, the final teachings of what the apostle Paul called "the Mystery" are the cardinal principles to motivate conduct and beliefs.

Animals, plants and the elements, however, are governed by a different set of principles. The apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 1 that mankind should look at the physical creation to realize there is a God who is all-powerful and wise. He did not mean that mankind should act like the animals and plants in the ways God has programmed them to do, or He allows them to do. In fact, Paul condemned many of the early Romans (applicable to all races on earth) for abandoning proper principles of conduct, that God commanded and they departed to a gross wrong of living like animals.<sup>1</sup>

The truth is, God made man not to live like animals — the beasts of the earth. There is something besides nature that we should follow. The Scriptures show man was made not to live in a "bestly" fashion. Unfortunately, many humans still want to live by physical standards that govern animals and plants. They grace it with a fine sounding title: "Living by the laws of nature." I once heard a person say: "Since I play tennis with different people of the opposite

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<sup>1</sup> Nature is not always a proper guide for humans to follow. Pity the husband that, like the Black Widow spider, as soon as the wife is mated and becomes pregnant, the wife kills the husband! Even bees get rid of drones when their job of fertilization is over. Though the Bible commends the ant as a good example of industriousness (they do laborious jobs with great precision), this does not mean that a "communist" form of anthill society is good for humans. Monkeys and dogs do things by nature that many humans would consider the height of barbarism if we did the same (Proverbs 6:6–8). *ELM*

sex, why shouldn't I do as nature intended and go to bed with each of them in an indiscriminate manner?" The reasoning of the person was understandable if one wishes to live by the laws of nature alone and nature has given some people strong urges along these physical lines. But does God wish a human to take this approach of nature as proper?<sup>2</sup>

To make early man realize that those in covenant relationship with Him should act differently from the animal and plant worlds, God gave a sign. That sign was first demanded of Abraham and later became a part of the Mosaic system established among the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The sign was called circumcision. Many people today, however, do not understand what that ceremony entailed. I will explain this ritual from God's viewpoint.

### ***What Did Ritual Circumcision Mean to the Early Jews?***

From the time of Abraham onward (when the circumcision rite was first inaugurated), the Gentile nations normally ridiculed this ceremony as being unnatural to the way God created us. The principal argument Gentiles used, especially later against the Jews, was that such a ritual was contrary to nature.<sup>3</sup> They taunted Jews by saying: "If God wanted us to be circumcised, he would have made us that way from the beginning. Jews mutilate the very creation of God by their barbarous act of cutting off the foreskin of the male organ of reproduction."

The Gentiles had a point. To the natural mind, it was better to leave nature alone and keep the way God created them in the first place. This makes good sense. Yet it was the very point God wanted to press on Abraham and his descendants, to use this ceremony as the sign they (the Jews) were God's covenant people. Notice below **seven important points** why God demanded Jews circumcise male children on their eighth day of life.

The **first spiritual point** is why God commanded circumcision for Abraham and his descendants. All Jewish as well as all Gentile boy babies are born as nature intended with the foreskin intact. God commanded the father to make the Jewish boy different from all other male children. The father was to go against nature and cut off the foreskin of his boy on his eighth day of life. This sign was to show the boy and his parents that he was to be different from the codes and principles of nature. That boy was to be different from what nature intended. This was the very point God was making with Abraham and his descendants.

The fact that a part of their anatomy had been cut off to make them different showed that God did not expect them to act like natural human beings. This made each Jewish boy to be in covenant relationship with God, and God expected each of them to act in conformity to that relationship. In other words, Jewish boys were from then on constantly reminded not to let "Nature Take its Course," because they were no longer to be like those who kept only the laws of nature as their guidelines. Gentiles relied on the religion of nature and most of their

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<sup>2</sup> In no way am I moralizing or preaching fire and brimstone for such actions. I want to show that we humans should know that letting "Nature Take Its Course" is not always the best thing for humans to do. Indeed, God expects of His human creatures (made in the very image of God, male or female) to conduct themselves with a different set of principles that He devised and gave to man. *ELM*

<sup>3</sup> For more than you ever wanted to know about the physical aspects of circumcision, see the comprehensive website "[Male Circumcision Guide for Doctors, Parents, Adults & Teens.](#)" *DWS*

holydays were centered on the seasons of nature.

This meant that not only were the bodies of Jewish boys different from the Gentiles, but their whole attitudes and conduct of life were also expected to be different. They were to be guided by God's spiritual laws and principles, and not by the laws of nature that pagans accepted as proper. This meant that a Jewish boy and Jewish man every time he took hold of that part of the anatomy in the middle part of his body (usually occurring daily for natural functions) was to remind him he was different from other men. He was a unique person in a covenant relationship with God Almighty while others were not. The Jew was to be an unnatural man. He was instead to be a man motivated by spiritual principles.

The Jewish man was not to be guided by natural instincts alone. Some modern psychologists for example believe that some who have homosexual or lesbian tendencies were born that way naturally and that they should be able to let "Nature Take Its Course" (after all, we are told, the people cannot help their tendencies — they were "made" that way). The Bible, however, in both Testaments condemn such practices and the Jewish man was reminded that he was not to be a natural man but that he should set higher standards of conduct. [See Dr. Martin's article, "[Homosexuality and the Bible](#)."] ]

In other words, the physical difference of the Jew through circumcision was to reflect the Jew's spiritual difference in every aspect of his life. Every day when the natural body functions were manifest, the Jewish man in the exercise of those physical acts was reminded that he was different. He was to be a representative of God and to be kind, considerate and loving to others. He was reminded not to be like a natural man who often conducted himself like the beasts of the field. The Jew was to show forth the faithfulness of God and a respect to all mankind. He was to remind the Gentiles of God's faithfulness to them through His covenant with Noah. The Jew was also to be like God who was forgiving and comforting to mankind in their lives. To sum up, the fact of circumcision made the Jew different from all other men. They were not the natural sort of man almost all other people were. They were God's people.

**The second point** of circumcision was that it was done to a part of the body which was normally secret and private. Only the Jewish boy, his parents, and other Jews knew he was circumcised in a physical sense. This meant that a Jewish man had to show others he was truly circumcised not by showing them that part of his anatomy, but by his actions and his spiritual way of life. This meant that the Jew was not to be outwardly religious in a physical or ritualistic way, but that he would not boast of his covenant relationship with God (a relationship that others did not have), but he would render his services to God and man in a private and non-ostentatious manner.

**The third point** of circumcision is that it was on the generative organ of the man — the place where all human life comes from. Of course, all life comes from God Himself, but the part of the human anatomy that illustrates this is the male organ. The symbol was to be reckoned in a holy sense by the Jewish man and it was not to be looked on as being crass and degrading. The circumcision covenant was made on the organ that gave life to mankind since Adam, and it was intended to remind Jewish men not simply of sex or sexual pleasure,

but of God who gives life to all. Gentile people often viewed such symbolism as absurd and sometimes made crass remarks about this spiritual characteristic that accompanied Jewish men. It is better not to make levity of such things, because I do not think our heavenly Father and Christ Jesus would be pleased.

**The fourth point** of circumcision was to remind Jewish men that they should always use that part of their anatomy in agreement with the covenant relationship they have with God. The strongest emotions and desires of mankind often center on this part of the anatomy. Even manliness is associated with its function. Nothing was to be restricted in its use as long as the act done conformed to the laws of God's covenant.

**The fifth point** of circumcision was that a part of their flesh had died. This was a symbol as the apostle Paul later stated in his epistles that God's people have "died" to the world — especially that carnal part that is detrimental to us and to the rest of society (Romans 6:2, 11–13; Colossians 2:20).

**The sixth point** of circumcision is the fact that cutting off the foreskin reveals an "inner organ or part" of man. The Jewish man was reminded of the "inner man" (not the outward, fleshy man) that was to govern his actions. The apostle Paul referred to this "inner man" concept in several epistles (Romans 2:29, 7:22; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 3:16).

**The seventh point** of circumcision is that this is the only part of the anatomy that makes a male person different from God in His image and likeness. The Father is not circumcised, neither is Christ at present. When Christ rose from the dead, all his body parts were restored to him (as they will be to us). Circumcision reminded the Jewish man not to be haughty in his spiritual relationship with God or flaunt his position before the rest of mankind. Though circumcision made them different from the rest of mankind, it also makes them different from God and Christ. Until their resurrection from the dead (when all body parts will be restored), the Jewish man is still different from God and Christ. God reminds them daily of this fact through the circumcision that they have.

So there you have it. The fact of circumcision has great spiritual value for the Jewish man and his family. Its significance does not end there. The apostle Paul told the Roman Gentiles that all Christians (male or female) should be Jews inwardly.

**"For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."**

• *Romans 2:28–29*

In teaching the latest doctrines of "the Mystery," even Paul states that we **"are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands"** (Colossians 2:11). The teaching of the Scriptures is that we all should be trying to live above our natural inclinations; that we should be different from all other humans; and that our emphasis should mostly be on spiritual matters.

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