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Acquire the habit of saying
NO by saying a thousand times
NO.

Critical Analysis of Motivation As Aid To Chastity.

The primary incentive for making an act of the will is our motive, which may be physical, intellectual or moral. An age dominated by materialism will be motivated principally by material things--better food, more comfortable homes, faster autos, increased incomes, cult of the body, lavish entertainments, more exciting pleasures. Motives here appeal to the senses and are called physical.

Intellectual accomplishments influence the will--art, culture, science, knowledge. Moral perfection is produced through moral motives, such as attractiveness of virtue, invitation of Christ to follow Him, heaven or hell.

Father Bittle (THE WHOLE MAN) teaches that by motivation is meant the arousal of the will from a state of inaction into a state of action. Some one motive must produce this activity. It is not the objective values as such which produce will-activity. To be effective objective values must personally appeal to the will, must, in fact, have personal appeal. To evaluate, to personalize this thing, this experience, this activity, this desirable good, is the work of the mind.

(We're getting in kind of deep here, but hold on.) Take sex pleasure. It is a desirable experience (a good) for the married and for them morally good. But for the unmarried sex pleasure, although desirable as a physical good, is not desirable as a moral good. God permits it for the married; forbides it to the unmarried. But sex pleasure tempts the unmarried. The root of the temptation lies in the conflict of motives. Conquest of the temptation depends on the moral good predominating and influencing the will to reject this physical good because God forbides it. (God's grace presupposed.)

Father Bittle points out that the second condition for will-action is that the motive inducing the will to act have sufficient strength. When man is tempted by sex pleasure he often dillydallies. That's precarious because sex images affect the sex organs, which in turn excite the imagination still more, thereby making sex pleasure even more desirable. When the will hesitates, it is then necessary to strengthen the moral motive to aid the will to overcome its hesitancy. Natural motives help, such as fear of pregnancy, disease, social disgrace. Or, the weak motive is strengthened by adding other motives, such as fear of sudden death, eternal damnation, love of chastity, self-respect, need for God, love of Mary, eternal reward, and others.

The more powerful the motive the easier it is for the will to make its decision. All motives that personally appeal to the will are produced in the mind. Ordinarily the will selects the more powerful motive, but not always, because it is free. Our task is to strengthen moral and supernatural motives with the help of actual grace.

The danger of worldliness, secularism, naturalism, is that the world propagates alluring motives. Live in the world, as you must needs do, unless you practice self-denial, unless you pray and receive the sacraments, you are bound to become infected with the virus of pleasure-madness. Your aim in life, your work, will be strongly influenced by sensuousness. Just as you cannot read an author without absorbing some of his philosophy, so you cannot live in the world without absorbing some of its norms.

Catholics are not immune. The philosophy of life of Catholics is not always the Catholic philosophy of life. Notre Dame tries its level best to prepare you for Catholic living--life motivated and dominated by the teachings of Christ. Faith teaches you to supernaturalize your whole life, whatever walk of life you choose. You are to develop a "sense of God, a sense of direction, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of mission in this life." Christ is your model. But He will not motivate you to apostolic activity unless you go to Him, unless you live in the state of grace, unless you strengthen His motives in prayer, unless you receive your strength from His Body and Blood. Without Him you can do nothing--nor will you safeguard your chastity.