

THE SPIRIT NATURE AND THE SIN NATURE



Pastor Calvin D. Williams

How can I know if the desires of my heart are from God or my Flesh?

1/24/2024

(James 1:13–15) When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

1. How many of you have some evil desires?

I asked the question on Sunday how can the Devil get us out of God’s hand?

- Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.

2. How can we stop the Tempter from dragging us away?

- Unlike human beings, God cannot be tempted to sin because everything about God is the exact opposite of sin. Human beings are born with a sin nature inherited from Adam, and that nature is part of what entices us and drags us away from what is good. God has no sin nature; His nature is holy and righteous. He cannot sin or even be tempted to sin. The enticements that cause us to sin have no effect on God.

- There is absolutely nothing in God's nature that would make Him tend to do wrong, and there can be nothing offered to Him that would cause Him to do wrong. Internally and externally, God is immune to temptation. That means that God would not tempt any person to sin and make Himself the author of sin. The Holy One will not justify sin or excuse it, and He will not prompt it.
- Because of this truth about God that He cannot be tempted or be persuaded, bribed, or in any way be swayed from His perfect purpose and plan. No matter what, He remains Perfect.

3. What is a Sin Nature?

- The sin nature is that aspect in man that makes him rebellious against God. When we speak of the sin nature, we refer to the fact that we have a natural inclination to sin; given the choice to do God's will or our own, we will naturally choose to do our own thing.

4. How do children know to Lie or be selfish?

- Proof of the sin nature abounds. No one has to teach a child to lie or be selfish; rather, we go to great lengths to teach children to tell the truth and put others first. Sinful behavior comes naturally. The news is filled with tragic examples of mankind acting badly. Wherever people are, there is trouble.

5. What's the reason for the trouble in my life?

- The Bible explains the reason for the trouble. Humanity is sinful, not just in theory or in practice but by nature. Sin is part of the very fiber of our being. The Bible speaks of "*sinful flesh*" in **(Romans 8:3)**.

(Romans 8:3) For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so, he condemned sin in the flesh.

6. Have you put to death the things in your earthly nature?

- It's our "*earthly nature*" that produces the list of sins.

(Colossians 3:5) Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

7. Who are the ones with a sinful nature?

The sin nature is universal in humanity. All of us have a sinful nature, and it affects every part of us.

(Isaiah 53:6) We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- All of us have gone astray.
- Paul admits that “the trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin” **(Romans 7:14)**. Paul was in his “sinful nature a slave to the law of sin” **(Romans 7:25)**. Solomon concurs: “Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, / no one who does what is right and never sins” **(Ecclesiastes 7:20)**. The apostle John puts it most bluntly: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” **(1 John 1:8)**.
- Even children have a sin nature. David admitted the fact that he was born with sin already at work within him: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” **(Psalm 51:5)**. David states, “Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies” **(Psalm 58:3)**.

8. Where did the sin nature come from?

- Scripture says that God created humans good and without a sinful nature: “God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” **(Genesis 1:27)**.
- **Genesis 3** records the disobedience of Adam and Eve. By that one action, sin entered into their nature. They were immediately stricken with a sense of shame and unfitness, and they hid from God’s presence **(Genesis 3:8)**.

9. Can our sin nature impact our children?

- When they had children, Adam’s image and likeness was passed along to his offspring **(Genesis 5:3)**. The sin nature manifested itself early in the genealogy: the very first child born to Adam and Eve, Cain, became the very first murderer **(Genesis 4:8)**.
- From generation to generation, the sin nature was passed down to all of humanity: “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” **(Romans 5:12)**. This verse also presents the unsettling truth

that the sin nature leads to death ([Romans 6:23](#) and [Ephesians 2:1](#)).

10. How does our sin nature impact our relationship with God?

- Other consequences of the sin nature are hostility toward God and ignorance of His truth. Paul says, “The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.
- Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God” ([Romans 8:7–8](#)). Also, “the person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit” ([1 Corinthians 2:14](#)).

11. Who’s the one person that didn’t have a sin nature?

- There is only one Person in the history of the world who did not have a sin nature: *Jesus Christ*.

12. How did this happen?

- His virgin birth allowed Him to enter our world while bypassing the curse passed down from Adam. Jesus then lived a sinless life of absolute perfection. He was “the Holy and Righteous One” ([Acts 3:14](#)) who “had no sin” ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).
- This allowed Jesus to be sacrificed on the cross as our perfect substitute, “a lamb without blemish or defect” ([1 Peter 1:19](#)).

13. How important is being born again?

- It is through Christ that we are born again. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” ([John 3:6](#)). When we are born of Adam, we inherit his sin nature; but when we are born again in Christ, we inherit a new nature: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

14. What happens to our Sin nature once we get Saved?

- We don’t lose our sin nature once we receive Christ. The Bible says that sin remains in us and that a struggle with that old nature will continue as long as we are in this world. Paul

talked about his own personal struggle in [\(Romans 7:15–25\)](#). But we have help in the battle—divine help.

- The Spirit of God takes up residence in each believer and supplies the power we need to overcome the pull of the sin nature within us. “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God” [\(1 John 3:9\)](#). God’s ultimate plan for us is total sanctification when we see Christ [\(1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 John 3:2\)](#).

15. How did we get victory over our sin nature?

- Through His finished work on the cross, Jesus satisfied God’s wrath against sin and provided believers with victory over their sin nature: “‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness” [\(1 Peter 2:24\)](#). In His resurrection, Jesus offers life to everyone bound by corrupt flesh. Those who are born again now have this command: “Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” [\(Romans 6:11\)](#).

The FLESH

16. Do you gratify the desires of your flesh?

[\(Galatians 5:19–21\)](#) The acts of the flesh are obvious: *sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery*; ²⁰*idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions* ²¹ and *envy; drunkenness, orgies*, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

17. What the meaning of Desires of the flesh?

- It can be defined as an intense desire or craving that seeks instant gratification rather than delaying or denying the desire in obedience to God.
- Flesh here means body, as opposed to the mind or soul.
- The lust of the flesh is part of worldliness, driven by the desire for worldly, selfish pleasures, which draw our hearts away from God and ultimately lead to death.

18. How do we overcome the desires of the flesh?

Walking in the Spirit and not gratifying the flesh

The Manifestation and Struggle with the Flesh

19. How does the flesh manifest itself in human beings? The Bible answers the question this way:

(Galatians 5:19–21) The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Examples of the flesh working in the world are evident. Consider a few sad facts taken from a recent survey on the effect of pornography in America. According to the study, every second in the U.S.:

- **\$3,075.64** is being spent on pornography
- **28,258** Internet users are viewing pornography
- **372** Internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines

And every **39 minutes**, a new pornographic video is being created in the United States. These statistics underscore the statement made by the prophet Jeremiah who mourned that “the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”

(Jeremiah 17:9) The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

The Consequences of the Flesh

The Bible says that living in the flesh produces a number of unfortunate consequences. First, Scripture states that those who live according to the flesh, and who never desire change or repent from their sinful behavior, will experience separation from God both in this life and the next:

(Romans 6:21) What benefit did you reap at that time from the **(sinful practices)** things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!

(Romans 8:13) For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

- Paul contrasts two ways of living: The flesh leads people to oppose God, so they are unable to obey Him; the Spirit dwells within believers and empowers them to do God's will.

(Galatians 6:7) Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

This he will also reap: Paul uses an agricultural metaphor to encourage the Galatians to live by the Spirit. A person cannot engage in works of the flesh and expect to experience God's life.

(Galatians 6:8) Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

(Romans 6:16) Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

- a person also becomes a slave to his/her fleshly nature.

Overcoming the Flesh

The Bible provides a three-step process for overcoming the flesh and restoring oneself to a right relationship with God.

1. The first step is a ***walk of honesty*** where a person acknowledges his sinful behavior before God. This involves agreeing with what the Bible says about everyone born of human parents: people are sinners and enter the world in a broken relationship with the God who made them:

(1 John 1:8) If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

- Every person should admit to themselves and God that they are sinful.

(1 John 1:10) If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

- When someone claims to have not sinned, they are rejecting God's statements about sinfulness and denying the need for Jesus' sacrifice.

2. The next step is a ***walk in the Spirit***, which involves calling out to God for salvation and receiving His Holy Spirit who empowers a person to live rightly before God and not obey the flesh's desires. This transformation and new walk of life is described in several places in Scripture:

(Galatians 2:20) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- Refers to new life in Christ as well as the presence of God's Spirit, which empowers obedience to the gospel.

(Galatians 5:16) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

- Refers to being under the Spirit's direction and empowerment.

(Psalm 119:11) I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

3. The last step is a **walk of death**, where the flesh is starved of its desires so that it eventually dies. Even though a person is born again through the Spirit of God, he must understand he still possesses the old nature with its desires that war with the new nature and the desires that come from the Spirit. From a practical standpoint, the Christian purposely avoids feeding the old, fleshly nature and instead practices new behaviors that are driven by the Spirit:

(1 Timothy 6:11) But you, man of God, flee from all this **(sinful actions)**, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

(Galatians 5:24) Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

- Through faith, believers participate in Christ's death and resurrection, leaving behind their orientation toward selfish desires.

(Romans 6:6) For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

Conclusion

I described sin and the flesh this way: "Whatever weakens your reasoning, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes away your desire for spiritual things, also if anything increases the authority and the power of the flesh over the Spirit, that to you becomes sin however good it is in itself." One of the goals of the Christian life is the victory of the Spirit over the flesh and a change of life, which manifests in righteous living before God.

Although the struggle will be very real **(which the Bible makes clear)**, Christians have assurance from God that He will bring them eventual success over the flesh. "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" **(Philippians 1:6)**.