

## CHAPTER XIX

# Understanding the Two Natures

Much confusion arises from improper teaching of the two natures. As a soulwinner, you need to understand this subject, not only so you can answer the questions of others, but also so you can effectively live your own life for the Lord. Without understanding what the Scriptures teach on this subject you will often be confused, doubtful, anxious, and unable to maintain your faithful, effective witnessing.

**Lack of understanding of the two natures brings about questions like the following:**

- (1) Does a truly saved person sin any more?
- (2) Can I lose my salvation if I keep sinning?
- (3) What happens to a Christian when he sins?
- (4) How can a Christian have the power really to serve the Lord?

Study this chapter carefully, looking up the verses in your Bible, and you will discover the answers to these questions.

The new birth is provided by God when a man by sincere faith accepts the payment that the Lord Jesus Christ made for him on the cross. It is not a process or a result of good works. It is not water baptism. It is a birth. John 3: 5 states a man must be born of water. This is specifically speaking of the Holy Spirit. This is living water, not H<sub>2</sub>O, and is referred to throughout the book of John as the Holy Spirit (John 4:11, 14; John 7:38, 39).

The first birth is of the flesh. The second birth is of the Spirit (John 3:6). These two are completely separate, and nothing of the birth of the flesh has anything to do with the second birth which is of the Spirit. The flesh birth is from fleshly parents. The spirit birth is from God Himself, who is a Spirit (John 1:12, 13). Never confuse the two by thinking the flesh can do something to bring on the spirit birth. Like reproduces like, and flesh can reproduce only flesh. Only spirit can give birth to spirit.

The new birth does not come from prayers; neither is speaking in an unknown jargon proof of it. The Holy Spirit is guaranteed by God to all who believe (John 7:38, 39; II Cor. 1:22). The Holy Spirit is always spoken of as a gift of God, not coming by man's efforts (Rom. 5:5).

The Apostles never tried to "pray through" or work for the Holy Spirit. They were commanded to wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, and God would send the Holy Spirit to them (Acts 1:4, 5). They waited in Jerusalem, and after the 50 days that were prophesied were fulfilled, the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2:1-17). The promise was given to all who would receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour—not to a few. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" ( Acts 2: 17 ). This was referring to all who would receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

When a person is saved, a man's carnal desires of the flesh do not change or improve one iota. They remain the same. Flesh is flesh, and it remains that way (John 3:6). Much unscriptural teaching and confusion come from thinking the old nature should get better after salvation, and when people still see sin in their lives, it brings great doubt as to whether or not their conversion was real, or whether or not they have lost their salvation, etc.

I John 3: 9 says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Beyond any question, this verse teaches that the new birth of the Spirit never commits any sin. There are other verses that teach the old nature never gets any better but remains evil, such as Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

The Bible teaches that the old nature doesn't change, but it can be controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells all believers. Whether the new nature or the old nature will control the individual depends entirely upon the person's decision of which nature he will nurture and allow to rule. Galatians 5:16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." The Greek meaning of the word "walk" is to be "responsive, controlled, and guided." In other words, be responsive to the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit, and guided by the Spirit, and you will not be controlled by the flesh. The desires of the flesh will still be present, but you will not be controlled by them.

Please notice that this verse is not saying, "Do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and you will be spiritual." Many people equate a pious, negative life with being a really spiritual person. Many people in this category become hyper-critical and yet never lead a soul to the Lord.

There is a continual battle between the old and new natures. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

If you want the new nature to be victorious in your life, you must feed and exercise that nature. Remember, your old nature has been fed and exercised all your life until you were saved. Your old nature will rule your life unless you feed and exercise your new nature regularly.

For example, in a boxing match the fighter who is the better trained and the stronger wins. They never match two men in a ring, one being very large and strong and the other being small and weak . . . because it would not even be a contest.

The fruit (result) of being controlled by the Spirit is described in Gal. 5:22, 23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."

The fruit (result) of being controlled by the flesh is described in Galatians 5:19-21, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The last phrase in verse 21 points out that no evil works can enter heaven, but that they are the results of a man being under the control of the old nature. Only righteousness enters into heaven, which comes only from the new birth. The new birth never sins but is incorruptible (I Peter 1:23).

It is difficult for people to understand clearly that heaven is a perfect place and only a perfectly righteous person can enter therein; but this righteousness is not a result of man's works, but is a result of a perfect righteousness that is given to man through the new birth. I Cor. 6:9, 10 tells us that no sin shall enter heaven . . . but verse 11 tells us how we are washed and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, after a person is saved, he has the power to serve the Lord and to be a witness (Acts 1:8).

There is no SECRET to having a "victorious Christian life." It is very clearly taught in the Bible. II Tim. 2:4 tells us that "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life: that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." To effectively live your life for the Lord, your life must be disciplined—to include the things of the Lord—and to leave out the things of the world. Colossians 3:2 tells us to "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

When we really keep in mind that people are lost and going to hell, and that we have been entrusted with the gospel message that will lead them to the Lord and heaven, it is not so difficult to determine that our lives are going to COUNT for the Lord. It is an every day, every moment decision. Every time you say "YES" and obey the Lord, instead of saying "NO" and disobeying Him, you are "spiritual"—controlled by the Holy Spirit. And this is how to be a happy, productive child of God.

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