

DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON THREE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST? WE OBTAIN A DOUBLE NATURE

INTRODUCTION: We all know how the world accuses Christians of being hypocrites. For many Christians this is true, but it should not be that way. We are not going to try to excuse this reality. Rather, we can try to understand the conflict within us between being like the world and being like Jesus. Understanding this, we can set the example God requires of us.

In today's lesson, we desire to take a look at ourselves, and analyze our physical/spiritual structure. This is necessary so that we can make the changes necessary to be more like what God wants us to be. We will come to the knowledge that even though we are "new creatures" in Christ, we have not lost our flesh nature. And because of this we will be involved in a battle between these two natures for the rest of our lives.

I. WE ARE BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

You are a soul that has a body and a spirit. Your soul is made up of mind, will, and emotions. *Your soul is what you truly are.* When you were a child, you could not distinguish the difference between good and evil. But eventually, you reached a point in your life when intellectually (mind), you understood the difference between good and evil, and voluntarily (will), chose to do wrong. That was something that caused conflict within you (emotion), because you knew that you were not supposed to do wrong, but you chose to do wrong anyway. You became guilty and responsible for your sin. The Bible clearly states in EZEKIEL 18:4, "...the soul who sins shall die." At that moment you were separated from God and condemned to suffer for eternity in hell.

Your soul has a body and a spirit. Even though your soul was condemned to spend eternity away from God the moment you willingly went against Him, in His love, God made a way for you to escape your just sentence. He sent His son Jesus to pay the consequences for your sin. When you acknowledged (mind), that you had sinned against God, you felt sorry for what you had done (emotions), and chose (will) to turn your back on sin, asked God for forgiveness, and received Jesus as your Lord and Savior. God then sent His Holy Spirit into your human spirit, and gave you eternal life. God's Spirit took permanent residence in your spirit and will never leave, because now your soul belongs to Him. This is why you can say "my *soul* is saved", or that you are "born again", because now (by God's Spirit), you have been spiritually born into the family of God. You are now His child. And all of this (as we have already

studied), was brought about by your having accepted Jesus as Savior.

Your soul and spirit is the part of you that was saved. You must understand that your spiritual birth was something of God. It was holy and permanent. The part of you that was born of God cannot sin. Why? Because it was born of "God's seed", and it can NOT sin. This truth is expressed in 1 JOHN 3:9.

II. WE ARE NEW CREATURES, BUT WE STILL HAVE OUR FLESH NATURE

Even though you cannot sin spiritually (after receiving Christ as Savior), you can sin physically, because you did not lose your "flesh nature" when you received Christ. The Apostle Paul explained this truth in ROMANS 7:14-25 where he taught that even though in His "inner man" (spirit), he wanted to serve God, he found another "law" in the members of his body, that waged war against the "law" of his mind (soul). He then stated, "I myself in my mind (soul), am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature (body), a slave to the law of sin."

It is important that you understand the significant difference between your physical being and your spiritual nature. Failure to understand the difference between the two can cause us to be spiritually defeated by our physical or flesh nature. The two do not mix with each other as Jesus stated in JOHN 3:6. In the case of the believer, one nature will *have* to submit to the other.

III. THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SPIRIT

GALATIANS 5:17 teaches that the desires of your flesh (body), and the desires of the Spirit (who lives in our human spirit), will constantly be confronting each other in such a manner that you (the soul) will have a hard time doing what is right.

The only way you will ever gain victory in the conflict, is by making one of your natures give in to the other. The vast majority of Christians today are giving into the flesh nature simply because it is easier to do so. But there is a price to pay for going against the will of God, and those who constantly do this will be miserable. What you should do is make your flesh nature become subject to the will of the Spirit inside you as taught in GALATIANS 5:16. And even though you will go through some rough times of conflict, you will still find the peace and satisfaction of having done God's will, and you will be content because God has made you for this purpose. To accomplish this feat, certain spiritual weapons will have to be put into use. We will study about that in future lessons.

When will this battle be over? It will end the day you die, or the day Jesus comes back for us. As long as you have a physical body, Satan will constantly wage war against your soul (mind, will, and emotions) to prevent you from "conquering more territory" or expanding the gospel for our Lord, Jesus Christ. At

the same time, the Holy Spirit will strengthen your inner man and lead you from victory to victory.

CONCLUSION: There are times in our lives when we do things we should not do, or feel ways we should not feel. It is during these times Satan, who is the "father of lies", comes to us and implants thoughts that we are no longer children of God because of our wrong actions or thoughts. And it is during these times that we need to remember that we have a *double nature*. We must tell Satan to take his lies elsewhere, ask our Father to forgive us when we have done wrong, and then determine to make our fleshly desires give in to the Spirit's leadership. When we learn to do this, we will become strengthened spiritually and begin to live the life of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.



SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

BIBLE STUDY: (One verse per day)

1. Romans 8:5-9...What does the sinful nature think about? Why cannot a person who thinks according to the flesh nature, please God? By what nature should a child of God live?

2. Romans 13:11-14...What does the Bible mean when it says we should "awake out of sleep"? In verse 12, to what does Paul compare the flesh and the spirit? How do we gratify the desires of our sinful nature?

3. Colossians 3:1-17...In whom is our life hidden? How does a person take off the "old man" and put on the "new man"? According to verse 12, what should God's people wear?

4. Ephesians 4:22-32...Why should a Christian want to get rid of his "old man"? What should our attitude be concerning the "old man" (our sinful nature?) What kinds of things should God's children no longer do?

5. REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER: Write down the person or things for which you prayed for today.

FELLOWSHIP: Write down the name of the believer you had fellowship with and what you did.

WITNESSING: Write down the name of the non-believer you witnessed to and how you did it.

Baptist Church Centro of Life
DISCIPLESHIP, by Pastor Ricardo Róbinson.