

Do Christians Have Two Natures?

Many Bible teachers will talk about our having an "old sin nature" that we still have to deal with as Christians. So, the question is asked, "Do we have two natures?" The Bible says we have died with Christ, and the part of us that died is the old sin nature. But if it died, why do we still sin even after we are saved and born again? To fully understand this, we need to go back to the beginning. God told Adam, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, **you shall surely DIE**" (Genesis 2:16-17). When Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God's command, **they did not DIE physically**, for we see they lived on for hundreds of years, **but they died spiritually**. Because of this **SPIRITUAL DEATH**, Adam passed on to his children and all his descendants (that's you and me!) a "**SIN NATURE**" that could no longer communicate with God on a spiritual level, because we are spiritually dead. That is why we need the new birth in Christ Jesus. We are first born physically, but **WE are spiritually DEAD**, and **our spirits must be MADE ALIVE**, through a spiritual birth (John 3:3-7), so that we can worship, communicate with, and experience God, and live with Him for eternity! God gives you eternal life, and **your spirit is REBORN and MADE ALIVE** when you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and then you are a new creation, and you can worship God "in spirit."

- **II Corinthians 5:17** "Therefore, if anyone is IN CHRIST, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away (died); behold, all things have become new."
- **John 4:23-24** "But the hour is coming, and now is, when **the true worshipers will WORSHIP the Father in SPIRIT and truth**; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. **God is Spirit**, and those who worship Him must **worship in SPIRIT and truth**."
- **Colossians 2:13-14** "And you, **being DEAD** in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has **MADE ALIVE** together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (sins)."
- **Ephesians 2:1& 4-5** "And **you He made ALIVE, who were DEAD** in your trespasses and SINS." "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when **we were DEAD** in trespasses (sins), **made us ALIVE** together with Christ....."

When you accept Jesus as your Savior, your spirit is REBORN and made ALIVE, and you become a "new creation" in Christ Jesus. But what has happened to that "old sin nature" that we inherited from Adam? Do we have two natures now? Let's look at what God's word has to say, because **until we REALLY KNOW who we are in Christ Jesus**, and **KNOW that our "old sin nature" was CRUCIFIED with Him, and is DEAD**, we will only have an up-and-down, roller coaster Christian life. We will have some periods of success and victory, but we'll have just as many periods of failure and slipping back into carnality and sin. That's not God's plan for us. He promises us in His word, in Romans 8:37, "Yet in all these things we are MORE than conquerors through Him who loved us." So how do we experience that victory, where do we begin? We begin with understanding the death of our old sin nature.

- **Romans 6:1-5** ".....How shall we who **DIED to sin** live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into His death**? Therefore we were **BURIED with Him** through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **NEWNESS of LIFE**. For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His DEATH**, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His **RESURRECTION**."

The word "baptized" in the Greek means immersed, placed INTO, IDENTIFIED with. When we are "BAPTIZED into Christ Jesus" and "BAPTIZED into His DEATH" it means **we are PLACED**

INTO CHRIST by the Holy Spirit the moment we believe (Eph. 1:13, I Cor. 12:13, John 14:16-20) and **IDENTIFIED with Him in His death. We are IN CHRIST, and CHRIST ALREADY DIED to sin FOR US, so WE HAVE DIED to sin.**

- **Romans 6:6-7** "Knowing this, that **our OLD MAN was CRUCIFIED with Him**, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be SLAVES of sin. For **he who has DIED** has been freed from sin."
- **Galatians 2:20** "**I have been CRUCIFIED** with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **CHRIST lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh (in my human body) I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
- **Colossians 3:1-3** "If then **you were RAISED with Christ**, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set (focus) your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **For you DIED**, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

We do not have two "natures" - one good, and the other bad. **Your NATURE means your essential being, the "real YOU," and there is only one you, the new nature, created in the image of Jesus Christ** (Colossians 3:10). In Romans chapter 7, Paul struggles with this dilemma of having "sin that dwells in me", but the real Paul, in his spirit, says "it is no longer I who do it". He says, "evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good" (Romans 7:20-21). In verse 22, he says he "delights to do the will of God in his **inward man**", and that is **the new nature** in Christ. We do not have two natures, but we do have the fallout, or leftovers of the behavior patterns of the old sin nature, and these reside in **our flesh - our physical body and mental/emotional make-up**. The old man was crucified with Christ, but he left behind a full tape library of old thoughts, ways of looking at things, how we handled life situations, in short, the old behavior patterns. In Ephesians 4:22-24, we are told to lay aside or put off the CONDUCT (behavior patterns) of the old man. We need to clean out the tape library, put in new software, or however you want to picture it in your mind. Otherwise, in a moment of weakness, or when we're not aware, we pop in an old tape and let it run. That's where we get into trouble.

- **Romans 7:15-19** "For what I am doing I do not understand. For what I WILL to do, that I do not PRACTICE; but what I HATE, that I DO. If, then, I DO what I WILL not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, **it is no longer I who do it**, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in ME, (that is **in MY FLESH**) **nothing good dwells**; for to WILL is present with me, but HOW to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will (WISH) to do, I do NOT do; but the EVIL I will NOT to do, that [is what] I practice."
- **Ephesians 4:22** "That you PUT OFF, **concerning your former conduct**, the old man, which is **CORRUPT** according to its deceitful desires and lusts."

Romans 6:6 says it is "the old man" that was crucified with Christ. The old man is your human nature, warped by sin. It is the person you were BEFORE you were BORN AGAIN - your old sin-loving SELF, who felt comfortable and at home with sin. Colossians 2:11-12 says God surgically removed the old, dead sin nature from your spirit when He raised you up to new life in Christ. Then Rom. 6:6 says "**that the BODY of sin might be DONE AWAY WITH.**" The literal meaning of "done away with" here is "**RENDERED INOPERATIVE**" (not functioning). God has provided a way for us to be FREE from the POWER of sin, to actually have it "NOT functioning" in our lives, when we come to understand that **the power source for sin** (the old nature) has been cut off. The POWER of the sin nature over us has been broken, but we STILL have to **ENFORCE the CRUCIFIXION of Christ** on **our BODY of flesh**, our mind and our emotions by being OBEDIENT to God and saying "NO" to old sinful desires. We enforce it one DEED at a time.

- **Romans 8:13** "For if you live according to the flesh you will DIE; but if **by the Spirit you put to DEATH the DEEDS of the BODY**, you will live."

- **I Corinthians 9:27** "But **I DISCIPLINE my BODY** and **bring it into submission**, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (lose my testimony)."
- **Galatians 5:24** "And those who are Christ's **have CRUCIFIED the FLESH** (body) with its PASSIONS and DESIRES."
- **Matthew 16:24-25** "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him DENY himself**, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'

"DENY himself" and "lose his life for My sake" and "put to death the DEEDS of the BODY" all mean the same thing: to get rid of, GIVE UP, DENY (say "No" to) the desires of your old sin nature; to DISREGARD the INTERESTS of the old man (**why should you pay attention to his interests? he's dead anyway!**). By doing this you fulfill God's will in your life - you give up the "lower" life in order to live the "higher life" with Christ (Phil. 3:12-14). Praise God! **We have a CHOICE!** We can PUT to DEATH, or **KILL those IMPULSES** and temptations coming from our FLESH (the "deeds of the BODY"), and Romans 8:13 says **we do it "by the SPIRIT** - by the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT in our lives (Eph. 3:20). The **other choice** or alternative is to GIVE IN to the temptations, **ACT OUT on the impulses**, and suffer the consequences. For a true, born again **Christian who CONTINUES to LIVE in sin** and according to the desires of his FLESH, an EARLY physical DEATH may be the consequence. God may CUT SHORT the life here on earth of one of His children who continues in DISOBEDIENCE, but they will still go to HEAVEN (I John 5:16, I Corinthians 3:15, I Cor. 5:1-5).

If our old sin nature is DEAD, where do temptations and desires to sin come from in the life of the Christian? You've heard the expression "Running around like a chicken with its head cut off." Back in the old days, you couldn't just buy nice, clean, cut-up chicken at the market, but you actually had to kill a chicken. A chicken's nervous system is not complex, so even after the head is cut off, and the brain can no longer send messages to the body, the body will still flop around, jerk and make movements until the nervous system finally shuts down. This is a picture of how we are with the flesh. Our physical bodies are still operating, not realizing that the head (the old sin nature) has been cut off. Just as the chicken's nervous system finally gets the message and stops flopping around, our physical bodies will eventually stop giving us trouble as we renew our minds with God's word. Colossians 3:1-10 tell us that it is our "members on earth" that are causing us trouble. It is the body of flesh, our physical body that gives us trouble while we are on earth. This body has not yet been born again, renewed or changed - that will happen at the resurrection (Romans 8:22-23). In the meantime, the body and its members must be kept in submission to the new man in Christ.

- **James 1:13-16** "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted **when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed (tricked)**. Then, when DESIRE has conceived, it gives birth to SIN, and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth DEATH. **Do not be DECEIVED** my beloved brethren."

James 1:14 says "one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires." You might say, "How are they 'my own' desires, then, if my old sin nature is dead, and I am a new person in Christ?" They are **"your own"** in the sense that **YOU EXPOSED your flesh** (your physical body, or mental-emotional makeup) to something, whether it was alcohol, nicotine, drugs, certain sexual behaviors, pornography, **negative destructive thoughts**, over-eating, or other "compulsive" behaviors, until a HABIT was developed, and after enough times of exposure, **your FLESH was TRAINED to DESIRE or want those things**. The OPPOSITE is also true: TRAIN your flesh to do the right things, the things of God, and eventually the sinful desires which kept you in BONDAGE will subside and no longer be able to affect you. Satan, or the old "tapes running in your mind" or your uncontrolled emotions will keep bringing up "old desires" **AS IF you were still subject to them**, telling you that you are NOT free, but still in bondage to old habits, and that you CAN'T help yourself, you **can't stop** committing that particular sin, etc. **You have a CHOICE of WHO you will believe - GOD or SATAN!** In

dealing with the "flesh" there is a three-fold way to resist temptation: **(1) BODY** - Discipline your body, keep it in submission to your will - tell IT what to do (I Cor. 9:27), **(2) MIND** - renew your mind with the word of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (Romans 12:2, II Cor. 10:3-5), and **(3) EMOTIONS** - refuse to live by your feelings - your feelings and emotions are highly unreliable (Jeremiah 17:9, I Cor. 3:1-3). Then, you must do what Romans 6:12-13 says "Therefore **do not LET sin reign** in your mortal body, that you should **OBEY IT** in its lusts. And do not **present your MEMBERS** as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but **present yourselves to God** as being **ALIVE from the dead**, and your MEMBERS as INSTRUMENTS of righteousness to God." "Reign" means **to have authority or CONTROL OVER**. You have a CHOICE of whom to obey, and the flesh or "mortal body" is referred to as an "IT" - it is not the "REAL YOU." The REAL YOU is your SPIRIT within you which was born again and is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Many Christians behave like the old self is still alive, because they have not been taught or they do not BELIEVE what God's word says about the old self being crucified and DEAD. They ALLOW Satan to deceive them and accuse them, because **they have believed their FEELINGS** or past performance record rather than God. In reality, that "old man" has already been crucified and is dead, but they keep hauling it around, as if it were still alive and a part of them.

- **Romans 6:11** "Likewise you also, **RECKON yourselves** to be **DEAD indeed unto sin**, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

To "reckon" means to accept something as certain; place reliance on, **even when you don't SEE the evidence. YOU MUST BELIEVE** what the word of God tells you about **WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST**. Romans 6:7 tells us that "he who has died has been freed from sin," but Satan will keep telling you that you are NOT free, but still in bondage to old habits. **You have a CHOICE of WHO YOU WILL BELIEVE - GOD or SATAN!!** Romans 6:18 and 22 both state that we **HAVE BEEN** set free. That's **past tense** - it's already a DONE DEAL!!

IN SUMMARY: we no longer have a NATURE that wants to sin - we have a "new NATURE" created by God in the image of Christ. That new nature (our spirit) wants to obey God, but it is still living in the BODY of flesh, and **our mind and emotions are still "in tune"** with all the old ways and desires of the flesh. The NEW nature is your **SPIRIT** that is born of God, but your **MIND** still needs to be RENEWED and your **BODY** needs to be brought into SUBMISSION to God and under control of the NEW YOU and the Holy Spirit. If you are still falling into sinful behaviors after you are born again, it is because **YOU are ALLOWING** your unrenewed MIND, emotions and BODY to be in CONTROL, rather than your BORN-AGAIN SPIRIT, the NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus.

- **Galatians 5:16-17** "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall NOT fulfill the desires of the flesh. For **the flesh sets its desire against the spirit**, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary (in opposition) to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."
- **Colossians 3:10** "...put on the NEW MAN who is renewed in knowledge **according to the IMAGE of Him** who created him."
- **Ephesians 4:23-24** "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that **YOU put on the NEW MAN**, which was **CREATED according to God**, in righteousness and true holiness."