

Two Warring Natures

New Life by the Gospel of Grace

Take a good look in the “mirror”—the mirror of God’s Word. What you will see is that there is now the new you and the old you. The old you may seem more real than the new you, but don’t fall for its disguise. You are no longer who you once knew yourself to be—you have two warring natures! You are a new creation. However, your true self—your real life—is a mystery “hidden with Christ.” It can only be revealed as you walk with Him in trusting obedience into the new life He has planned for you. Get used to not being in charge!

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Romans 7:22-23 ESV

Bouncing Back and Forth

There will be times when you know that you have a good heart and can rejoice in it. You are a new creation! At other times you will search in vain for a single redeeming thing about yourself and not be able to find it. You are totally corrupted by self-will and selfishness. What’s going on? Martin Luther called this puzzling phenomenon being “simul justus et peccator,” being simultaneously sinful, yet justified. No wonder our head is spinning—there is a war going on inside us!

When you asked Jesus into your life to be your Savior, our Father did many things for you which may have escaped your notice at the time. These were going on behind the scenes while the revelation of Jesus, the forgiveness of your sins and the incoming hope of heaven were taking center stage. Don’t feel like you were inattentive: We only know what Father was up to due to the Bible’s explanations. (See [What Just Happened to Me?](#))



Supernaturally Separated!

Before conversion you and your sinful fallen nature were seamlessly joined together. Not only did your sins still cling to you, there was no escaping the inevitable centering of your life upon yourself. When you repented and turned from sin and self to Jesus, God not only forgave you your sins, He separated you from them, giving you a whole new status as a highly favored child in Christ. This is called [justification](#). Then by revealing Jesus to you through faith and the new birth, God separated you from your old life which was centered on yourself and has given you a new life centered on Christ with a new heart and a new nature. This is called being a [New Creation](#).



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These transformations are so radical that the language of the New Testament makes it seem that everything old has passed away to such a degree that the new creation you will never again 1) sin, 2) be centered on self, 3) give way to the fallen nature, or 4) be overtaken by the “old man.” That’s not the way it goes! God has not eliminated these former nemeses, but He has given us whole new possibilities of overcoming them. Let’s take them one at a time.

1) Sin

Thanks to the Blood of Jesus God has [separated us from our sins](#) to such a degree that He always sees that we are not our sins, even at those times when (God forbid) we may be deeply sinful in thought, word or deed. This doesn’t mean that He doesn’t see the sin, but that He sees it the way we see dirt on our bodies. We may be covered in mud and muck, but that’s still not who we are! Before conversion we and “the dirt” of sin were one and the same. Now, because the Blood of atonement covers us, God is able to always look past the filth of sin to see us as He has always intended for us to be. One day—in heaven—we will fully be the person God has His eyes on now!

2) Centered on Self

This is a direct outcome of Adam’s sin: we are born spiritually dead, completely disconnected from our God, and, therefore, no longer able to carry His image within our hearts. We are “image bearers” bereft of an Image to bear--and we don’t even know it! Into this vacuum enters the sin nature, but notice what it is feeding upon. Without the Image of God to provide the only correct center for our lives, we have been thrown down into centering our lives upon ourselves. We have no other option than to put self, or family, or the enemy (in one form or another) upon the “throne” of our hearts. Thankfully, now that Jesus has been revealed to us, we can choose daily to center our lives upon Him and live by keeping our “eyes” on Him: We are Image bearers once again!

3) The Sin Nature

We inherited the sinful nature from Adam. Often referred to as “the flesh” or the “carnal nature”, it is the nature of the enemy within us. As such there is nothing good about it; nothing that can possibly be redeemed. Constantly at war with the new nature, it can only be “put to death” by dying to self and living for Christ. Like the enemy’s own self-focused rebellion, it feeds on self-will and self-love. Thanks to our separation from God, the sinful nature was able to attack, subvert and eventually overthrow the created goodness of childhood which the Holy Spirit shepherds.

That sense of innocence lost, the deep commitment to self-preservation, the inescapable self-centering, the inability to live with joyful, yet pure abandonment—all these are signs in every adult of what got lost along the way. Recovering the grace of childhood with the wisdom of faith is one of our assignments, now that we have been made new.

4) The Old Man

This phrase indicates something akin to but distinctly different from the fallen nature, like “kissing cousins” in the same family line. The old man, or “old self” is used to describe the person we were when the sin nature had us centered on self and we were at one

with our sins. That old you or former version of you no longer exists! You now know who Jesus is! That is the essence of the new you. But you can slip back into the old ways of looking at things whenever you get your eyes off Jesus. That former version of our self developed its own unique mindset and world view, patterns of reaction and ways of living, all of which were “contaminated” by a perspective that lacked [the revelation of Jesus Christ](#).

Paul came to the conclusion that he didn’t consider anything of his former self of any value compared to knowing Jesus. Now that conversion has opened our eyes, the old man is only a shadow of his former self. No matter how effective the sin nature may be at putting that straw man back in charge, that game is forever spoiled because we now know that **Jesus**, not self, is the true Master of our universe.

The new creation you lives by placing its entire trust in Jesus. We literally fight the good fight of faith in order to keep yielding ourselves to the leadership of our new-found Lord and Master. This is the tug of war over who is going to rule from “the center” of our life—Jesus or self? That battle can only be won by getting [our eyes back on Jesus](#)! When we yield to Christ, the fallen nature is crucified (by us) and the old man is laid back into the shadows. This only happens whenever we trust Jesus with everything going on in our lives and become willing to follow each step He shows us. In this way we walk in the Spirit and we “grow up” into Christ. May you learn the way of walking closely with Him!

Two More to Explore

[Two Passionate Purposes](#) The unbelieving world, plagued with emptiness, loneliness and boredom, ever seeks distraction through selfish pursuit of pleasure or ambition. What a difference a wholesome sense of real purpose brings into any life! Suddenly, one has reasons to live for, a passion to live by, and a destined purpose worthy of great and noble sacrifices. As believers in Jesus we have not one, but two magnificent purposes. Learn how to strap them on, my friend, and you need never be empty, bored, or lonely *ever again*.

[Two Monumental Tasks](#) When it comes to our problems down here, God has His Hands full. Every individual person needs saving from sin and restoration to the life they were created to live in full fellowship with the Lord. Every world system needs saving from injustice and oppression and restoration to the Lord’s way of running things. Out of this emerges our twin tasks: the Great Commission which is aimed at the spiritual needs of individuals and the “Great Compassion” which is aimed at creating freer, nobler societies.

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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