

THE DIVINE
NATURE
AND
THE SIN
NATURE

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Crossroads Full Gospel
International Ministries

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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THE DIVINE NATURE

THE FALL OF MANKIND

Adam disobeyed God's command and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Immediately, Adam and Eve were introduced to the knowledge of sin, for their action brought shame, fear and guilt into their lives. More importantly, however, it caused Adam and Eve to become separated from God, which is another way of saying that they entered into a state of spiritual death. Likewise, Adam's descendants were, as a consequence of his action, all born into this state of spiritual death.

GENESIS 3:6 *And when the woman (Eve) saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he (Adam) did eat.*

ROMANS 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world (through his disobedience), and death (separation from God) by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (are born in a state of sin = death)*

Note: "Adam was permitted to eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden but one, which was called 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' because it was the test of Adam's obedience. By it Adam could know good and evil in the divine way through obedience; thus knowing good by experience in resisting temptation and forming a strong and holy character while he knew evil only by observation and inference. Or he could 'know good and evil,' in Satan's way, by experiencing the evil and knowing good only by contrast. - Ed. The prohibition to taste the fruit of this tree was enforced by the menace of death." ¹

(underlines added)

“. . .Adam could know good and evil in the divine way through obedience; thus knowing good by experience in resisting temptation and forming a strong and holy character while he knew evil only by observation and inference. . .”

Before the Fall, Adam and Eve each had a human nature that was energized by God’s Divine Nature. After the Fall, both lost access to the Divine Nature, and acquired in its place the sin nature. The ability to know right from wrong could then only come through their conscience.

Therefore after the Fall, man knew good but could not really experience the good he knew in a Divine way, only at a human level without the Divine Nature. His conscience bore witness to his knowledge of good in certain areas. Sometimes the conscience can be enhanced through receiving righteous input, or alternatively become seared (hardened) so that it is unable to function as it should, being unable to recognize good as good and evil as evil. Factors which influence the development of the conscience include culture, exposure to sin, education on righteous matters and maturity (growing up intellectually). Eve was deceived (which was still no excuse), but Adam knowingly transgressed his conscience - and Adam, not Eve, was man’s federal head.

Adam was created as a perfect man with no sin nature. Rather, he was a partaker of the Divine Nature. Adam was designed by God so that his human nature would be at one with the Divine Nature, giving him the power to both desire and then do as God willed. As a free-willed being, however, he still had to yield to this Nature. He was empowered to do this naturally, having no sin nature to wrestle with, and therefore not needing to exert willpower against it. Nevertheless His will was involved, as it is with us today, as the trigger by which we can live in the grace of God - to do right by God, so that our joy will be full. By Adam’s will he could yield to the will of God or, as in the case of the tree, do as he desired which was to yield to sin.

“. . .After the Fall, man knew good but could not really experience the good he knew in a Divine way, only at a human level without the Divine Nature. . .”

The result of Adam’s high treason was death to himself, both spiritual and physical, which he, as man’s federal head, passed on to all his offspring through the bloodline. While spiritual death came instantly, the nature of death also entered into Adam and Eves’ physical bodies. This meant that instead of living forever, as the perfect human beings they were created to be, Adam, Eve and all their descendants would age physically and eventually die. Such was the gravity of Adam’s sin in terms of its consequences for both he and every person born after him. Indeed the whole human race would inherit Adam’s polluted blood. Therefore all who have been born into the world have been born into this state of (spiritual) death.

ROMANS 3:23 For all have sinned (all are born in a state of sin, also called spiritual death, and are sinners by nature), and come short of the glory of God (are deprived of God’s saving presence)

ROMANS 6:3 Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ (this is baptism into Christ, not water baptism: 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27) were baptized into His death (through identification, we die with Him and are raised with Him)?

ROMANS 6:4 Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death (we are buried with Him - all past sin is left in the grave): that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father (we too are raised with Him, His Resurrection is our resurrection), even so we also should walk in newness of life (now having access to the graces and energies of God’s Divine Nature).

The Cross of Calvary is the cross-road we should come to every morning, before we start the day. Every day we should remember the Cross, what Jesus accomplished there and who we are because of it. This is where we were born again, where we became new creations in Christ - but only after a funeral had taken place for the old man. We are now new creations, new men and women raised, after the death of the old man, into “*newness of life.*” This new man whom we now are, has been given access to a new nature, the Divine Nature, so we can be at one with God in spirit (our human nature being energized by the Holy Spirit) and truth:

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (in the Word of God): that by these (promises) you might be partakers of the Divine Nature (implanted in us when we were born again), having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (by the graces of the Divine Nature, we can live a sanctified life above the lusts of the flesh).

We can now overcome sin through this new Nature given by the grace of God. It works through us as we yield to the Holy Spirit, believing and reckoning to our account that this miraculous change has taken place. We have been transferred spiritually from darkness and death into light and life. This has taken place not only in a positional sense, but as we say “Yes” to God in the course of our lives, then the empowerment to live the saved life is made available to us through the grace of the Divine Nature. This takes place as it enmeshes with our human nature, thus providing us with the energies and graces to both desire God’s will and then to do it (Philippians 2:12-13).

“ . . . This new man whom we now are, has been given access to a new nature, the Divine Nature, so we can be at one with God in spirit (our human nature being energized by the Holy Spirit) and truth. . . ”

Only through focusing our faith on what happened at Calvary can we begin a journey with Christ which provides us with today's answers, and the power needed to live a righteous life. Indeed the Christian is meant to live in complete dependence upon God so that through His power we can keep the sin nature dethroned. Then our carnal desires will not hold sway, and we will thus please Him in our daily walk, giving Him the glory for all that is righteous in our lives.

Note: The sin nature can only be enthroned in our flesh - it can never touch the regenerated spirit of the person who remains in Christ.

THE SIN NATURE

We as humans are eternal spirit beings, each person having a soul that contains our mind, will and emotions. Thus man is a spirit and has a soul, all this encompassed within a physical body which functions in a physical world.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When a man is born again, his spirit is regenerated to life by the very presence of God (John 14:17-20). While his mind is then positionally (or legally) saved, conditionally it is not saved until it is renewed by the Word of God (James 1:21; Romans 12:2; Psalm 23:3). Therefore our soul (mind) is saved by the Blood of Jesus in a legal or positional sense. But in colloquial terms, to cash the cheque, our mind must be renewed in God's truth by His power in order for it to be conditionally (or experientially) saved (John 15:26, 16:13).

As a Christian, therefore, our spirit is positionally and conditionally saved, washed clean by the Blood of the Lamb. As stated, however, after salvation, it is up to us, as Christians, each day, to "*receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save your souls*" (James 1:21), i.e. to renew our minds. Renewal means that we seek and then embrace God's truth by His grace. As a result, our thinking becomes aligned with God's thinking. By this means we become "a work in progress," as by God's grace, our mind

progressively receives God's truth and so comes to line up with His mind and His thinking.

The last installment of our salvation concerns our physical body and will occur on the day that the Lord comes back for His Church. Called the "*blessed hope*" (Titus 2:13), this is the time of the Rapture. On that day, all who are in Christ will receive a glorified body, the same as Jesus received when He was raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:52-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

“. . .Renewal means that we seek and then embrace God's truth by His grace. As a result, our thinking becomes aligned with God's thinking. . .”

Our mind in the next life will be both positionally and conditionally saved. It will therefore merely expand in holy knowledge for the rest of eternity, continually progressing in regard to God and His truth. In other words, there will be no areas of darkness in our minds in heaven.

While on this earth in this dispensation, however, we may experience difficulties in regard to mind renewal. For instance, we may not be able to hear God properly, or alternatively, we may not want to. From whatever inherited genetic negatives we possess concerning memory function or the lack of it, to the dictates of whatever worldly connection we are plugged into, or whatever tries to influence us, physically or spiritually, all these factors will contribute to the problems we will have with mind renewal.

Chapter 6 in Romans tells us that we, as Christians, still have the sin nature to deal with. When we trust God, rely on Him and are led by the Spirit, then the sin nature will remain dormant or deactivated. This is when the Divine Nature is enthroned in our hearts.

At salvation the sin nature becomes legally dead to us. Conditionally or experientially, however, is another story. If we have accepted thinking in our mind that is contrary to God's truth, then we are, in actual fact, thinking without God's influence. Therefore, in that area (of sin), we are in spiritual darkness. This darkness will be,

of course, in our mind and will not impact in any way upon our regenerated spirit.

So it is in this state that we have entered, in our minds, into spiritual darkness. This state provides us with what is known as “the sin nature” - which can be defined as man thinking in spiritual darkness. For the unsaved, this state is perpetual. For the Christian, this is an optional state because we have an alternative.

The sin nature empowers man to sin when he does not seek to embrace God’s Word of truth concerning the matters of life about which God has spoken.

The sin nature also contains a “gravitational factor” or spiritual weight which seemingly makes it easier to sin in the area of accepted thought or embraced thinking. The more one meditates on wrong thinking with the intent to embrace it, seemingly the greater the gravitational pull which is exerted. So with more meditation comes greater pull (gravity) toward sin and with less meditation comes less pull (gravity) towards sin. As has been said before, the battleground regarding sin is always located in the mind.

***“. . .The sin nature also contains a
“gravitational factor” or spiritual weight
which seemingly makes it easier to sin in
the area of accepted thought or embraced
thinking. . .”***

Man was originally created with a human nature, which is simply the sum of qualities and traits shared by all humans. To function properly and be complete, the human nature, contained in the spirit of man, needs to be energized by the energies and graces of God’s Divine Nature. This is how man was created to function at his optimum capacity. In other words, we always needed this spiritual influence to properly order our thinking and therefore our behaviour in relation to both God and our fellowman - the vertical and the horizontal.

Only as we are yielded to God will we be allowing Him to energize us by the graces and energies of His Divine Nature. This is when the Divine Nature is enthroned in our hearts. Without this influence on our minds in a continual sense, we will be thinking in

relation to accepted and embraced thought, by ourselves, in isolation from God.

We were thus created not with a defect, but with an inbuilt need to rely on God at all times. Even though we are free-willed beings, we cannot reach our potential in any way without our Creator's influence on our thinking (Isaiah 55:7-9). We were created to function in relationship with Him and dependence upon Him.

When man stepped away from the graces of God's influence, the sin nature - spiritual darkness - flooded into his life. The sin nature was not created by God because God does not create evil.

Without God's influence, we live with the sin nature, and as we operate in isolation from God, from this nature flows all manner of evil intent. When man remains in, or places himself into this dark place, then dark thoughts emerge. When man has no connection to God in his thinking, he is immersed in spiritual darkness. In this state the sin nature dominates his life as he follows after his flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

Man is a free-willed being with ethical and moral accountability to his Creator. Without God's influence, however, he is unable to discern, in a true sense, his responsibilities to his God and his fellow man. He is unable to correct himself or self-regulate because he is engulfed by the darkness in his mind and cannot think at a Godly level.

The only possible answer to man's dilemma came through God's grace and mercy. God in His love sent a Saviour into this world for this world. In fact God Himself, the second member of the Trinity, entered this temporal world, becoming flesh (John 1:14) and dying as a man for us.

So it can be seen that man without the spiritual restraints of God's truths will be empowered to sin when the opportunity arises, and the sin nature will come alive in that opportunity.

“ . . . When man stepped away from the graces of God's influence, the sin nature - spiritual darkness - flooded into his life. . . ”

When man enters into the dark cave of self, he becomes self-absorbed and self-centred. By himself, and according to whatever he may think, there are no moral restraints to obstruct or impede him. Sin's opportunity arises when man focuses on his own thoughts and desires to the point of accepting and embracing them so as to act upon them.

The power to sin comes from man's unrestrained mind - operating without God's influence. Sin is therefore the result of man thinking by himself so as to embrace thinking which is at odds with God.

Man acts in accordance with the nature with which he was born, and when given opportunity to sin will do so. In the Word we find man described as a sinner by nature:

ISAIAH 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (so-called good deeds) are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

PSALM 51:5 Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin (original sin) did my mother conceive me.

JEREMIAH 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

JEREMIAH 16:12 And you have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, you walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto Me:

Indeed Jesus identified the source of man's defilement as being his evil heart:

MARK 7:20 And He (Jesus) said, "That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man.

MARK 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

MARK 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

MARK 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (the heart of man is not good but evil)."

Without the guiding moral light of God's truth and the grace that accompanies it, man is defenceless against the onslaught of the sin nature that ravages his character and lays waste to his soul.

". . . The power to sin comes from man's unrestrained mind - operating without God's influence. . ."

Unsaved man can still be influenced by God from the outside to some extent, as we see, for example, in the Old Testament - and his conscience is still there to assist him in some way. But man will continue to fail miserably without God on the inside. Therefore Christ came so that God can make His abode on the inside of man, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to influence his whole being.

JOHN 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man loves Me, he will keep my Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

ROMANS CHAPTER SIX

The reality of Romans 6:3-4 must be kept alive in our minds and hearts on a day-to-day basis, so that our feet move to the beat of God's heart. Only humble hearts can do this, and so with this attitude reach the spiritual heights that our Lord wants His sons and daughters to attain. All this can only come about through man first kneeling at the Cross of Calvary and trusting in the finished work of the Saviour. Not only has the ledger of our sins been wiped clear and stamped "paid in full," the power to rise above sin has been given to

us through the Divine Nature. Let us now read Kenneth Wuest's expanded translation of Romans 6:1-14:

ROMANS 6:1 *What then shall we say? Shall we habitually sustain an attitude of dependence upon, yieldedness to, and cordiality with the sinful nature in order that grace may abound?*

ROMANS 6:2 *May such a thing never occur. How is it possible for us, such persons as we are, who have been separated once for all from the sinful nature, any longer to live in its grip?*

ROMANS 6:3 *Do you not know that all we who were placed in Christ Jesus, in His death were placed?*

ROMANS 6:4 *We therefore were entombed with Him through this being placed in His death, in order that in the same manner as there was raised up Christ out from among those who are dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we by means of a new life imparted may order our behavior.*

ROMANS 6:5 *For in view of the fact that we are those who have become permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His death, certainly also we shall be those who as a logical result have become permanently united with Him with respect to the likeness of His resurrection,*

ROMANS 6:6 *Knowing this experientially, that our old [unregenerate] self was crucified once for all with Him in order that the physical body [heretofore] dominated by the sinful nature might be rendered inoperative [in that respect], with the result that no longer are we rendering a slave's habitual obedience to the sinful nature,*

ROMANS 6:7 *For the one who died once for all stands in the position of a permanent relationship of freedom from the sinful nature.*

ROMANS 6:8 *Now, in view of the fact that we died once for all with Christ, we believe that we shall also live by means of Him,*

ROMANS 6:9 *Knowing that Christ, having been raised up from among those who are dead, no longer dies. Death over Him no longer exercises lordship.*

ROMANS 6:10 *For the death He died, He died with respect to our sinful nature once for all. But the life He lives, He lives with respect to God.*

ROMANS 6:11 *Thus, also, as for you, you be constantly counting upon the fact that, on the one hand, you are those who have been separated from the sinful nature, and, on the other, that you are living ones with respect to God in Christ Jesus.*

ROMANS 6:12 *Stop therefore allowing the sinful nature to reign as king in your mortal body with a view to obeying it [the body] in its passionate cravings.*

ROMANS 6:13 *Moreover, stop putting your members at the disposal of the sinful nature as weapons of unrighteousness, but by a once-for-all act and at once, put yourselves at the disposal of God as those who are actively alive out from among the dead, and put your members as weapons of righteousness at the disposal of God,*

ROMANS 6:14 *For [then] the sinful nature will not exercise lordship over you, for you are not under Law but under grace.*

(Wuest K.S., The New Testament, An Expanded Translation, underlines added)

In Romans Ch.6 the Holy Spirit reveals the workings of what happens at the conversion of a sinner, and how we are to take advantage of this new-found position in Christ.

“. . .Not only has the ledger of our sins been wiped clear and stamped “paid in full,” the power to rise above sin has been given to us through the Divine Nature. . .”

ROMANS CHAPTER SEVEN

Then in Romans Ch.7 the Holy Spirit reveals through Paul’s life his failings, even after his conversion.

Wuest outlines Paul’s experience in Romans Ch. 7 in terms of self-dependence. Victory eludes him when he does not use the resources provided for him by the Holy Spirit to defeat sin in his life. Wuest goes on to describe self-dependence as the “*monkey wrench*” of the Christian life:

“THE MONKEY WRENCH IN THE MACHINERY

Paul says in Romans 7:15, “That which I do, I allow not.” He is describing his experience as a saved person, but one ignorant of the way of living the victorious life. The things he desires to do, namely, good things, he does not do. Things he does not want to do, namely, sinful things, he does do. The power of sin in his life has been broken, and the divine nature implanted. But the correct adjustment to these facts, Paul does not know. Hence the evil nature is still the master. Paul says that this experience he does not “allow.” The word “allow” is from a Greek word which means “to know by experience.” Paul says in effect, “What I carry out I do not recognize in its true nature, as a slave who ignorantly performs his master’s behest without knowing its tendency or result.” Paul does not recognize his experience in its true nature. He is acting blindly at the dictates of another; like a slave who does not have the liberty to determine the details of his life for himself because he is governed by

another. He is somewhat of an automaton, not quite a machine, but yet a human being without self-determination in his spiritual life. He has the desire to do good but no power to put that desire into practice. He rebels against doing evil, but does not have the power to keep from sinning. He fights as one that blindly beats the air. He is in a spiritual fog. He does not understand his experience, for he is acting involuntarily.

Romans can be likened to a great factory. The sixth chapter takes us to the floors where the machinery is located. There we have the mechanics of the Spirit-filled life, namely, the power of sin broken and the divine nature implanted. The eighth ushers us into the basement where the power to operate that machinery is generated. There we have the dynamics of the Spirit-filled life, the power of the Holy Spirit. Chapters twelve to sixteen take us to the upper floors of the factory where the finished product is on display. Chapter seven is the monkey wrench which, if it falls into the machinery, interferes with its working and thus prevents the production of the finished product. That monkey wrench in the Christian life is self-dependence. All the resources of the Holy Spirit are there to put down sin and produce a Christ-like life, but they are not appropriated because the believer is depending upon self." ²

(underlines added)

“ . . . Paul is describing his experience as a saved person, but one ignorant of the way of living the victorious life. . . ”

We can struggle in our own strength to overcome the sin nature and the carnal cravings we have because of it - but we will fail until we, like Paul, discover God's prescribed order for doing so. It is only through dependence on the Lord's grace, which comes to us via the energies and graces of the Divine Nature, that we are able to serve the Lord, overcome sin and walk in righteousness. As we yield to the Lord and ask for His grace, the power we need will be made available to us. The Divine Nature is implanted in us at the new birth, through the internal presence of the Holy Spirit bringing this grace to us. Access to the Divine Nature is part of our inheritance according to the New Covenant in which we now stand.

“ . . . The Divine Nature is implanted in us at the new birth, through the internal presence of the Holy Spirit bringing this grace to us. . . ”

HOW DO WE BEGIN TO LIVE IN THE DIVINE NATURE ?

Background Reading: Colossians 3:1-17

At regeneration, all pollution is removed from our spirit, and through Divine connection, the Divine Nature is imparted to the Believer, giving us the potential to love as God loves. We now have the ability to operate in the power of the Divine Nature, but we must will for this to happen.

We do this by choosing to listen to and act on God’s Word, rather than listen and respond to the dictates of our flesh or our senses (what we see, what we hear, what we feel like, etc.). It is the Word of God which gives us the boundaries and principles which are to govern our lives. The flesh and the unchecked senses will not provide this light. We need to understand God’s Word, then we need the power to walk in the spiritual knowledge which we have gained from the Lord.

“ . . . At regeneration, all pollution is removed from our spirit, and through Divine connection, the Divine Nature is imparted to the Believer, giving us the potential to love as God loves. . . ”

To obtain this power, we must believe and reckon ourselves to be dead to the sin nature, and we must yield to the Holy Spirit in all that we do so that the Divine Nature will be enthroned in our hearts. The Divine Nature will empower us to do God’s will, but only as we yield to the Holy Spirit. As we yield, His Divine Nature will enmesh

with our human nature and we will receive the energies and graces we need to do the will of God. As we focus on the Word of God, in the power provided by the Divine Nature, we will come to think as God thinks, which is to have “*the mind of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 2:16). Our minds are renewed in this way through the faith God develops in us - as we cooperate with Him. What is required is our yielding and His grace! If we do not yield to the Holy Spirit, we will not gain the spiritual power we need to walk in His righteous ways. To yield and receive empowerment through the Divine Nature is to live in the “*newness of life*” spoken of in Romans 6:4. The potential to love as God loves was imparted to us at regeneration through Divine connection. We are only able to love as God loves with His help. To obtain His help, His empowerment, we need to take advantage of the Divine Nature, of which we are partakers, by submitting ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Then through this empowerment we can walk in righteousness so that “*henceforth we should not serve sin*” (Romans 6:6).

To know the will of God in our hearts, we must allow the Spirit of God to speak to us and make us aware of truth, to make us aware of Him and His ways.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know (understand) the things (truths) that are freely given to us of God (by allowing Him to show us His truths).*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:13 *Which things also we speak, not in the words (or ways) which man’s wisdom (worldly knowledge) teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches (shows); comparing spiritual things (truths) with spiritual.*

In our position as true sons, God can truly communicate with us (if we are open and allow Him to) because the blockage of death and darkness has been removed from our spirit. The Light of God expelled all darkness from our spirit when we gave Him permission to enter. In other words, God’s saving presence, which is the essence of God, the love and the Light of God, eradicated the darkness in

which our spirit had been immersed. This darkness had blocked the Lord from fellowshiping with us in the way He desired. Even when we are saved, however, if the sin nature remains enthroned or engaged, it will block God from communicating with us in those areas it affects. The sin nature must be dethroned if we are to have any proper spiritual communion with God. As this becomes a reality, God will also be able to deposit “*good treasure*” (e.g. knowledge of God’s will, truth, wisdom of God) into our hearts.

HEBREWS 8:10 . . . I (God) will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. . . .

MATTHEW 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things. . . .

So because all darkness (which causes the state of sin) has been washed out of our spirit by God’s presence, we now have the potential both to communicate with Him and to allow Him to deposit good treasure into our hearts. However, even today, God can only communicate with us, as Christians, and lead us, **IF** we will to listen to Him. We also need to position ourselves or ready ourselves to hear the Lord’s voice, through proper spiritual focus.

“. . .As we yield, His Divine Nature will enmesh with our human nature and we will receive the energies and graces we need to do the will of God. . .”

To hear the voice of the Lord (to perceive the leading of the Spirit, which could come in the form of inner conviction or a knowing within), we need to be committed to renewing our minds with the Word of God with all diligence. We also need to be committed to fellowshiping with the Lord on a daily basis.

To begin to be led by the Spirit of God, we must purpose, in His power, to walk in the light given - to walk in obedience to God’s Word (James 1:22-25). As we yield to the Holy Spirit, the graces of

His Divine Nature, energizing our human nature, will not only give us the desire to do God's will, these graces will empower us to do so.

As we know, babies may have the potential within themselves to achieve many things when they grow up - but they must first gradually mature into adults. Children must be fed and nourished, physically, emotionally and spiritually for many years before they are ready to fend for themselves and make a success of their lives. Also, whatever is put into a child, physically and mentally, will usually play a major role in determining that child's future.

As a baby needs to grow, so too does our spirit - for the same principle applies.

1 PETER 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk (unadulterated, pure doctrines) of the Word, that you may grow thereby (in your salvation)

Our spirit is only baby-like to begin with, and needs to grow through receiving proper spiritual nourishment, as we see in Matthew 4:4:

MATTHEW 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"
(Deuteronomy 8:3)

Only by receiving the nourishment of God's Word can our spirit become educated (come to be at one with the Divine Nature), and therefore strong and mature enough to direct us wisely. We could also then say that the spirit-man is energized as the human nature absorbs the graces and energies of God's Divine Nature.

The primary purpose of educating our spirit is so that we may know God's will on any matter - even to know how He thinks and by what principles we are to live. All this will also help us in our relationship with the Lord, and we will be better able to communicate with Him as we, by grace, grow in knowledge, wisdom and character, as Jesus did (Luke 2:40-52).

“ . . . Only by receiving the nourishment of God’s Word can our spirit become educated (come to be at one with the Divine Nature), and therefore strong and mature enough to direct us wisely. . . ”

THE RENEWING OF THE MIND AND THE EDUCATING OF THE SPIRIT

The Divine Nature of God will slowly be manifested in our lives as we live according to God’s Word, and yield to the Spirit. This involves having our minds constantly renewed, and with the Spirit’s empowerment, acting according to that renewal.

To be renewed in our minds is a commandment which applies to all Christians. When we accept Jesus Christ into our life, our spirit is regenerated and cleansed of sin, but our mind is not. Yes, positionally we are saved, but our condition does not always match our position. Ongoing daily sanctification is required if our condition is to progress towards our position - and the grace of the Divine Nature is needed for this process to take place. All this means is that when we are saved, and even after this immediate time, many of our attitudes, thoughts and beliefs will be at variance with the Word of God. Because of this, our unrenewed mind will often cause us, in the flesh, to oppose the desires of God. To change this situation, we must be committed to the renewing of our mind.

Note: The Believer is saved conditionally in the spirit, for the spirit is cleansed of all darkness at regeneration. Concerning spirit, soul and body, the Believer is saved in all aspects in a positional sense. Indeed the Believer in Christ is dead to the law of sin and death (we no longer come under this law in a positional sense), but the law is not dead to the Believer - for we can choose to sin and bear the consequences of that sin. So where we are at positionally can be very different to where we are at conditionally (our day to day experience). Only as we abide in Christ and yield to the Spirit, so as to absorb the heavenly graces of the Divine Nature, can our condition be brought towards our legal position. Sin (or the sin nature) should

no longer have any ascendancy over the Believer, because he or she is saved from “sin.” To walk in victory, however, faith in Christ and His finished work at the Cross must be our central focus. We also need a total dependency on Him, and the Spirit’s empowerment in our daily Christian walk if we are to experience ongoing sanctification. It is something we cannot achieve by the self-efforts of the flesh, otherwise called willpower.

“. . . Only as we abide in Christ and yield to the Spirit, so as to absorb the heavenly graces of the Divine Nature, can our condition be brought towards our legal position. . . ”

God’s Word tells us:

ROMANS 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind (the way you think), that you may prove (and know for yourself) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

EPHESIANS 4:23 *And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind - having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude (Amp.)*

Once your mind is renewed in any area, this makes possible the next step:

EPHESIANS 4:24 *And that you (through your actions of faith) put on the new man, which after God (in God’s image) is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

The renewing of the mind involves accepting God’s truths wholeheartedly, grasping these truths aggressively or even violently (Matthew 11:12). A renewed mind involves commitment to a truth or principle, for the renewed mind is the mind which has learned to live by God’s Word. Once the mind is renewed, it will see other points of

view but it will consider only one course of action, that which is in accordance with the Word of God. The renewed mind puts all its trust in God's Word, for it has grasped knowledge which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit. The renewed mind does not even consider, in its analysis, anything else, no matter what others may say or do. This occurs to the point where one becomes dependent upon this renewal in any area so that we are able to "*prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" (Romans 12:2).

The renewed mind gives us only one answer to a problem. It is after this renewal that we, through the Divine Nature, will have the strength to say "Yes" to God's will, thereby saying "No" to the world, the flesh, the devil and natural circumstances. If unrenewed, the mind will side with the flesh and natural circumstances. If renewed, the mind speaks forth God's Word and sides with the regenerated spirit which is empowered through the Divine Nature. This gives the voice of truth a strong means of expression. However, even with a mind which is renewed in any area, the Christian still needs to make a decision to act upon this renewal, and not to heed the dictates of the flesh or the natural realm. This action necessitates the person using their will. The will is the trigger, and the Divine Nature is the source of power needed to effect change.

“. . .If unrenewed, the mind will side with the flesh and natural circumstances. If renewed, the mind speaks forth God's Word and sides with the regenerated spirit which is empowered through the Divine Nature. . .”

As we have said, the renewing of the mind causes the regenerated spirit to be educated in the things of God - and thus allow it, in the power of the Divine Nature, to have a greater and stronger voice. Christians who do not bother to work on this renewal process will still have unrenewed minds and baby-like spirits, even after they have been saved for many years. We thus need to goal to harmonize our spirit and soul together with God's Spirit, through the continual renewing of our mind. This, through the energies of the

Divine Nature, will result in the continual process of “ongoing sanctification” in the Saint’s life - until the day they go home to be with the Lord.

As we have said, the regenerated spirit, also called “the legitimate self,” wants to please God. Man was originally created in God’s image, and before the Fall, man would originally have had an all-consuming desire to please God. When a Christian is empowered by the graces and energies of the Divine Nature, their spirit-man will again have the holy desire and power to do God’s will. This is a righteous and holy yearning (Romans 8:5-6).

***“ . . . Christians who do not bother to work
on this renewal process will still have
unrenewed minds and baby-like spirits,
even after they have been
saved for many years. . . ”***

We can, however, ignore or reject the voice of the regenerated spirit until it is no longer heard. Sometimes this voice is expressed through the conscience. If we act in opposition to our conscience for too long, it can become seared or hardened in that area so that it can no longer speak forth God’s holy standard through conviction, being alienated from man’s thinking processes. Also, the voice of the regenerated spirit may be small to begin with, but increases in strength as we nurture our spirit, educate it and listen to it rather than the dictates of the flesh, including self-desire.

Note: Sometimes our emotions which express strong wants can be mistaken for our conscience, when, for instance, we say, “Well, I feel this and this.” What we feel may be nothing but our flesh speaking, as we operate under the government of self-rule. What God wants for us and what He says should be our primary desire and focus. But how can we know unless we first seek and discover God’s will (Matthew 7:7-8).

A baby has a strong inbuilt desire for food. The baby does not know much about this food, but when it is fed, its desire will be satisfied. Our regenerated spirit can be likened to this baby. It has a desire to be fed on spiritual food - it does not know much about this

food, but when it does receive spiritual food, the desire of the spirit-man is satisfied. As we then continue to feed our spirit on good food, it will grow and mature, and its voice will become stronger. With the Divine Nature giving us the spiritual energy and graces needed, our spirit will have a holy desire to do God's will.

“ . . . The voice of the regenerated spirit may be small to begin with, but increases in strength as we nurture our spirit, educate it and listen to it rather than the dictates of the flesh, including self-desire. . . ”

Thus through the renewing of the mind, our spirit grows to maturity. Another way of looking at this is that the regenerated spirit contains the God-given desire to serve Him (even though this only becomes a holy desire through the Divine Nature energizing man's human nature). The Christian needs to allow this desire to come forth in his life, or else he is cheating himself out of his primary creative function. This desire must be channelled and harnessed by the Holy Spirit, and properly directed. The renewing of the mind is vital to this process, for it is in this way that we come to know the good and perfect will of our Heavenly Father. We then need to have the Divine Nature enthroned in our heart so that we receive the empowerment we need to act on this knowledge.

So we all need to study God's Word and accept its truths wholeheartedly if we want to renew our minds through the gaining of revelation knowledge. By this process we can have our spirit educated, so that it will have a strong voice. In this way we can channel the Godly desires of the spirit and be conformed to the perfect will of God. Therefore renewing the mind and educating the spirit will help us make decisions which side with God's will and not the dictates of the flesh, the world or the natural realm.

Thus: The renewing of the mind = Rejecting wrong ideas and beliefs by allowing the Spirit to replace them with the truth of God's Word (which we then believe and trust in).

As we have said, through renewing our minds and acting on this renewal in faith (through the Divine Nature of which we are partakers), we will come to discover and to walk in God's will for our lives.

Note: Sometimes in the simple acceptance of truth, repentance automatically takes place. At other times, we may need to mindfully and deliberately repent of wrong ideas and beliefs that have hindered our growth as Christians.

SALVATION OF THE SOUL

Background Reading: 1 Peter 1:13-23

Salvation of the soul at a conditional (experiential) level is obtained by acting according to the transformation that has taken place through accepting and relying on truth. This, as 1 Peter 1:22 tells us, is simply called "*obeying the truth*," the truth found in God's holy Word.

“. . .Therefore renewing the mind and educating the spirit will help us make decisions which side with God's will and not the dictates of the flesh, the world or the natural realm. . .”

As we accept God's truths wholeheartedly and reject our old carnal ways of thinking, then act upon this renewal in faith, thanking God for the empowerment provided by the Divine Nature, we can experience a type of deliverance called "the salvation of the soul." This means that no evil can continue to oppress us because of wrong beliefs or wrong thinking. It entails complete freedom from oppression of the mind, e.g. freedom from fear, anxiety, worry, depression, anger, hatred, unforgiveness, resentment, etc. We must always remember, however, that it is the grace of God at work in us (having come to us because of Christ's finished work) that brings about our victory and God's pleasure.

Positionally, all this happened at the Cross and was legally imparted to us the day we were born again. Experientially, however, many do not live in the victory Christ won for us at Calvary. Once again, the condition of many Christians is, in many areas of their lives, far removed from their legal position.

In relation to the salvation of the soul, the Word therefore exhorts us:

JAMES 1:21 So get rid of all uncleanness and the rampant outgrowth of wickedness, and in a humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls. (Amp.)

JAMES 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

1 PETER 1:22 Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently.

We can have heart-knowledge that something is true. However unless we act or purpose to act on that knowledge, nothing will be achieved. Similarly, salvation of the soul at a conditional level cannot take place unless we first renew our minds, then willingly act in faith on this renewal when an opportunity arises.

“. . . Similarly, salvation of the soul at a conditional level cannot take place unless we first renew our minds, then willingly act in faith on this renewal when an opportunity arises. . .”

GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

God's nature is love - in fact the Word tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8).

God's love is not passive but expresses itself in action - and God's love in action manifests itself in total commitment and sacrifice.

JOHN 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten (the One and Only) Son, that whosoever believes in Him (Jesus) should not perish, but have (with God) everlasting life.

MARK 10:45 For even the Son of Man (Jesus) came not to be ministered unto (to be served), but to minister (to be a servant), and to give His life a ransom for many.

JOHN 10:15 As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father: and I (Jesus) lay down My life for the sheep.

JOHN 15:13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

The Apostle Paul expanded on this in Romans Ch.5 when he stated that Jesus died for us, not while we were His friends, but while we were still enemies of God, sinners, and hostile to God in our minds:

ROMANS 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time (at the appointed time), Christ died for the ungodly.

ROMANS 5:7 For scarcely (rarely) for a righteous man will (would) one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even (possibly) dare to die.

ROMANS 5:8 But God commends (demonstrates and proves) His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (He died for those who bitterly hate Him).

Jesus showed the Divine Nature that was within Him through His works of faith and love. By His actions, Jesus was saying, “It doesn’t matter what you do to Me - you can kick Me, spit on Me, whip Me, you can do what you like to Me, but I’m still going to love you, I am even going to die for you.” Even on the cross Jesus displayed this love:

LUKE 23:34 Then said Jesus, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

“. . . God’s love is not passive but expresses itself in action - and God’s love in action manifests itself in total commitment and sacrifice. . .”

Jesus’ total desire was to do the will of the Father and to complete the work that He had been given. This too is the desire of our regenerated spirit. This desire will come forth as we live in God’s perfect will for us, nourishing our spirit with proper spiritual food, and, under the influence of the Divine Nature, allowing the voice of our regenerated spirit to be heard above the voice of our flesh, the voice of our senses, the voice of human logic and the voice of worldly wisdom.

THE SELFISH NATURE

Man is unable to live in the God-like image in which man was originally created until he is regenerated (born from above). However just because people are regenerated does not always mean they will act according to this God-like image - for we sometimes see non-Christians acting in a more Godly manner than some Christians.

The regenerated spirit has the desire to do God’s will. However, without the Divine Nature energizing the human nature, there will be no power to do God’s will as He would desire it to be done. There will be willpower, but not the grace of the Divine Nature at work - unless we yield to the Holy Spirit and use in faith the graces He

gives. Only then can the graces and energies of the Divine Nature flow into our human nature so that the works we do will please the Father.

While unregenerated, we were unable to live in the true, heart-nature of God. This was because we still had, in our spirit, the selfish nature which is part of the sin nature that Adam passed on to all mankind. Scripture clearly shows us the tyranny of the sin nature in our unregenerated state, a state in which we lived to gratify the cravings of our sinful nature and follow its desires and thoughts.

ROMANS 5:12 *Wherefore, as by (through) one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by (through) sin; and so death (and the sin nature) passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

EPHESIANS 2:1 *And you has He quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins (total depravity due to the Fall and original sin); (E.S.B.)*

EPHESIANS 2:2 *Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world (refers to the fact that the unredeemed order their behavior and regulate their lives within this sphere of trespasses and sins), according to the prince of the power of the air (pertains to the fact that Satan heads up the system of this world), the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (the spirit of Satan, which fills all unbelievers, thereby working disobedience): (E.S.B.)*

EPHESIANS 2:3 *Among whom (the children of disobedience) also we all had our conversation (manner of life) in times past in the lusts of our flesh (evil cravings), fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (the minds of the unredeemed are the laboratory of perverted thoughts, impressions, imaginations, etc.); and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (God's wrath is unalterably opposed to sin, and the only solution is the Cross.) (E.S.B.)*

The potential to live in the power of the Divine Nature resides in every “born again” Believer, for we are, in Christ, partakers of the Divine Nature. The devil tries to deceive people into believing they are living in love, and even finding favour with God, merely by doing good works and not harming anyone. (Remember that we are saved by grace, not works (Ephesians 2:8; 2 Timothy 1:9.) Without Jesus in his life, man will have a selfish motive behind most of that which he does. The reason for this is that man is inherently evil (Jeremiah 17:9). The sad part is that people do not even realize their motives are selfish, or self-centered.

“. . .While unregenerated, we were unable to live in the true, heart-nature of God. This was because we still had, in our spirit, the selfish nature which is part of the sin nature that Adam passed on to all mankind. . .”

Man without regeneration cannot have God-like motives, for man cannot love as God loves without God. It is impossible. Unregenerated man has no way of pleasing God in regard to righteousness, for he is steeped in sin and lacks the power source to do so. Unsaved man has only a human nature, a sin nature and an unreliable conscience. What else but sin could govern his life, and form the foundation for self-gratification, self-promotion, seeking the favour of men not God, selfish motives, lying, cheating, stealing, etc. What hope has man without Christ – none! (Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9).

Now we cannot deny that many unsaved people do works which benefit mankind, their neighbour or their own family. Such good deeds spring from the fact that man was created in God’s image or likeness. Following the Fall, in which Adam’s spirit was polluted with darkness, and all his descendants thereafter also came into this world polluted with death and darkness, only a shadow of the image of God remained within man. This shadow gives man the ability to love, to reason, to believe as well as acknowledge, to create and to

respond to an indwelling conscience in regard to moral issues. While the shadow of the image of God has substance, however, it lacks the power to turn good actions into holy (righteous) actions. This is because without God's grace (and therefore help), we will lack the empowerment which only comes from the enthroned Divine Nature - the graces of which are absorbed into our human nature so that we can think as God thinks and act accordingly. So the shadow of the image is a form, but lacks the spiritual power to fulfill its inclinations. Man's intent, therefore, is full of the desire to satisfy and fulfill self, for every "good work" done outside of Christ is done in the context of self-rule.

“. . .Man without regeneration cannot have God-like motives, for man cannot love as God loves without God. For without Jesus in his life, man will have a selfish motive behind most of that which he does. . .”

If we are not yielding to the Holy Spirit and so not being empowered by the Divine Nature, we as Christians can also do "good works" in the context of self-rule. These so called "good works" will be religious works - works of the flesh. All our works will be tested by fire, and any lacking God's standard (performed for self-gain, or done in the flesh [by willpower], outside God's will and timing) will be burned up (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). For these extinguished works we will receive no reward. Regarding the unsaved, however, there is no Divine power working within to produce works which will please God or be stamped in any way with His holiness. Such good works may show forth the shadow of the image of God which remains in man, but are of no eternal value, because "*without faith it is impossible to please Him*" (Hebrews 11:6). No good works will ever justify man (Ephesians 2:8-9). And no good works performed by Christians who self-rule will bring glory to God or please Him. As Christians, therefore, we must be abiding in Christ on an experiential level if we are to avoid self-rule, and produce fruit that will stand for eternity (John 15:4-5).

In fact if anything is done in the name of the Lord, it must be done in faith if it is to please Him. This involves following the leading of the Holy Spirit with regard to that work and its timing. Proper holy faith consists of the union of belief and trust which comes through the grace of His Divine Nature. Therefore the person believing and trusting must be at one, through yielding to the Holy Spirit, with the Divine Nature within - and so absorbing the holy energies and graces of this nature. Anything less than this may constitute belief but not holy faith. What makes it holy? The Divine Nature does this - God's grace at work in, with and through us. In other words we need to depend totally on God's grace at work in us, through being vessels yielded to His will, not ours. Works involving self alone will never gain God's favour or approval, and will be of no eternal benefit.

THE DIVINE NATURE

The Divine Nature gives us the holy desire to do God's will, and then the power to undertake the commitment. Everything that does not stem from this - God's grace working in us through the Divine Nature - is a counterfeit of good, and therefore false, no matter how the works appear. Again, without Christ in our lives (affording us regeneration), we remain bent sinners, destined only for the judgement of God as "law breakers."

Simply stated, to operate in the Divine Nature is to operate in the selfless love of God, being concerned not only for our own needs but also for the needs of others, even those who treat us unfairly or oppose us. Therefore:

PHILIPPIANS 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife (factional motives) or vainglory (conceit); but in lowliness of mind (humility) let each esteem (consider) others better than themselves.

PHILIPPIANS 2:4 Look not every man (only) on his own things (his own interests), but every man also on the things of others (the interests of others).

PHILIPPIANS 2:5 Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let Him be your example in humility (Amp.)

Operating in the power of the Divine Nature will also cause us to act without partiality (James 2:1-9). God's Word tells us not to show special favour in regard to those who could reward us in some way, or who have higher social standing or acceptability in the world's eyes.

However, as we have said, just because people are regenerated does not always mean they will act according to the Divine Nature of which they are legally partakers. We see this clearly evidenced in Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, where he accused them of "*envying and jealousy and wrangling,*" of behaving not like Christians but like unregenerated men (1 Corinthians 3:3). Such carnal Christians have not renewed their minds and remain as "*babes in Christ,*" still flesh and sense-ruled. They demonstrate through their actions that they have not allowed the holy power of the Divine Nature to come forth in their lives, having not counted the sin nature as dead, and having not yielded to the Holy Spirit.

“. . . Everything that does not stem from God's grace working in us through the Divine Nature is a counterfeit of good, and therefore false, no matter how the works appear. . . ”

Note also that new Christians cannot be expected to operate fully (in all things at all times) in the God-type love of the Divine Nature. We must grow and mature in God's Word so that little by little, the God-type love will emanate, if we allow it to, and this will show forth in our actions of faith and love. A characteristic of Godly love is that it will always express itself in action. Furthermore, how much of God's grace we are able to absorb from the Divine Nature will generally be in direct proportion to the amount of deposited and digested Word we have received from God through the studying and hearing of faith (truth).

ROMANS 6:3 *Do you not know that all we who were placed in Christ Jesus, in His death were placed?* (Wuest)

ROMANS 6:4 *We therefore were entombed with Him through this being placed in His death, in order that in the same manner as there was raised up Christ out from among those who are dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we by means of a new life imparted may order our behavior.* (Wuest)

Wuest's translation of Romans 6:4 includes the following: "*thus we by means of a new life imparted may order our behavior.*"

The Divine Nature is imparted to us through the saving presence of God's Light being given to us at salvation. Now "*God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5). His Light or His presence incorporates the essence of God, the character of God and the Divine Nature. In His Light, bathed in His presence, we can absorb the energies of the Divine Nature, energies we need to walk in righteousness. In order to gain access to these energies and graces, however, we must have proper focus. We must acknowledge Christ's work at the Cross and that it is only in Him, being totally dead to self and so reliant on Him, that we can do anything concerning God's will.

It is only in Christ that man gains access to the Divine Nature. Believers are forever connected to the Divine Nature, and have access to the graces of the Divine Nature through Christ. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, we gain the graces that give us spiritual and emotional energy and therefore a passion and a strength to do God's will - by this empowerment that has come through the Cross. In this He alone will be given the glory, and we will gain the victory and fulfill our potential for that moment - in Christ, by the power of God at work in us.

“ . . .The Divine Nature is meant to become the power plant of our emotional outlook and moral thinking. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, we gain the graces that give us spiritual and emotional energy and therefore a passion and a strength to do God’s will. . . ”

When we say “being empowered by the Divine Nature” we mean that we are allowing God’s spiritual energies, that give us faith and passion of the highest Divine order, to be absorbed. Indeed we were created as free-willed beings who are, by design, made to absorb the goodness of God’s Light. In fact we were created to think like He does, even to love and believe like Him. Awesome isn’t it!

The Divine Nature is meant to become the power plant of our emotional outlook and moral thinking. Indeed its energies will motivate us concerning goodness and the good of others, giving us spiritual strength, holy purpose and a thirst for holiness and righteousness. The Divine Nature was always meant to function as God in man, in the Garden of Eden and after the Cross.

To make proper demands on the graces of God’s Divine Nature will cause two beings to become one in thought and purpose. The first person is of course God, and the second person is the Christian yielding to the Spirit of Grace. In other words, the journey and the goal are all about daily relationship through daily connection with our Lord in an experiential way. Communication must be based on the truth and wisdom of God’s Word, wrapped in the Anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the only way to victory, and in this the Father is pleased as we yield ourselves to Him as a son-servant or a daughter-servant in Christ.

As we know, the Divine Nature is “implanted” or imparted through relationship. Indeed we become a “partaker” of the Divine Nature by Divine “connection.” Therefore, because we are in Christ, we have implanted inside us the Divine Nature. Realize this - that it is God Who owns the Divine Nature, but He chose at the beginning

of the human race to create man to be complete only as He shares the energies of His Divine Nature with him. Adam lost this source of completeness and wholeness with God. Those who followed Adam were likewise deficient. Through the Cross, God restored what sin had taken from man, namely the grace of His Divine Nature.

The Saint is then able, as he seeks and finds, to embrace God's Word and will through and by God's Divine graces. In this way, "the image of God" that man was originally created with is restored via the Cross of Calvary - through the graces of God's Divine Nature. Man cannot do it by himself for he is powerless to overcome sin or walk in righteousness without God's enablement.

“. . . We were created as free-willed beings who are, by design, made to absorb the goodness of God's Light. In fact we were created to think like He does, even to love and believe like Him. . . ”

Man was created in the image of God. In order for that image to gain proper expression, however, the created being must draw from a power source that would cause him (the creation) to move in the potential set forth for man to aspire to. Primarily, therefore, the Divine Nature is the power source that would produce in man an ability within to flow, walk and run in righteousness. It is this Divine connection that is fused to the repentant born-again Believer at the Cross, bringing the graces of God to his heart to order his thinking and therefore his ways.

THE POTENTIAL OF EVERY PERSON

Background Reading: Ephesians 5:1-2

All people, whether they are Christians or non-Christians, whether they are doing right or wrong, have been created in the image of God.

GENESIS 1:27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.

As has been taught, a shadow of the image of God has remained in man, and part of this shadow consists of moral knowledge in our conscience. Note that the conscience of man also contains an inward moral light which gives man a measure of awareness of God and the ability to acknowledge a Creator (if man does not block off to this inner light).

Man was created with a Godly conscience so he would know good from evil at a moral level. Even before God's laws were written down, man's conscience, if allowed, would have convicted him of wrongdoing. For example, he would have known it was wrong to steal, to murder, to commit adultery, etc (Romans 2:14-15). Through our conscience we may perceive right and wrong, but this does not then mean that because we know right, we automatically have the power to do the right we perceive. In fact, man without God struggles to do right. If he does the right thing in one area, he will fail in another. So again we prove to God, ourselves and others that we are law breakers. Being a law breaker in any area before a just God means we are guilty of all (James 2:10).

“. . . A shadow of the image of God has remained in man, and part of this shadow consists of moral knowledge in our conscience, which gives man a measure of awareness of God and the ability to acknowledge a Creator. . .”

Through habitual sin, man tries to erase the moral conviction of sin (e.g. 1 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 3:13). Some Believers even allow the sin nature to be so enthroned that sin overrides their conscience to the extent that they also become able to sin, in some cases, without any sense of guilt. If Christians continue in sin, without repentance, in particular areas, this will usually affect other areas and their relationship with God as well. The more a person sins, the more that

person's conscience will become seared so that they may even reach a point where they feel no sense of guilt at all, their conscience having become alienated from their thinking processes.

Concerning the heathen, there are even people who can murder fellow human beings without a second thought, feeling no guilt at all in regard to their actions. Others allow Satan to pervert their thinking to the extent that they "*call evil "good" and good "evil"*" (Isaiah 5:20). This is quite prevalent in society today where those who stand up for God's moral laws are often criticized and despised. For instance, vocal and militant sections of the community promote the cause of homosexuality as a valid alternative lifestyle, abortion as the rightful choice of every woman, and euthanasia as an act of mercy rather than the terrible devaluation of human life.

Even the unsaved who try to live according to their conscience, and who do not habitually commit serious sin, still have the sin nature permanently enthroned in their hearts. Even if they try to live by good moral principles, they are doomed to failure in regard to pleasing God - for good works will not satisfy Him. Man can only be released from the bondage of sin through spiritual regeneration, giving him the potential to please God through Spirit-led and empowered works. Christians with the Divine Nature imparted through Divine connection have the potential to live in righteousness as they purpose to harmonize their wills with God's will. It is therefore the potential of every Believer, regardless of their culture, background or circumstances, to live in this "*newness of life.*" No one is excluded, but this potential can only be realized through Christ and in Christ.

The potential of every person is a transformed life. Therefore we are to be careful how we walk. We should be careful how we treat people, saved or unsaved, because every person has been invited into the Kingdom. We all began as sinners and are equal before God. His grace has been extended to all, and no-one is better than another.

The scriptures tell us many times over:

MATTHEW 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the Law and the prophets.

MATTHEW 22:39 . . . You shall love your neighbour as yourself (even if your neighbour hates you or is “unlovely”).

ACTS 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (shows no favouritism):

ACTS 10: 35 But in every nation he who fears Him, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.”

“ . . .It is therefore the potential of every Believer, regardless of their culture, background or circumstances, to live in this newness of life. . . ”

Some people may not be living or acting in a Godly manner, but beneath this, each person has the **potential**, in Christ, to partake of the Divine Nature to which man was originally given access. To live our lives in the empowerment of the Divine Nature is to live a life which pleases God through His grace and love at work in us!

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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1 Smith's Bible Dictionary.

2 Wuest K.S., Word Studies From The Greek New Testament, Golden Nuggets From The Greek New Testament, pg.63.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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