

LIVING BY FAITH



BEGINNING YOUR WALK
AS A NEW BELIEVER

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The following sample is from the print version of Living by Faith.

Prior to salvation we are spiritually dead, destined to spend an eternity in hell unless we repent of our sin and accept Jesus as our Saviour. One of the ways that our sinful nature is referred to in the Bible is 'the flesh'.

In 2 Corinthians 5:16, the Bible says that "henceforth know we no man after the flesh". Since the flesh refers to the state of man before salvation we know that this verse is telling us that after salvation we do not see others in the same way as we used to. The verse goes on to tell us that after salvation we know Christ and, therefore, recognize everyone's need for Him. It is how we view all of mankind after salvation. We are all sinners in need of Christ.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

The Bible tells us that after salvation, we are a new creature. Old things are passed away and all things become new. Does this mean there will be instant change in a person after salvation? No. But there will be a change in the way that we view things as noted in the Assurance of Salvation chapter. Change in a person after salvation is often a process that occurs over time as God works in their heart.

As we have mentioned before it is always good to look for supporting evidence in the Bible. God's Word clarifies what some of the works of 'the flesh' are to show us that it is referring to a sinful nature.

Read Galatians 5:16-26.

What is the Spirit?

What does it mean to 'Walk in the Spirit'?

Can we walk in the Spirit and live in the flesh at the same time?

The Bible is very clear about the meaning of 'the flesh' as God's Word shows us some of the works of the flesh. Not everyone with a sinful nature has committed *all* of these sins. There may be some sins that have had a greater hold on your life and some that may be listed in other places of the Bible that could be a problem for you.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. – Galatians 5:19-21

God's Word draws a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. After salvation we have the Spirit of God living within us. The Spirit and the flesh are in direct opposition. We are justified by Christ's death on the cross which wipes away our sin in God's eyes when we go to Him with a repentant heart asking for forgiveness and asking Jesus to be our Saviour.

The Spirit and the flesh cannot both have control of our lives. If someone is lost, without Christ, they will be living in the flesh and cannot 'inherit the kingdom of God' (go to heaven). The Spirit is the reigning nature in a born-again believer's life but a child of God can wrestle with the flesh because that sinful nature works against the Spirit.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. – Galatians 5:17

The Holy Spirit will convict you of any sins that you are allowing in your life but your sinful nature will struggle against it. This is why it is so important that we 'walk in the Spirit' in order to live our lives for Christ. We will discuss more about resisting temptations in the next chapter.

The two natures of man are represented in other ways within the Bible to help us further see the contrast.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9 - 16.

What were we given so that we would understand God's Word?

What directs our speech and teaches us to discern spiritual matters?

What terms represent the two natures of man in these verses?

God has provided a way for us to understand His Word and to discern spiritual matters to direct our lives. The Holy Spirit teaches us to understand that which we read or hear. We are able to know what is from God and what is not through the Spirit.

These verses represent our two natures as 'the natural man' and 'the spiritual man'. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, we see that the natural man considers spiritual matters to be foolish because he does not understand them. He would prefer the wisdom of men to the wisdom of God.

The spiritual man judges all things to discern whether they are from God or from man. This does not mean that the spiritual man judges other people. God is the one who judges individual men. It means that the spiritual man has a desire to know what God says and to receive instruction from the Lord.

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