

Whose Nature Is in You?

✖ After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God confronted Adam with an important question: “Who told you that you were naked?” (Gen. 3:11, NKJV). He was really asking Adam, “Who have you been listening to—other than Me?”

God wanted Adam to realize that he had allowed something other than God’s word to influence him—and as a result, something other than God’s nature had entered his heart.

Adam learned an important principle: Whatever you give your attention to determines the nature that lives in and rules you. Eve gave her attention to the serpent by opening the gates of her hearing, her sight and her taste. She allowed the words of the enemy to entice and deceive her to act out of his nature—one characterized by pride, lust and disobedience.

The Bible says that Jesus is the “author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). The word “author” means creator, originator. When we allow Him to be the author of our natures we produce the fruit of His Spirit.

Is that the kind of fruit you’re producing in your life—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and so on? If not, who is the author of *your* nature? Who has been writing on the tablet of *your* heart?

When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives, we are restored to our positions as sons of God. As a result, we inherit the nature, character and personality of God and are no longer bound by the Adamic nature. We are given the nature of Christ (see 2 Pet. 1:4).

The apostle Paul confirms our changed status: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor.

5:17). But Paul also makes it clear that we must choose to walk in a manner befitting our changed status.

“You should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind. *Put off*, concerning your former conduct, *the old man* which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and...*put on the new man* which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:17, 22-24, emphasis added).

Unfortunately, this is not as easy as it sounds. There are so many voices competing for our attention!

Which one are you listening to—God’s, the world’s, the devil’s—or that of your own flesh? What man, what woman, what voice has your undivided attention?

Remember: Whatever you give your attention to determines the nature that rules you. Seedy programs and pornographic sites on the Internet can lead you into sin.

The scenes we view and the words we hear create perceptions—that lead to passions—that lead to actions, which develop the habits in our lives. It is by examining these habits that we can determine whose nature is in us.

Words vs. God’s Word

Hearing is especially important in influencing our thoughts. It is one of the most significant ways in which we receive information. In fact, the way we perceive ourselves is based primarily on the words that have been spoken to us.

We should be selective about the words we take into our hearts. What we receive, we believe. What we believe, we become—and act upon. The Bible says, “As [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7).

Mankind is made of words housed in flesh. We *are* the words we

have received. The enemy has used those closest to us to speak word curses upon our lives. His goal is to have us not only receive but also speak words that will create a distorted, self-destructive image in our spirits.

God, on the other hand, uses people to speak words of exhortation and encouragement to us. Words fuel the spirit as gasoline fuels an automobile. Our hearts are programmed by words.

Genesis 1 states that “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (v. 2), waiting for a word from the Lord to go into action. “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (v. 3). Your spirit, too, is waiting for a word from the Lord so that your faith can be activated.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Fear, failure, deceit, confusion and destruction come by hearing the voice of the enemy. Sadly, many Christians have bought into the enemy’s lies, accusations and strategies. We have not learned to recognize his devices because we have not spent enough time learning and hearing the Word of God.

The more time we spend in God’s Word, the more God’s nature will live in us. We will develop a keen awareness of the enemy’s devices, and our spirits will be alert and ready to hear the voice of God so that we will “by no means follow a stranger” (John 10:5).

Renewing the Mind

God’s plan for our lives is to draw us back to Himself. Sinful habits interrupt this plan by separating us from God. They prevent us from being connected to our Source and focusing on Him so that our nature will be one with His.

But let’s face it: Sin is pleasurable. It’s enjoyable to the flesh. It satisfies the soul. If we are truly honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we don’t want to give it up.

Could this be the reason Paul cried, "I am carnal, sold under sin. 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"? (Rom. 7:14-15). His flesh and his spirit were at war with one another!

No wonder he advised the Romans, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies [the acts of your flesh] as living sacrifices [the sin that is alive in me, that wars against God's Spirit], holy and pleasing to God this [the sacrifice] is your spiritual act of worship" (12:1, NIV, bracketed comments added). He knew that giving up sin was a sacrifice.

A sacrifice requires death. Something must die; something must be killed. Our weapon to destroy the sin that lives in us is our power to make a choice. Choice is the weapon that kills the sacrifice.

We have to choose to fight the war against the flesh. Second Corinthians 10:4-5 states that "the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Thoughts are perceptions put into words. They are what ultimately lead us into sin. The war is in our minds, and we can win the war by being active and alert, ready to demolish every perception that will lead us to ungodly passions and actions. To do this, we must follow Paul's admonition: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

If the enemy can keep us distracted from God's plan, then he will destroy us. That's why it is necessary for us to keep our

minds on God. *Whatever you give your attention to determines the nature that lives in you.*

God has empowered us to win the battle against the enemy. He has “given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” and has made us “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:3-4, NKJV). We appropriate these things by spending time in His Word—listening to Him—and making a conscious effort to be imitators of Christ so that His nature, and His alone, will live in us.

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