

The Two Natures

ROMANS 7:1-25

MEMORY VERSE

ROMANS 7:25

I thank God-through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many activity sheets as the number of children in your class.

Three magnets – two of equal size and one much larger.

Old dead leaves and some new green leaves for each child, poster board, scissors, a hole punch, yarn, glue stick, contact paper and markers.

Four rolls of toilet paper.

As many scripture memorization worksheets as the number of children in your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Opposites Don't Attract

There is a saying that says, "Opposites attract." While that may be true for some things, it isn't true when it comes to our old sin nature and our new nature in Jesus. These two natures are completely opposite.

You will need 3 magnets, two of equal size and one that is much larger. Introduce today's lesson by explaining that there is a battle that goes on in our hearts and minds as Christians. We have our new nature in Jesus that battles against the old sin nature. These two are always fighting.

Show the children the two equal sized magnets and point them at each other in such a way that they will not come together. Explain that these two natures are like these magnets in that one nature only serves the flesh and the enemy while the other nature serves the Lord. Our old sin nature wants us to give in to sin and our new nature wants us to obey Jesus. Do we have to give in? NO WAY!

What we have to realize is that our new nature is much more powerful than our old nature (pull out the larger magnet). Explain that this is really what the battle looks like. The Holy Spirit who lives in us is much more powerful than our old sin nature. Jesus has freed us from sin and its hold on our lives and we are now free to say yes to Him and serve Him completely. In our lesson today we are going to learn about these two natures and how that as Christians we can still sometimes sin, but we can also be forgiven and given the power to live our lives for Jesus. **Even though we are saved, we still sin sometimes.**

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever been mean to your brother or sister and wished you hadn't been that way? Have you talked back to your mom and dad and wished you hadn't? Do you ever feel like you spend more time getting in trouble than anyone else in your family? Paul talks about some of the reasons we may do some of these things in Romans 7, even after coming to know Jesus.

Do you remember last week when Paul talked about the law and being dead to sin and alive to Christ? He talked about a choice we have to make - to be a slave of sin or a slave to obedience. He also talked about how we can be freed from the power of sin in our lives through Jesus and how we can be a slave to righteousness.

Well, this week, Paul continues to teach about these things. He explains even more on how to understand some of the thoughts going on in our heads and why we still sin sometimes. **Even though we are saved, we still sin sometimes.**

ROMANS 7:4-7

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”

Let's begin with a bit of review. We really have to look at Romans chapters 6 – 8 together. We learned from Romans chapter 6 that when we come to Jesus we have become freed from the power of sin to rule over or dominate our lives. Before we come to Jesus we are under the control of sin. The Bible says that we are born in sin and we are dead in trespasses and sin. When Adam sinned in the garden sin entered God's creation for the first time. The sin and death that resulted then passed on to

Adam's children and grand children and all the way to every person born in the world. That is why people do bad things in this world, because we are sinners.

This sin that dwells inside of every person in the world is called the sin nature. It is that part of our hearts that is separated from God and desires to sin or disobey God. It is called a nature because apart from God we will naturally sin. So when people apart from Jesus sin they are just doing what is in their nature to do. That is why this world needs Jesus so badly.

In the Old Testament God gave His people the law. He gave it to them through His servant Moses. The law showed the people who were sinners the standard that God had for them to be right with Him. The problem was that no one could keep the law perfectly. So what Paul is saying here is that one of the main purposes of the law that was given by Moses is so that people could see how far they miss the mark. They look at God's law and see how perfect it is and then look at their lives and see how far their lives are from God's standard.

Then when they see their failure to keep God's law they will understand their desperate need for help. God also knew that we couldn't keep His law so He sent His Son Jesus who did keep the law perfectly. God loved us so much that He gave Jesus to die on the cross and take the penalty for our sins. Because of our failure we should have died and been separated from God forever. Instead Jesus died for us so that if we would simply believe then we could be forgiven of all of our sin.

But something else takes place when we come to Jesus. We are made a brand new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are given a brand new nature to replace the old sin nature. So now we have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us and helping us to live for Jesus through our new nature (John 14:17; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18). That is why as a Christian we desire to do things that please God. Serving Jesus now becomes the natural thing for us to do.

So now we have the old sin nature that is made powerless over our lives through Jesus (Romans 6:18). That doesn't mean that we won't ever have the desire to do something wrong again, but it does mean that we can now, in the Holy Spirit, allow our new nature to direct how we live our lives. And we can live our lives to please God and to bear fruit. **Even though we are saved, we still sin sometimes.**

Paul tells us that the sin nature makes yucky, dead fruit in our lives. He says the new nature produces wonderful, alive fruit in our lives. Picture two different trees: one in the wintertime, with leftover, dead fruit on it, shriveled, no leaves, bare, not useful for anything.

Now picture a tree in the summertime: full of luscious, sweet fruit, lots of leaves, pretty, good for shade, good for food, good for people. Which one would you want YOUR life to look like? Remember what Galatians 5:22, 23 says about God's fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control).

Paul tells us that we need to live our lives "in the new way of the Spirit". If we obey and give our lives to living in the Spirit then WOW, what the Lord will produce in our lives. We can be used by Him to really make a difference in this world.

New Nature Bookmark

For this craft you will need some old, dead leaves and some new green leaves for each child, poster board, scissors, a hole punch, yarn, glue stick, contact paper and markers. The children will be making bookmarks that highlight the contrast between the old sin nature and their new nature in Jesus.

Before class cut out strips of poster board 2"x 7", one for each student. Give each child a strip of poster board, a couple of dead leaves and a couple of new leaves. Have them glue the old leaves at the top of the bookmark and with a marker write under them "Old Nature". Next glue the new leaves under the old leaves write under them "New Nature".

At the bottom of the book mark write "Romans 7 – Jesus makes me brand new!" Allow the children to finish decorating their bookmark however they wish. Cover the bookmark with contact paper on both sides. With scissors trim the edges to make them straight. Punch a hole at the top and tie a piece of yarn to the end. Explain to the children that they can hang onto this bookmark as a reminder that Jesus has given them a brand new nature.

ROMANS 7:14-20

For we know that the law is spiritual, but 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.

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 to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Have you ever thought to yourself that you would like to go make your bed or take out the trash or set the table because you know that's what your mom wants you to do without being told? But then you start to think about it and remember that you would really much rather play a video game.

Have you ever got into an argument with your brother or sister and thought, "I really shouldn't be arguing because that isn't honoring to the Lord"? But then you think, "Wait a minute, they were mean to me and I really want my way", so you keep on arguing?

These are just a couple of examples of the types of battles that happen for Christians all of the time. We have a thought or something placed on our hearts by the Holy Spirit to do something right or good. Our new nature in Jesus is helping us to know what to do. But then another thought enters our mind. Our old nature, or flesh enters in and reminds us that we may not have fun doing that, or we won't get what we want, or what I want is more important than someone else. That kind of battle takes place all of the time. **Even though we are saved, we still sin sometimes.**

But what do we do when these thoughts enter into our minds? The Lord understands this struggle and He has equipped us with all we need to make the right choices. We don't have to give in to what our old nature tells us to do. Remember that we have been freed from sin so that we no longer have to serve it or do what it says for us to do. Also remember that we have the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us to give us the power and strength to do what is right.

What we have to do when we find ourselves in this battle is to stop and remember to pray. Ask God to help you to choose to do what is right. We can even ask God to help us to WANT to do what is right. This is true whether we are tempted to do something wrong, or just trying to figure out the right thing to do (1 Corinthians 10:13). What you will find is that if you choose to do what is right and pray to ask God for strength that He will be there and help you to do the right thing every time.

God knows our weaknesses and will help us. He wants us to realize that we are weak and to call out to Him. And we will sin sometimes, but really we should be choosing to do what is right as Christians a lot more than sinning. If sin is ruling in our lives then it could be indicating something that is wrong in our hearts. But when we do sin we need to remember that when we realize that we have done wrong and we are sorry in our heart that we can go to the Lord, confess our sin and be completely forgiven (1 John 1:8, 9).

ROMANS 7:21-25

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

This battle between the two natures can make us pretty frustrated if we don't understand what is happening. Paul was saying that He really wants to do what is right, but there are those old desires sometimes to sin. And he talks about it being a battle in his mind. **Even though we are saved, we still sin sometimes.**

He asks, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Paul realized that it is our flesh and its desires that keep us from being able to serve God perfectly all of the time. But then His thoughts turn to Jesus in thanksgiving because he remembers that it is through Him that we are delivered.

Right now we are freed from the power and control of sin over our lives, but one day we will lay down this flesh and receive new, glorious bodies. We will no longer sin. The sin nature will be completely done away with and we will be able to completely serve Jesus without any thoughts or desires towards sin. That day will come when He returns for us

What a blessing to know that the Lord has given us everything we need to live for Him. We can live for Him right now and allow His wonderful new nature to rule in our lives. We can bear fruit for Him as we continue to grow in Him.

Another part of this is that it is important that we nurture our nature. In other words if we truly do want our new nature in Jesus to rule in our hearts and lives then we need to spend time in fellowship with the Lord. We need to pray and spend time with Him in His word. We need to fellowship with other Christians and listen as His word is taught at church. All of this will nourish our new nature and help us to grow into the Christians that the Lord wants us to be.

At the same time we need to starve our old nature. If we still allow things into our minds and hearts that feeds our old natures then it is going to be harder for us not to give in to those fleshly desires. Things like bad movies, or bad language or bad music can all feed our flesh. Let's give our minds over to the things that are good and pure (Philippians 4:8).

Toilet Paper Chase

For this game you will need 4 rolls of toilet paper. Divide your class into 4 teams of equal numbers. If you have a small class then 2 equal teams are OK too. Have each team designate one person to be their person to get wrapped up. Have the teams form in circles in different areas of the classroom. The designated student should be in the middle. Give each team one roll of toilet paper.

When you say go the team should take the toilet paper roll and by passing to each other around the circle they are to wrap up the person in the middle. Start at the feet and work up. The first team that runs out of toilet paper **WITHOUT ANY SHEETS BREAKING** wins. So, while they need to go fast they also have to be careful not to break any sheets off.

When the students in the middle are all wrapped up quiet the class for a moment and talk about how that when we compromise with sin in our lives, or allow our old nature to rule then we will get all tangled up in sin again. Sin will begin to place its hold on us and put us back under bondage. But if we ask for forgiveness and choose to follow Jesus then we will be freed to serve Him.

Next have the teams race again to see which team can unroll the student in the middle and roll the toilet paper back onto the cardboard roll. Make sure that no sheets break on this one as well. Declare a winner.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for their salvation. Allow them to ask the Lord to help them through the Holy Spirit to live completely for Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

