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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Ephesians**

by Warren Doud, Director  
*Grace Notes*

### Lesson 14

#### Ephesians 4:17-24

Confession of Sin

Occupation with Christ

Separation

Sin Nature

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## Ephesians

### Lesson 14: Ephesians 4:17-24

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## Instructions for Completing the Lessons

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Read the whole book of Ephesians often. It is a short book, and reading it many times will help you understand the story much better.

### **Instructions**

1. Read the introduction to the study of Ephesians
  2. Study the Ephesians passage for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.
  3. **Review** all of the notes in the Ephesians lesson.
  4. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
  5. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to *SAVE* your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at *Grace Notes* as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.
  6. To send the Quiz back to *Grace Notes*, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.
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## Ephesians 4:17

**This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.**

This passage of Ephesians, verses 17 to 24, is probably the strongest and most graphic warning to Christians in the New Testament!

Paul issues this warning now because he knows that the great results of the previous verses depend on the personal choices that people make in the Christian life.

In this passage we are shown that it is possible for a Christian to have a darkened spirit (soul), an understanding that is like that of an unbeliever (other Gentiles), and the empty soul that has no spiritual understanding in it.

And we are also shown that it is completely unnecessary for any of us to have these problems. But as long as we live we are dependent on doctrine from the Word of God and on our day-to-day resolve to learn Bible truth at the feet of those the Lord has provided as communicators.

The developed Christian life in Grace is supposed to lead to maturity, edification, and effective function, as described in 4:11-16. But when a Christian's understanding is darkened, he becomes sensitive to the opinions of other people, his self-consciousness leads him to flail around in a hundred directions. Self-consciousness leads to self-pity, then bitterness and implacability.

But God has ordained a system for getting Bible truth into the believer, via the . It is incumbent upon every believer to keep himself on track by staying in God's plan for spiritual growth.

### "This I say, therefore"

"This" is a reference to the statements which follow, comments on the subject of insensitivity, obtuseness, and indifference in the soul.

Indifference to the Word of God is a Christian's greatest occupational hazard. The apostle warns about the hardness of soul which is the direct result of failure to obtain Bible teaching and spiritual understanding.

The first hints about the problems of immaturity are brought out in Eph. 4:14. Immature Christians are "children", gullible, pushed about by every phony idea that comes along ("winds of doctrine"), and easily fooled by crafty imitators.

Everyone begins the Christian life as a novice; we all started our Christian walk as "babes in Christ." A new believer is expected to be naive, to behave as a "child", and not to know how to function as an "adult." Young children have to grow up.

But the spiritual "babe" needs to take in spiritual food every day in order to grow. Otherwise, the effects of spiritual malnutrition will be obvious for everyone to see. Verses 11 to 16 tell us how to grow up spiritually and function like adults. Verses 17 to 19 verses show what happens to Christians who do not follow the Lord's plan for growth.

**"and testify in the Lord"** - a use of the verb MARTUREW, "to make a solemn appeal".

Paul is very concerned for his Ephesian friends and colleagues. In his wide travels he has seen every kind of dysfunctional Christian. He knows what Christians need for Christian growth and spiritual health, and he knows how easy it is for indifference to develop. He begs his friends not to "walk as other Gentiles walk".

### "that you walk not as other Gentiles walk"

"walk" refers to the pattern of life a person follows. Chapter 4 began with his exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called." And he continues in chapter 5 with "Therefore, be followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love..."

"Gentiles" is ETHNEI, the plural of ETHNOS, "a nation; a people". Here the reference is to the rest of the "general population" who have not accepted Christ as Savior. Paul is pointing out that if a Christian has deadness of soul, his manner of life will exactly resemble that of the unbeliever.

**1 Cor. 3:3, "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?"**

Christians are supposed to be distinguished by their walk. But there are believers, just as there are

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unbelievers, who are moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, self-righteous and legalistic, living in overt sin or not, in short having nothing to distinguish them from other people.

Now begins the statement of the main problem in Christianity and in individual Christians' lives.

### "in the vanity of their mind"

"Vanity" is the Greek word MATAIOTEIS, "emptiness; vanity; fruitlessness; without profit".

A believer who is occupied with Christ and living in the Word is constantly "renewing his mind" by a process in which he continually takes in (inhales) the Word of God and exercises the Word (exhales). Let's read ahead...

**Eph. 4:22-24, That you put off concerning the former manner of life the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND, and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

The apostle Paul makes a very similar plea to the Christians in Rome in Romans 12.

**Romans 12:1,2, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

The opposite of a RENEWED mind is an EMPTY mind.

A negative Christian "exhales", that is, he thinks, speaks, and acts based on the contents of his mind. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." However, because he does not "inhale" the Word of God, he can only "exhale" his own ideas, his own doctrines, or the ideas and doctrines that he has picked up from whatever sources in the world.

When a soul is empty, there is a resulting "vacuum" that pulls in false doctrines, doctrines of demons, darkness. Satan has a complete system of

false theology to be used to ensnare the novice, the unprotected, the gullible. Today these doctrines may be any system of religion, existentialism, communism, or any other non-biblical proposition. Into the "vacuum" will go misery, mental attitude sins, religion, legalism, emphasis on details of life, human viewpoint, and so forth.

**1 Tim. 4:1-3, Now the Spirit speaks expressly that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by them who believe and KNOW THE TRUTH.**

"of their mind" - NOUS. This word is a reference to the mind as a container of the thoughts of the soul. The phrase is not "...vanity of thoughts" but "...emptiness of the mind, the container of thoughts."

The verb equivalent to NOUS is NOEW, "to think". The noun, therefore, means "place of thinking". Both these words are used extensively in the Greek New Testament; and both words are used with various prefixes to indicate different kinds of thinking.

For example, DIANOIA is DIA + NOUS. DIA is the preposition "through", so DIANOIA are thoughts moving "through the mind", or simply "active thoughts." This is used in Eph. 4:18.

In another example, the Greeks had an expression for changing one's thoughts, METANOIA, the "changing of the mind." This word was translated "repentance" in the King James Version, and the word "repent" 17th Century England meant "to rethink" or to change one's mind about something. The change in idiom in modern times has resulted in a lot of confusion about repentance; but repentance is simply changing one's mind, reversing previous thinking.

Verse 17 reads, then, "This is say, therefore, and make a solemn warning in the Lord that your manner of life is not to be as the Gentiles manner of life, in the emptiness of the mentality of the soul."

## Ephesians 4:18

**"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;"**

"Understanding" is DIANOIA, the activity of thinking in the soul.

READ Isa. 55:7-9, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, says the Lord ..."

There are two types of active thinking [DIANOIA] that are available to a Christian.

The first type is called DARKNESS and refers both to satanic thoughts and human viewpoint.

**Col. 1:21, And you that were once alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled."**

**2 Cor. 10:5, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.**

And from 1 Tim. 4:1, "...doctrines of demons"

The opposite type of active thinking is DOCTRINE, which is the Word of God active in the mind of the believer.

Again - the way a believer sets himself up for trouble and darkness in the soul is to NEGLECT BIBLE TEACHING. It happens when one is too busy, apathetic, antagonistic toward doctrine, or antagonistic toward the teacher of doctrine.

**"darkness"** is SKOTIDZW, "to shroud in darkness; to be benighted; to bring about moral obscurity."

The process of darkness: the Christian who is negative toward Bible truth opens up his soul and empties it; satanic doctrines occupy the soul by moving into the vacuum. There are scores of repercussions; here are eight of them.

1. Darkness causes a Christian to fail to orient to the plan of God. He does not know God's plan or how it works, and he does not know how he fits into God's plan.
2. Darkness brings about a failure to orient to the grace of God. The result is arrogance and

legalism, lack of forgiveness, lack of graciousness.

3. Darkness causes inner misery, unhappiness, lack of peace. These things cannot be compensated for by anything in life, but the negative Christian spends his life in a frantic but futile pursuit of happiness through the details of life.
4. Darkness can bring about neuroses and psychoses.  
**Phil. 4:6,7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard [STABILIZE] your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**
5. Darkness results in a frantic search for happiness through details of life, or through some form of sublimation.
6. Darkness leads to slavery to the details of life. Sins may grow out of legitimate things in life (money, success, pleasure, sex, social life, family, loved ones, career, hobbies, health, status symbols).
7. Darkness leads to apostasy, erroneous thinking, false doctrine in the soul.
8. Darkness is accompanied by a lack of capacity to love, leading to pseudo-love towards God, family, the community.

**"being alienated from the life of God"** - the perfect passive participle of APALLOTRIOW, "to alienate".

Disorientation to the plan of God is a result of darkness. A Christian can live his whole life on this earth and always be out of phase with God's plan for his life. This can go on indefinitely as long as the believer refuses to hear and believe the Word of God.

All of this is caused by...

**"through the ignorance that is in them"** - DIA plus AGNOIA. "By means of" or "because of" the "ignorance" that is in them.

This word is, literally, "no thinking". The Greek word describes someone who is ignorant of the

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content of something that he is supposed to know. To "ignore" means "not to think about".

Therefore, the Christian in darkness either has not learned Bible doctrine, or he does not think of the Bible doctrine to which he has been exposed. So he lives in darkness. Without knowledge of the Word of God it is impossible to orient to God's plan of Grace. When a believer lacks knowledge and edification he is out of step with the plan of God.

"in them" refers to believers who have darkness in their souls.

### "because of the blindness of their hearts"

"Blindness" is POROSIS, which is a direct cognate of the English word "porosis". POROSIS means "callous" or "something which has hardened or petrified". It is used for the buildup of scars from multiple wounds in the same place, hence "scar tissue."

So verse 18 reads, "Having become darkened in thinking, having been alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the callous on their heart."

So, in verses 17 and 18, all the ingredients for soul blackness have been presented:

Negative volition towards Bible truth

The resulting callous (scar tissue) on the soul

The opening up of the vacuum (emptiness) of the soul

Darkness in the soul

Subjectivity

Alienation from the life of God.

## Ephesians 4:19

**"Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."**

Remember - Paul is warning Christians not to fall into this lifestyle. It is easy to associate a sinful manner of living with non-Christians. But Christians who live apart from the plan of God can easily be involved in "Gentile" lasciviousness or uncleanness.

**"Who"** is a relative pronoun referring to people who have callous on their souls, who are negative toward Bible teaching.

**"being past feeling"** is APALGEO, "to cease to feel anything; to become callused". Callous develops from failure to learn and appropriate the Word of God. For the negative Christian, callous remains on the soul and accumulates, resulting in a lack of feeling. In other words, his situation continually gets worse.

Darkness of the soul is characterized by mental attitude sins, such as arrogance, bitterness, jealousy, worry, vindictiveness, implacability.

The antidote is first, Confession of Sin; then, Occupation with Christ and Living in the Word.

**"have given themselves over unto lasciviousness"**. Literally, "have betrayed themselves into immoral sexual activity (ASELGEIA)"

Topic: SEXUAL HEALTH IN THE BIBLE

**"to work all uncleanness"** - or, "to make a profession of impurity".

**"with greediness"** - this is the frantic search for happiness through the details of life. Because details of life cannot satisfy, the search becomes more and more intense, resulting in greediness.

Greediness is the willingness to do something immoral, illegal, or harmful to other people in order to obtain something one desires. The Christian life removes greediness because a believer trusts God to supply all needs and has the patience to wait for God's timing in everything.

Topic: CONFESSION OF SIN

Topic: OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST

## Ephesians 4:20,21

**But you have not so learned Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:**

Francis Foulkes in "Ephesians", "'But you' the apostle says to his readers, emphasizing the personal pronoun, 'can no longer walk in that way. You have not so learned Christ. The truth of

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God and of His purpose has come to dominate your minds, and this truth has ethical implications. Your lives are no longer dark, your minds no longer vain. You are no longer alienated but walking step by step in the full light of the Lord, and in fellowship with Him. So you must finish with all immorality, and the passion for what is impure, and for what outrages the souls and bodies of others."

The ability to stand alone for that which is right is one of the truest signs of maturity in the Christian life. It is the sign that one has openly identified himself with a superior way of life - with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE VERY CAREFULLY THE SEQUENCE FOLLOWED IN THIS PROCESS OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY!!**

You learn Bible truth; you grow in Christ; you become more like Him; you are edified.

Result: whereas you were once in darkness, you are now "light in the Lord" and you "walk as a child of light".

The Christian life is NOT a process by which you turn over multiple new leaves and form yourself into a product that is somehow acceptable to God.

The Christian life IS a process by which you submit to His plan of grace, learn and apply the doctrines of the Word of God, and enjoy His work of reconciliation, restoration, and edification in your life, whereby you grow into a place of spiritual productivity.

### **Topic: SEPARATION**

To put it another way: while separation is definitely a part of God's plan, you do not become more spiritual or more advanced in the Christian life by separating yourself from various evils. Rather, your advancement in the Christian life depends on the Word of God in your soul and your being filled with the Holy Spirit. As the Lord builds our lives, line upon line, precept upon precept, the fruit of the Spirit grows in our lives and our behavior changes, as shown in the verses that follow in chapter 4.

## Ephesians 4:22

**That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;**

Notice in verses 22 to 24 that the Christian life is one of moving from a former state to a future state, from the "old man" to the "new man". And the mechanism is described in verse 23 as being renewal that takes place in the mind. It is like a breathing process in which bad air goes out and good air comes in.

"**that you put off**" is APOTHESTHAL, "to lay aside" as in laying aside a garment.

The word "former" refers to us when we were unbelievers. An unbeliever may be religious or irreligious, moral or immoral, self-righteous or sincere - there are all types of unbelievers. And the qualities of an unbeliever are generated by the sin nature in his soul. It is very important to study the doctrine of the Sin Nature at this point, because the Bible describes us to a "T" and helps us to see just what it is that we are laying aside.

### **Topic: SIN NATURE**

"**which is corrupt**" is from the Greek PHTHERO, "to be constantly depraved". This is the strongest Greek word for depravity and means "to be marked by corruption or evil."

"**according to deceitful lusts**" Lusts are the activators of the Sin Nature and the motivators of a person who not controlled by the Holy Spirit. There are all sorts of lust patterns, and any person will have one or more of them: power lust; the desire for approbation; sexual lust; lust for worldly possessions; etc. The result of lust, among other things, is slavery to the details of life - seeking happiness and satisfaction in what the world offers, rather than through God's plan.

## Ephesians 4:23

**And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**

This is one of the greatest concepts in the Christian life! This verse describes how the Christian life works - the very process!



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If someone asks you, "How do I live the Christian life? How do I grow in Christ? How can I become a productive believer?", here is your answer.

The word "renewed" is ANANEOUSTHAI, which means "to be continually undergoing a restoration process". This is comparable or analogous to involuntary respiration, the automatic breathing process by which our lungs continually bring in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide and other gases which could be harmful to the body.

The Bible process is called edification. Bible doctrine comes in, first academically through the communication of the Word. Then, the Holy Spirit undertakes His teaching activity and gives us spiritual perception of the things we have learned. As the Word of God comes in to our souls and gives us life, false doctrines are expelled; our human viewpoint is replaced by divine viewpoint. That which is harmful is replaced by that which is life-giving.

The only way to "put Christ first" in the life is to have maximum intake of God's Word accompanied by the continual filling of the Holy Spirit.

Here is the same process discussed in Romans.

**Romans 12:1,2, I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

### Ephesians 4:24

**And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

The "new man" refers to edification, the structure (OIKODOME) which the Father builds in a believer's life. Edification is the process of spiritual growth in a Christian who is living according to the plan of God and who is fulfilling the command to "grow in grace and in the knowledge" of Jesus Christ.

To grow in Christ, a Christian must be consistent on a daily basis in staying in fellowship with the Lord through confession of sin, and learning and applying Bible teaching.

Edification is the means of advancement and productivity in the Christian way of life.

Doctrine that is learned must feed both the human spirit and the human soul for capacity for both human and eternal life. Edification of the soul is the result.

### Synonyms for Edification

Light. Eph. 5, "...walk as children of light.

"Christ formed in you" Gal 4:19, connotes edification.

"The new man," Eph 4; Col 3, refers to edification

"The perfect man," James 1:4.

"Imitators of God," Eph 5

**1 Cor 14:26, "When you assemble, let all things be done for edification."**

**Acts 9:31, "All the church were having prosperity, having been edified, and advancing in occupation with Christ.**

### Confession of Sin

The presence of the Sin Nature in the soul guarantees that the Christian believer will have a problem with active personal sin for the rest of his life on earth. This personal sin causes a deep disturbance in the believer's personal relationship with the Lord. The Holy Spirit is said to be personally "grieved", and His work "quenched" by a Christian's sin.

While you do not lose your salvation each time you sin, your personal growth and effectiveness are stifled as long as there is a rift in your fellowship with God. This rift is healed when you personally confession to God the sin which caused the breach.

Confession of sins is not the basis of salvation. Jesus Christ was judged once for our sins, on the Cross; and He does not need to be judged repeatedly for our sins. The basis of salvation is your personal trust in Christ and His work, rather than confession or any other act which you might

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perform to try to win the favor of God. ACTS 16:31; JOHN 1:12; EPH. 1:13,14; 2:8,9; 1 PET. 2:24; 2 COR. 5:21.

A Christian is always "in Christ". EPH. 1:3,5,7. So confession of personal sin is extremely important to the personal spiritual relationship that you have with God.

God requires confession of sin as the means of maintaining a close personal walk with Himself. He requires a continual acknowledgement of His rulership; and confession of sin is the means by which you express your yieldedness and surrender to the sovereign will of God on a moment by moment basis. The Lord wants you to have a very useful and happy life, and part of His plan for providing this sort of life is confession of sin.

### The Lord Encourages Confession

A novice believer may not be aware that it's possible to live out of fellowship and that he needs to confess sin. 1 JOHN 1:6; 2:9,10; 2 PET. 1:9. God both commands and pleads with us to judge ourselves, to confess, and then to forget sins. ISA. 43:26; 1 COR. 11:28,31; 1 JOHN 1:9; PHIL. 3:13,14; PROV. 1:23. Any person who reads the Bible quickly becomes aware of God's intentions in this matter.

Some Christians willfully ignore the commands to confess, leading God to employ more persuasive measures to encourage compliance. These methods include:

- Loss of inner peace, PHIL. 4:6,7
- Chastening (discipline), HEB. 12:6
- Pricking of conscience, HEB. 13:18
- Sorrow for sin, PSALM 32.

A few Christians manage to ignore even severe chastening for a long time, leading to God's administering the "sin unto death." The alternative to confession is discipline. HEB. 12:1-5.

### The Mechanics of Confession of Sin

Confession does not provide you with a license to sin. The idea that "I can sin and confess repeatedly because God will always forgive" is sinful in itself because it indicates that he believer

does not actually think the same about his sin that God does. That is, there is no real repentance or confession.

And confession of sin does not remove the buildup of callousness or hardness in the soul of the person who has lived apart from God for a long time. This removal of scar tissue is accomplished through edification, the Biblical system for understanding and applying the Word of God.

Confession of sin does not give you emotional experience, nor is it accompanied by an emotional reaction. God's forgiveness is based on His promise to cleanse, not on how a person feels. And, confession does not always remove the pain or suffering which is the result of the sin itself or which came as a result of divine discipline. Although the cursing is turned to blessing, the suffering may continue; but the suffering may be endured to the glory of God instead.

Some Christians try to get on God's good side through some means other than the confession which is prescribed by God. Sometimes a person thinks that a demonstration of sorrowfulness is called for, or that weeping will impress God with one's contrition. Others "compensate" for their sin by increasing their religious activities. Some will pray more often and longer and read their Bibles more. Some will try to bribe God with additional tithes and offerings, or with acts of self-denial, sacrifice, or service. Some will present themselves in re-dedication services and attend church functions more often. But these things cannot be substituted for confession of sin. God is interested only in a person's mental attitude toward the sin.

The word "confession" in the New Testament is taken from the Greek word ὁμολογέω (homologeō), meaning "to cite", "to name", "to classify in the same manner", "to agree with", "to say the same thing as". Confession acknowledges God's rulership in the matter and agrees with His judgment.

This is a method of dealing with the disharmony caused by sins which causes no merit to accrue to the person who confesses. It is strictly a Grace provision in which God makes a promise and carries out the function of cleansing. The

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Christian must (1) confess the sin, 1 John 1:9; (2) forget the sin, Phil. 3:13,14; and (3) isolate the sin, Heb. 12:15.

Since prayer is made only to God the Father (Mark. 2:7), confession is made only to God the Father. Upon the condition of confession, forgiveness is guaranteed and cleansing from all unrighteousness is administered (1 John 1:9). The word "cleansed" refers to the removal of the guilt of the sin. Therefore, the cleansed individual is removed from the condition of discipline, chastening is no longer being administered, and the hindrances to the ministry of the Holy Spirit are removed.

There are several synonyms in the Bible for the word "confess", as follows:

- To "yield" means to confess. ROM. 6:13.
- Putting off the old man", is tantamount to confession. EPH. 5:14.
- Judging oneself is confession, or leads to it. 1 COR. 11:31.
- Presenting one's body is analogous to confession. ROM. 12:1.

### Principles Derived from the Doctrine of Confession

Walking closer to God is, in reality, an activity in which you are more consistent in your relationship with the Lord, more consistent in your confession of sin. While confession does not, in itself, cause one to grow in Christ, there can be no growth in the Spirit as long as one is out of fellowship because of unconfessed sin. Therefore, confession sets the stage for progress in the Christian life. The ministry of the Holy Spirit depends on uninterrupted fellowship. So Christian growth depends on the unhindered work of the Holy Spirit.

Confession takes the believer out of the sphere where he is producing callous and scar tissue on his soul, and it puts him back in the sphere of the Holy Spirit's control. You can thus produce "gold, silver, and precious stones" rather than "wood, hay, and stubble".

As you learn more about the true doctrine of confession, you will increase normally in your

discernment about your own status of fellowship. You will know whether you are controlled by the Holy Spirit; and you will know what to do about it when you are not. You will also learn to recognize carnality in others; but you will be more tolerant of other people because you realize better how your own standing depends entirely on the Grace of God.

## Occupation with Christ

### Introduction

The Lord has made available many provisions for living according to His plan and growing in Christ. These provisions are known variously as "divine operating assets", "techniques for Christian living", "problem solving devices", and so forth.

These provisions are part of the great store of blessings which God has already made available to us in Christ.

**Eph. 1:3, "And has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."**

These provisions include:

- Confession of Sin
- The Filling of the Holy Spirit
- Faith-Rest - the ability to trust God and to enjoy His peace
- Orientation to Grace
- Personal Love for God
- Impersonal Love for Mankind
- Joy - the happiness of God which does not depend on people, circumstances, or things
- A personal destiny shared with all in God's royal family

This article deals with the subject of Occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, under the following headings:

- What is Occupation with Christ
- Why a Christian Needs to be Occupied with Christ

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- The Bible Commands Regarding Occupation with Christ
- Mechanics - How to be Occupied with Christ
- The Results of Occupation with Christ

### What is Occupation with Christ

Occupation with Christ is a mental attitude by which a Christian believer views all things in life with the Lord Jesus Christ in mind.

Occupation with Christ is love for the Son, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, therefore it is the expression of love for God. The Bible commands us to love God, with all our heart, soul and mind. Being occupied with Christ is a great part of our love for God. Therefore, this concept is one of the most important spiritual functions in the Christian life.

Love for God, and Occupation with Christ, results from learning, digesting, and applying Bible truth. The Bible describes the lifestyle of wisdom and the path to spiritual maturity through the filling of the Holy Spirit and growth in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is invisible to us because He is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God. He will not become visible to us until we see Him when He returns. So, loving Christ requires a system of communications which is based on thought. The system is the Word of God, God's thoughts and God's words, guarded in the Scripture. There is no other accurate record of the mind of Christ, divine viewpoint, apart from what is contained in the Bible.

Therefore, we can only come to love Jesus Christ, to be occupied with Christ, through learning the Word of God and making His thoughts our thoughts.

**1 Cor. 2:16, For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.**

This love for Jesus Christ can only come about through applied Bible truth.

**Eph. 3:19, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.**

**1 Pet. 1:8, and though you have not seen Him, you love Him [occupation with Christ],**

**and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,**

Joy and occupation with Christ always go together, you can't have one without the other. The glory with which you are filled is Bible truth, and this emphasizes the fact that you have come to know Christ through perception and application of the Word of God.

### Difference Between Indwelling of Christ and Occupation with Christ

The Indwelling of Christ is not an experience. Every Christian, whether a novice or advanced believer, is indwelt by Christ, has been since the point of salvation, and always will be. You find this teaching in John 14:20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; and 1 John 2:24.

Christ indwells believers for a number of reasons: (1) as a sign that a Christian is a member of God's royal family, (2) as a guarantee of the blessings which we have for time and eternity, (3) as a guarantee of eternal life and a life after death in the presence of God, (4) as a motivation for us to stay in the plan of God, especially when we experience suffering.

Occupation with Christ, though, is one of the processes leading to Christian maturity, and not all believers experience this. Occupation with Christ is the focus of all worship. When you worship God "in spirit and in truth" you are occupied with Christ.

Occupation with Christ is the main motivation in a Christian's life. And it is the prime solution to all the problems of life. Only positive believers who choose to follow the plan of God are occupied with Christ.

The following are expressions of the process of being occupied with Christ. Notice in each case how the Christian is involved in a thought and decision process leading to occupation with Christ.

"Christ being formed in you..." (Gal. 4:19)

"Christ at home in your hearts..." (Eph. 3:17)

"Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

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Occupation with Christ makes an issue out of knowledge of the Word of God, setting right priorities, being involved and active in the plan of God, and glorifying God during a Christian's lifetime.

### Characteristics of Occupation with Christ

1. Jesus Christ is God; so, occupation with Christ is the greatest expression of love toward God, the objective of all Christians.  
Deut. 6:5, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."
2. Occupation with Christ becomes the means for making great decisions with an impact on history.  
Heb. 11:27, "Moses gave up the crown of Egypt. He became strong under pressure, for he saw the invisible One."
3. Occupation with Christ begins as the believer moves toward spiritual maturity, Col. 3:15-17.
4. Occupation with Christ glorifies Him, Eph. 3:17-21
5. Occupation with Christ means that human beings are not raised on pedestals, Phil. 3:7,8.
6. The means of continuing to be occupied with Christ is the daily learning and application of Bible teaching while under the control of the Holy Spirit, Jer. 9:23,24.
7. Occupation with Christ is a pastor's prime motivation to teach the Bible so that believers grow in Christ, Heb. 6:10.
8. Occupation with Christ is related to victory in spiritual warfare with Satan and his angels. With your mind in the right place, you are confident of victory, Col. 3:1,2.

### The Need for Occupation with Christ

Psalm 118:9 tells us, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes." If you take refuge in the Lord, you stop expecting things from people. Your fellowship with God solves the problems that you have with people, and makes your relationships with people far better.

A person is seldom treated the way he wants to be treated, or loved the way he wants to be loved.

Outside of God's plan, this can cause frustration and instability.

This frustration becomes a major motivation in life and leads people on a frantic search for fellowship with people, instead of fellowship with God. Until a person becomes stabilized in his thinking, by occupying himself with Christ, he will be very unstable. People select their companions, their spouses, even their churches, based on the desire to be loved and treated properly.

Most of the time, people don't find what they are looking for, so they become bitter, and indulge themselves in jealousy, envy, vindictiveness, hatred, and revenge, and are very disappointed in all categories of life.

Occupation with Christ brings about a change in priorities in a Christian's life. Proper focus on Christ takes care of the problems of friendships, romance, marriage, business, or social life, and the problems that are caused by constant friction with people in all situations. Love for God and for Christ takes the place of frustration and bitterness with people.

Impersonal love, which is the professional attitude of a mature believer toward all people, provides a capacity for wonderful relationships with people in Christian fellowship, friendship, and marriage.

The Problems of Focusing on Self, People, Things

**Jer. 17:5,6 Thus says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert, and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant."**

Three great problems develop through failure to be occupied with Christ. The first problem is to have a focus on self. This is arrogance, or an overestimation of one's self. When you are indignant, or offended, or angered by the way you are treated, your eyes are on yourself. You are frustrated and bitter, and you become vengeful. You make bad decisions from a position of weakness.

The second problem of wrong focus is to have one's eyes on people. We tend to put our trust in

people in many different relationships. We think people are causing our problems, and we look to other people to solve our problems. We try to find people who are compatible, but are always be disappointed in them.

There is nothing wrong with having relationships with people. In fact, they are unavoidable. But we will always be disappointed by people until we have a personal love for God, occupation with Christ, and an impersonal love for all people. This spiritual outlook is the source of pure joy and the enjoyment of a personal sense of eternal accomplishment.

You can't change other people, even your spouse. When you try, it only intensifies the problem. What you are doing is making an issue out of yourself instead of Christ's teaching. The only person you can change is yourself; and you cannot do that by executing some sort of psychological program for your life. Personal change comes only through growth in Christ and using the assets that God has provided for solving the problems of life.

The third problem caused by failure to be occupied with Christ is a focus on things. Sometimes when you're not being treated properly, you decide to sublimate in some way by buying something, going somewhere, seeking out recreation. If you can't get away, or you can't afford your dream package, you spend your life filled with fantasy or wanderlust.

Occupation with Christ provides a new focus on life, away from self, people, and things. When you have spiritual self-esteem, it doesn't matter how you are treated, whether you are loved or not loved, or whether you get what you want. It is your fellowship with Christ that counts!

God is perfect and can only treat you within the scope of His perfection. Within God's plan, you will be treated in a manner that is most beneficial to you, with the proper combination of pleasure and suffering, joy and sorrow, social life and solitude, a combination of blessing and testing to bring you to maturity.

So, how you are treated by people, or by life itself, is no longer an issue. You are living a life of love for Christ as your motivational solution. You

have impersonal love for people as part of your functional integrity. The Lord gives you victory over hurt, anger, hatred, frustration, or antagonism toward people, even in the midst of some of the greatest expressions of frustration.

You have yourself been changed through the Word of God. You can pass all forms of testing without being destroyed. You are well positioned to conduct a powerful personal ministry for Christ, being free from the self-generated problems to which most people are subject.

### The Bible Commands Us to be Occupied with Christ

Occupation with Christ is commanded by God; it is not an option. If you are going to live the Christian life according to God's plan, you must come to the place where you are occupied with Christ.

**Deut. 6:5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**

This verse shows that it is God's will that we be absorbed with Him in our whole being: heart, soul, and might. This means the Word of God must be our top priority. To love God - to love the Lord Jesus Christ - we must know Him. We learn about Christ, the Living Word, through the Bible, the written Word. The written Word and the Living Word eventually become our main focus in life. A Christian cannot enter spiritual adulthood (maturity) without this dual priority in life.

Christians who are not occupied with Christ will always be novices, spiritual immature, and dabblers in the faith.

**Heb. 12:2, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Jesus Christ is the author and perfecter of our faith (our doctrine). Furthermore, the Bible is the "mind of Christ", the actual thinking of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16)

The word "joy" in Heb. 12:2 refers to the happiness of the Lord Jesus as he endured the

suffering of the Cross, when He was being judged for our sins. We don't usually think of happiness associated with Christ's suffering, but this was the pure joy, in Christ's case, of his being 100% occupied with the Father and with His plan.

**1 Pet. 3:15, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;**

This verse is a command to be occupied with Christ. The "heart" is the place in the soul where wisdom and applied Bible knowledge reside. We "sanctify" Christ in our hearts by having maximum understanding and application of Bible truth. By consistent learning of the Word, under conditions of spiritual fellowship (control of the Holy Spirit), a believer sanctifies Christ as Lord in the heart.

### **Mechanics - How To Be Occupied with Christ**

You have probably already seen that occupation with Christ is accomplished through having regular interaction with the Word of God. The #1 priority is concentration on Bible truth, and organizing one's life around that #1 priority. When you do that, you are concentrating on Christ, you are occupied with Christ.

To concentrate on the Word, you must receive consistent accurate teaching from a pastor-teacher. In Eph. 4:11-16, we see that the method God the Father has chosen to bring us to maturity as individuals, and to have a mature, productive church, is Bible teaching from men who are prepared to minister (preach) the Word of God.

You must listen and learn many things from the Bible. Some of them will seem to have no immediate application, but all Bible knowledge is important in God's plan for your life. If you stay with it, the pieces will begin to fit together and it will all make sense.

If your top priority is Bible truth, your life will begin to change almost without your knowing it. You will learn doctrine every day, and you will begin to use the problem solving techniques that the Bible offers. Your mental attitude will be

determined by the divine thinking that is coming into your soul.

When the Word of God is the main focus of your life, you come to the point of personal love for God the Father. You will have spiritual self-esteem. Once you begin to have love for God, and to be occupied with Christ, you will no longer feel threatened by things in life that once disturbed you. You have a relaxed mental attitude and spiritual joy, which is happiness supplied by God that you have regardless of circumstances, things, or the people in your life. This process is demonstrated in 1 Peter 1:6-8.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

that the proof (genuineness) of your faith (doctrine), being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

and though you have not seen Him (Jesus Christ), you love Him (occupation with Christ), and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

In other words, you begin to function by using the Word of God during times of testing, at the same time as you are occupied with Christ. You are actually sharing the happiness of God as you go through life.

### **The Results of Occupation with Christ**

Occupation with Christ is the principal solution to all problems that occur in life. God the Father has provided us with everything necessary for us to have a capacity for joy and a prosperity that is independent of people or circumstances. These provisions are known as "all blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Note that the place of blessing is in Christ. All blessings, and all problem solutions begin with Occupation with Christ.

Occupation with Christ glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:19-21)

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Occupation with Christ is required in order to have complete fellowship with God the Father. I John 1:6. Walking "in darkness" is the opposite of occupation with Christ.

In 2 Cor. 13:14, the "practice of truth" is fellowship with God the Father; and fellowship with God always leads to love for God.

I Cor. 1:9 indicates that fellowship with Christ is concurrent with, and necessary for, fellowship with God. Since you were "called into fellowship with His Son," this should be your main priority in life. But this means that you have to make the Word of God your main interest in life.

Fellowship with God the Holy Spirit is also closely tied in with occupation with Christ. Phil. 2:1,2 "Therefore, if there be any encouragement in Christ, if there is any comfort of love, if there is any fellowship with the Spirit, if there is any affection mercies, complete my happiness by thinking the same things."

God's happiness is completed as we have fellowship with Him, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Then we can have true fellowship with people, without putting people before God. 2 Cor. 13:14 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love for God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." But without occupation with Christ, interaction with other people is often bad.

Occupation with Christ, therefore, eliminates the superficiality of human hero worship. Phil. 3:7,8 "...I count all things but loss except for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord..."

As you become occupied with Christ, you have a stronger motivation to have a relationship with the Lord, and you change gradually from dependence on people to dependence on the Lord. You cannot change people; it is God who causes people to change, to grow up. And no one is fully grown up who is not making use of occupation with Christ. The key to God's plan is that we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ.

**2 Cor. 5:14-17 For the love of Christ continues to motivate us, in that One died for all; therefore, all have died. And He died as a substitute for all, in order that those**

**who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and was resurrected...**

Occupation with Christ brings spiritual self-esteem and self-confidence. You have self-esteem when you stop competing with people and undermining them. You stop slandering, gossiping, maligning, and judging other people. You have impersonal (professional) love for other people, because you are occupied with Christ. You live in grace, and you are a conduit of grace to other people, because Christ has become formed in your thinking and you love Him above everything else. The result is 2 Cor. 5:14 "The Lord for Christ motivates..."

Occupation with Christ is the Basis for Production and Blessing

It is the means by which mature believers contribute to national blessing (blessing by association). Deut. 30:15-20.

It produces courage and victory in battle, Jer. 23:10,11.

It is the basis for strength during testing, Psalm 31:23,24.

It results in great blessings, Psalm 37:4,5.

It provides strength under pressure, Heb. 11:27.

It helps the Christian avoid fatigue in the soul, Heb. 12:3.

### Summary Remarks

Occupation with Christ is the ultimate function and outlook of the Christian way of life. It is the only answer to unrealistic expectations in life, which include not being treated the way you think you should be treated, and not being loved the way you think you should be loved.

Occupation with Christ is the main problem solving feature of Christian living, and it is the key to all other solutions which God's plan provides.

Occupation with Christ proceeds through three phases as the Christian grows in Christ. First, "Christ is formed in you", Gal. 4:19. As a result, "the love for Christ motivates us." 2 Cor. 5:14



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Second, occupation with Christ is characterized as "Christ at home in your hearts", Eph. 3:17, resulting in "setting apart the Lord Christ in your hearts", 1 Pet. 3:15.

Third, in spiritual maturity, "Christ is exalted in my body, whether by life or by death," Phil. 1:20. The result "for me, living is Christ and dying is profit," Phil. 1:21.

Phil. 3:7-10, "Whatever things were gain to me, I have concluded them loss for the sake of Christ, I conclude all things to be loss because of the surpassing greatness of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, because I have suffered the loss of all things, and I now consider them dung in order that I may gain Christ. And that I may be demonstrated in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Christ in the fellowship of His death."

### Separation

The ability to stand alone for that which is right is one of the truest signs of maturity in the Christian life. It is the sign that one has openly identified himself with a superior way of life - with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When a person takes a stand, he is saying to others that he has something worth standing for. This type of commitment attracts followers and is one of the primary characteristics of a good leader.

One of the strongest pressures against being true to the Word of God comes from friends who have compromised their own standards or who have rejected Christ's standards in some way. The most serious consequence of not taking a stand is that the Word of God is not upheld by the believer's testimony. The Bible has a great deal to say about the believer's obligation to separate from people who knowingly and willfully disobey the Lord.

Separate yourself from those who are doctrinally disorderly.

**I Tim. 6:3-5. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even**

**the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness: He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself."**

**II Tim 3:1-5. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."**

Avoid those who cause divisions and offense.

**Romans 16:17,18. "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."**

Separate from the world.

**John 15:19 "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."**

Separate from the works of darkness.

**Eph. 5:11,12 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."**

Separate from Christians walking disorderly.

**II Thess. 3:6** "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

Those who would not repent were excommunicated.

**Matt. 18:15-17** "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

**Titus 3:9-11** "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

Separate from false teachers.

**II John v. 10** "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:"

**Col. 2:8** "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

**Prov. 19:27** "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

**Prov. 14:6-8** "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. Go from the

presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit."

**Psalm 1:1.** "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Separate from the sinful activities of the unbeliever.

**1 Cor. 5:9-11**

**I Kings 11:12**

**II Cor. 6:14**

**II Chron. 19:2**

**Heb. 13:13**

**Ex. 34:12**

**I Pet. 4:1-5**

**Prov. 1:10-19; 4:14; 24:1**

**Num. 33:55**

The Christian's main goals in life should be occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, conformity to His image, and fulfilling the Plan of God for his life. The believer must make careful decisions about his purpose in life. Then, he must compare every activity in his life with his goals to see whether the activity helps or hinders him in reaching the goals.

The following notes provide examples of the uses of the word ἀφορίζω (separation) in the Bible:

**Matt. 13:49-51**, the wicked are separated from the righteous at the final judgment.

**Matt. 25:31-46**, the sheep are separated from the goats.

Are you one of the righteous? How do you know? Can you explain to a friend how he can be one of the sheep instead of one of the goats?

**Luke. 6:22**, the righteous man is ostracized by the worldly.

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Acts 13:2, Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were separated to the work of the ministry.

2 Cor. 6:17, "touch not the unclean thing."

Gal. 1:15, Paul separated from his mother's womb.

Gal. 2:12, Peter wrongfully separated himself from Gentiles for fear of the opinion of the Jews.

### Sin Nature

The Sin Nature is that part of the essence of the soul acquired at Adam's fall and subsequently passed on to every person at birth. The Sin Nature is the center of the soul's rebellion against God. The essence of the soul contains:

- Self-consciousness
- Mentality
- Volition
- Emotion
- The Sin Nature

### The Essence of the Sin Nature

The Sin Nature has an "area" of strengths in which human good is produced, that is, those good deeds and thoughts which are acceptable to man but which are unacceptable to God for purposes of salvation or spiritual growth. Isa. 64:6; Rom. 8:8. In the Bible, human good is contrasted with divine good which is the work produced by the Spirit of God in the life of a believer who is walking in daily fellowship with the Lord under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Sin Nature also has an "area" of weakness which directs the production of all personal sin. Heb. 12:1. Three types of personal sin are produced here: mental attitude sins, sins of the tongue, and open sinful activity.

The Sin Nature has patterns of lusts, or desires, the basic motivators of all the activities of human life. The basic drives include the desire for power, approbation, ego satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, material satisfaction, and so forth.

### Trends in the Sin Nature

The Sin Nature has a system of trends, or inclinations, which vary among individuals. Some people have an inclination toward im-

morality or lasciviousness. Rom. 1. Others have trends toward morality or asceticism. Either trend is a product of Sin Nature activity.

The trends of the old sin nature are derived from the individual lust pattern. There are certain areas in which we lust, and other areas where we do not.

The trends of the old sin nature are classified in two categories, legalism and lasciviousness.

Legalism unrestrained results in moral degeneracy.

Lasciviousness unrestrained results in immoral degeneracy.

**Both trends in the old sin nature result in distortion and erroneous conclusions.**

For example, moral degeneracy with its self-righteousness and self-vindication is often mistaken for the Christian way of life. People who are morally degenerate are often considered to be great Christians.

Morality originates from the laws of divine establishment, designed for the entire human race. Morality is designed for both believer and unbeliever.

Anything the unbeliever can do is not a part of the Christian way of life. The Christian way of life is a supernatural way of life and demands a supernatural means of execution, i.e., the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Virtue supersedes morality in the protocol plan of God. But if your trend is toward legalism, people assume you're a great Christian.

There is also a distortion involving those with a trend toward lasciviousness.

Christians say such a person cannot do "those things" and still be a Christian.

Immoral degeneracy, with its fornication, violence, terrorism, murder, dope addiction, is construed as not being Christian.

So in the first distortion, people think that if you're very moral you're living the Christian life. In the second distortion, people think that if you raise hell you're probably not a Christian at all.

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Legalistic shock concludes it must have been a "head belief and not a heart belief."

Born-again believers still possess an old sin nature and still commit sins. If the believer has a trend toward legalism, he will commit sins related to moral degeneracy. If the believer has a trend toward lasciviousness, he will commit sins related to immoral degeneracy .

When born-again believers commit sins related to immoral degeneracy, they're judged by their Christian peers as being not really saved. They erroneously allege, "a person cannot do such things and be saved."

What determines the reality of one's salvation is personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not the category of one's sins .

The believer out of fellowship, living in the cosmic system, can actually commit any sin that his unbeliever counterpart would commit, i.e., an unbeliever with a compatible old sin nature.

### Bible Synonyms for the Sin Nature

There are several terms used in scripture to refer to what is known as the Sin Nature.

Sin (in the singular) -- Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12; 7:14; 1 John 1:8.

Flesh -- the emphasis here is on the location of the Sin Nature in the "flesh" or life of the individual. Rom. 8:8; 7:18; 13:14; Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 2:3.

Old Man -- referring to the the believer's former manner of life as an unbeliever. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5-9.

Heart -- in some usages the word "heart" refers to a facet of the soul which is the source of sin. Jer. 17:9; Mt. 12:34; 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; Ps. 58:2-5.

Carnality -- derived from the Latin for "flesh". Rom. 7:14; 8:6-8; 1 Cor. 3:1-3.

### Principles Related to the Sin Nature

The Sin Nature is the source of spiritual death. Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1,5.

The Sin Nature is perpetuated in human beings through physical birth. Ps. 51:5; 1 Tim. 2:13,14.

The believer continues to have his Sin Nature after salvation. 1 Cor. 3:1; 1 John 1:8. The believer under the control of the Sin Nature is called "carnal". Rom. 7:14; 1 Cor. 3:1ff

The Sin Nature frustrates the production of divine good. Rom. 7:15.

The Sin Nature is not found in the believer's resurrection body. 1 Cor. 15:56; Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 5:23.

### Solutions to the Problem of the Sin Nature

God has arranged to provide all that is needed to deal with the problems caused by the Sin Nature in a believer's life. The personal sins of the individual were borne by Jesus Christ on the Cross. 1 Pet. 2:24. These sins will never be mentioned again because they have already been judged in Christ. Rev. 20:12.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ rejected the human good produced by the Sin Nature in terms of its use as "currency" to purchase salvation, Eph. 2:8,9. This made the way clear for God to provide salvation by grace. The unbeliever will be at the Great White Throne judgment because of his rejection of this grace provision. Rev. 20:11-15.

The believer's sins were borne on the Cross by the Lord, as were those of all people. 2 Cor. 5:21. When a believer sins, Satan accuses him in heaven. Jesus Christ is our Advocate; He pleads our case, and the case is thrown out of court.

God has provided confession of sin as a means of restoring the broken fellowship with God caused by the believer's personal sin. The believer can repent and confess and be filled with the Spirit. 1 John 1:9; Prov. 1:23.

Human good, rejected by Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8,9), is never acceptable to God, and it does not produce blessing in the life of the believer. It is contrary to the principle of Grace, in which God does the work. In Christian growth, the Holy Spirit provides for the production of divine good in the believer's life, through His filling, control, and teaching functions. God does the giving; man does the receiving.

Legalism is human good production for the purpose of earning and receiving merit or blessing

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from God. In Legalism, man does the work and receives the credit. Therefore, Legalism is a product of the Sin Nature lust patterns. Under Grace, God does the work and receives the "credit" (glory). Human good production of the Sin Nature will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is called "wood, hay, and stubble" and will be burned. The "gold, silver, and precious stones", of divine good production of the Holy

Spirit, will remain. 1 Cor. 3:10-15 to him at sixteen drachmae..."

Source materials for this article: Unger's Bible Dictionary; Kittel's NT Greek Lexicon; Chester McCalley's written notes on imputation; Moulton and Milligan studies in the papyri.

## Ephesians Lesson 14 Quiz

### Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

**Grace Notes**

**% Warren Doud**

**1705 Aggie Lane**

**Austin, Texas 78757 USA**

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

### Questions on Ephesians Lesson 14

1. What is it that causes Christians to "walk as other Gentiles walk," that is, to fail to grow in Christ and become productive believers?

Answer:

2. What is God the Father's system for getting Bible truth to believers?

Answers:

3. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and told them, among other things, that they were carnal. What were the evidences of this carnality?

Answer:

4. What is the means by which a believer "puts off the old man and puts on the new man?"

Answer:

5. Name another Bible passage (other than Ephesians 4) which speaks of being transformed by the renewing of the mind.

Answer:

6. What is the opposite of a "renewed" mind?

Answer:

7. What is it that stabilizes our hearts and minds?

Answer:

8. What is scar tissue of the soul called in Ephesians 4?

Answer:

9. Name three of the provisions God the Father has given to us as divine operating assets.

Answer:

10. Write a definition of Occupation with Christ.

Answer?

11. Why does a Christian still have a problem with sin, even after being saved?

Answer:

12. Confession of sins is not the basis of salvation. [True/False]

Answer:

13. What methods does God use to encourage us to confess sins?

## Ephesians Lesson 14

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Answer:

14. A Christian is never to have contact with a non-Christian. [ True / False ]

Answer:

15. Complete the phrase: "Mark them which cause \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ contrary to \_\_\_\_\_."

Answer:

16. A Christian should listen to false teachers to find out what they're teaching. [ True / False ]

Answer:

17. The sin nature is part of a person's \_\_\_\_\_ and is passed on at birth.

Answer:

18. There are three basic types of personal sin. They are (1) \_\_\_\_\_; (2) \_\_\_\_\_, and (3) \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

19. The people who have a trend towards overt sin (lasciviousness) are much worse sinners than those whose sins are only mental attitude sins and not so obvious. [ True/False ]

Answer:

20. If a Christian would do all of the good things called for in Ephesians 4:25 to the end of the chapter, he would be a mature believer walking in fellowship with the Lord. [True/False]

Answer:

End of Quiz