



OVERCOMING OUR HUMAN NATURE

KINDOM PRINCIPLE STUDY KP5

READ THIS FIRST

This is an important study. While it is often preached that we must 'take up our cross', 'walk by faith', 'overcome the flesh', it is seldom that this message gets into the hearts of God's people. A great many of God's sons are still grappling with the problem of their human nature. They know that the things that they do not want to do they are doing, and the things that they want to do they are not doing. They are not seeing that God has made a way out for us in Jesus our Liberator. For this reason, many of God's people are vulnerable to feelings of guilt and condemnation. They do not experience God's righteousness, peace and joy. Or, if they do, it is for brief periods in between times of suffering. Such suffering is needless if we grasp what God has done for us in Jesus and begin to walk by the law of the Spirit. We especially trust that this study will be used of the Holy Spirit to give you revelation of the simple practical life of 'the faith of the Son of God'. If you learn to walk this walk you will not only live your own life in victory but be a tremendous blessing to others. God bless you as you learn with Him.

Key scriptures for this study are:

Matthew 5:21-48
Romans 1:18-32
Romans 8:1-14
Galatians 5:16-26
Colossians 3:5-25, 4:1

Read these scriptures first; underline and write out those verses that seem especially important to you. Then go through the study notes; learn the memory verses and look up the texts as you go along.

LEARN THESE SCRIPTURES BY HEART

'What our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants' (*Gal. 5:17*).

'There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Jesus. For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death' (*Rom. 8:1-2*).

'It is no longer I who live -it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son

of God who loved me and gave His life for me' (*Gal. 2:20*).

THOSE WHO LIVE BY THEIR HUMAN NATURE CANNOT BE GOD'S SONS

As we have seen in previous studies, it is expected of us, who are now God's sons, that we separate ourselves from the world system and the works of the devil. Having done this we have one more enemy to deal with and this enemy is very much closer to home. This is a battle that will rage as long as we are on this earth walking in mortal human bodies. It is the battle against our human nature.

Paul makes it clear in his writings that he believed that our human nature is always against what God wants. To be controlled by human nature has only one result - death, because those who obey human nature cannot please God (*Gal. 5:17, Rom. 8:7-8*). The fruit of living by our human nature is plain to see in us the world around us:

'Immoral, filthy and indecent actions, worship of idols, witchcraft, fighting, jealousy, anger, ambition, envy, drunkenness and orgies and sectarianism, i.e. separating into parties and groups' (*Gal. 5:19-21*).

'Sexual immorality, indecency, lust, greed, anger, insults, obscene talk and lies' (*Col. 3:5, 8-9*).

God's anger is revealed against all the disobedience and evil in the world. Ever since He created the world His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen (*Rom. 1:18-32*). No-one has any excuse. Because people know God but give Him no honour he allows them to do all of the immoral things their hearts desire. As a result their minds are filled with nonsense and darkness, their acts are perverted and unnatural; they have no conscience, they never keep promises nor show any pity for others. Even though they know their actions deserve punishment they continue to do them and encourage others to do the same.

We know what Paul is talking about here because 'all of us have been the slaves of human nature'. That is, before God saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit which He shed upon us abundantly (*Titus 3:3-6*). We know what it is to lust after pleasures of all kinds, live our lives in malice and envy, hating others and being hated. Further, we know that 'those who live by their human nature will not possess the Kingdom of God' (*Gal. 5:21*). It is vital that those of us who have received God's life and are now His sons put to death our earthly desires; otherwise God's anger will come upon us just the same as it will on all who are disobedient to God's commands (*Col. 3:6, Rom. 2:1-11*).

WITHOUT GOD'S LIFE WITHIN US WE ARE HELPLESS TO PLEASE HIM

Paul shares his own experience and ours when he says

that 'even though I know what is right and agree with it, I find I am not doing what I want to do, but instead I do the things that I hate' (*Rom. 7:14-24*). Even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it! My inner being delights in the Law of God but I find my body working against what my mind approves of!

How unhappy we are in this condition! We condemn ourselves, giving the devil his opportunity to stamp on us for good measure. How will we ever escape from these bodies that are taking us to death? Thanks be to God who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ!

GOD'S HIGHER LAW

The revelation of the Law through Moses was of the greatest importance. It showed God's holiness and revealed man's disobedience. But, even though the Law is plain and practical, humans continue to live according to their human nature. Without exception, we have all fallen short of what God requires (*Is. 53:6, Judges 21:25*).

Brothers, the Law could not save us because of human nature. The Law can only condemn us. It cannot deal with the root problem - our disobedient nature. Not that the Law is rendered useless; on the contrary, Jesus told us that, not only will the smallest part of the Law remain relevant, but anyone who disobeys the smallest detail of the Law will be the least in the Kingdom of heaven (*Matt. 5:17-19*). He also said that unless we are more faithful than the Pharisees in the keeping of the Law we will not get into the Kingdom at all. That is, it is not enough to keep the Law outwardly, we must know it inwardly in our hearts (*Matt. 5:20, 23:23-28*).

The heart must be cleansed first; for out of the heart proceeds the things that defile a man - not what goes in. Cleansing the outside does not solve the problem! (*Matt. 15:10-20, Jer. 17:9*).

It will do us no good to think that we can hide our hearts condition from the Lord either for the Lord looks on and searches the heart. What we speak gives us away! This is what Jesus said to give us an idea of the sort of people He requires us to be! (*Jer. 17:10, I Sam. 16:7, Matt. 12:33-37*):

'Whoever is angry with his brother will be brought to trial... whoever calls his brother good for nothing will be brought to the Council... whoever calls his brother a worthless fool will be in danger of hell's fire! (*Matt. 5:21-22*).

'Anyone who looks on a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart...

'Anyone who divorces his wife, even though she has not been unfaithful, is guilty of making her commit adultery if she marries again' (*Matt. 5:31-32*).

'If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap the left cheek also... If anyone sues you for your shirt, give him your coat as well... If anyone forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two! (*Matt. 5:39-42*).

'Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you ... You must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect!' (*Matt. 5:48*).

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

What the Law could not do because our human nature is too weak, GOD DID!!! He did away with the separation by sending His own Son with a nature like man's sinful nature. God did this so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied by us who live according to the Spirit and not according to our human nature (*Rom. 8:3, 10*).

If Christ lives in us, the Spirit is life for us because we have been put right with God, even though our bodies are going to die. Further, if the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from death lives in us, then He who raised Jesus from death will also give life to our mortal bodies by the presence of the Spirit in us. NB: We can experience this now in bodily health but at the time of the Lord's coming we will know a total transformation. At that time we will receive our resurrection body which will be free from the principle of sin. (*Rom. 8:11, I Cor. 15:35-38, I Cor. 5:1-5, Rom. 8:18-25*).

Even though we continue to live in these old bodies, we are already part of the new creation which God has prepared for His sons, because we have God's life within us. Paul says this is like putting treasure in clay pots. God's good reason for this is that it shows us and others continually that the power in us comes from God and not from ourselves (*I Cor. 4:7, Eph. 2:8-10*).

Each day we are called to walk this walk: to offer ourselves as living sacrifices dedicated to God's service and to pleasing Him, to avoid conforming ourselves to the standards of the world system and the devil; and, especially, to avoid walking by our own ideas and desires. We are to let God transform us inwardly by completely renewing our minds. As we let him do this we know what God wants, what is good, acceptable and perfect in His eyes (*Rom. 12:12*). As we act on what God wants we become sons of righteousness and have truly entered into the experience of the Kingdom of God (*Matt. 7:21-27*).

As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. As we walk by the Spirit so we produce the fruit of the Spirit: love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self control. THERE IS NO LAW AGAINST SUCH THINGS!

THE BELIEVER CALLED TO TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY

The cross, for Jesus, was the setting aside of His own will to do what His Father wanted. So it is for the believer, living in union with Jesus. If we do not take up our cross and follow Jesus in this way, we cannot claim to be his disciples, for the simple reason that we are not His disciples (followers)! If we are going to find real life, we must allow our old life to be put to death. (Note: This is the work of the Spirit, not something we do ourselves, although our will is involved and we must open the door for the Lord to do what is necessary in our lives). For, we really do not know what we need; it is our spirit within us that knows all about us. We need to seek the Lord; we need to understand that our natural thoughts are always a long way from His thoughts, and our ways from His ways. For as high as the heaven is above the earth, so are His thoughts and His ways above our thoughts and our ways. To pursue our thoughts is unrighteousness; to go our own way is wickedness. We must find God's ideas and ways if we are to have any hope at all of pleasing Him! (*Luke 22:42, Mat. 16:24, Mark 8:34-38, Luke 14:27, Luke 9:23-26, I Cor. 2:10, Rom. 8:26-27, Is. 55:6-9*).

GOD'S PLAN TO REVEAL HIS WILL TO US

It was always God's plan to place His Spirit within us so that we could know all that He has prepared for us as His sons. The natural man cannot receive the things that the Spirit reveals to us; they are nonsense to him. Actually, he cannot know them because they can only be spiritually discerned (*I Cor. 2:12, John 14: 26, John 16:7, 13-14*).

To those who have received God's life within them, God is revealing everything about Himself. We do not need others to teach us, we have God's Spirit who teaches us all things (*I John 2:20-21, 27*).

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

The life of a liberated believer is one of day to day putting to death the natural man so that we can hear God's will and think His thoughts **and do what He requires of us**. Once we place ourselves in God's hands, we know that we start out on a lifetime learning experience which teaches us to be the sort of sons that are pleasing to our Father. Everything that happens to us God is able to use for our instruction and good; there is nothing that happens to us that God does not know about or that He cannot use for our benefit! How wonderful to rest in that! (*Rom. 8:28*).

Like Paul, we may be troubled on every side but not distressed... perplexed but not in despair... persecuted but not forsaken... cast down but not destroyed... always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus **so that** His life may be seen in our mortal bodies. (*II Cor. 4:8-12*).

When others see this life (the Spirit allows them to do this) we are light in their darkness; they see the Kingdom of God in us and are encouraged to reach out for it themselves. We must not hide our light (life) under a box (our mortal bodies) but let it shine for everyone to see (*John 1:4, Matt. 5:14-16*).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST!

When our thoughts are in tune with God's thoughts, we are 'thinking right'; as we let God's thoughts fill us and be our guide we are in 'righteousness'. This has a happy result for us, because, as our minds, emotions and spirit become one in tune with God's Spirit, we experience God's inner (Shalom) peace. This is the special peace that Jesus promised us! (*Rom. 14:17, 4:3, John 14:27*).

It is normal for a believer that *his spirit* is in agreement with God's Spirit because they are joined and always in close contact, but the emotions and mind can be a long way from God's mind. Have you ever noticed yourself worrying about something in your mind and finding that your spirit is singing a positive spiritual song at the same time? This sets up warfare within us. But as we allow the Spirit's mind to fill our emotions and mind (He never changes!) we experience Shalom. Praise the Lord! As we further allow God's Spirit (life) to break out of our innermost being and flow up into our whole being we experience God's joy; the sort of joy that Jesus wanted us to have. This joy, being the flow of God's life within us, has the power to strengthen us in body, soul and spirit. ! (*I Thess. 5:23, John 15:10-11, Neh. 8:10*). This can be our daily experience if we will just let God have His way! If we fail to let Him have His way, we miss the blessing He desires for us.

God has given us powerful ways of helping Him in this process of changing and renewing our minds. Paul calls these spiritual weapons. We are to use them against every imagination of our heart which opposes the mind of God; we are to bring all of our thoughts into captivity to God's Spirit, so that we can walk in the same obedience that Jesus demonstrated! Then we can say with Paul: 'I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I am alive; but it is not me who lives but Christ who lives within me. This life that I live now, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and died for me'. Praise His wonderful name. (*II Cor. 10:3-5, Gal. 2:19-20*).

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean: '...our human nature is always God's enemy'?
 2. What is the result of following our human nature?
 3. Why could the Law not save us?
 4. What is the Law of the Spirit? How does this save us?
 5. What does it mean 'to take up our cross daily'?
 6. Someone said: 'The life of faith is hearing what God is saying, and doing it, trusting Him for the consequences'. How is it possible for us to do this?
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Post your answers to:

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