The Believers Two Natures

Lesson #11

Pulling in two directions.

1. The need for the New Nature.
2. What God says about the Old Nature:
   (a) It cannot please God—Ps. 51:5; Eph. 4:22; Rom. 8:8; Jer. 17:9.
   (b) It cannot obey God—Mark 7:21-23; Eph. 2:2.
   (c) It cannot understand God—1 Cor. 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 3:11.

SOMEONE has drawn a picture of a wagon with a horse hitched to the front and another horse hitched to the back, both pulling as hard as they can. Of course, they cannot get anywhere. In a tug of war you do not go very far—just back and forth. There is a tug of war in the Christian's life, and the only one who can stop it is the Holy Spirit.

Everyone is born with sin in his heart. When a baby is very, very tiny, you cannot see the sin, and the baby does not do anything wrong. But the sin is there, hidden in his heart, and before he gets much bigger it will show forth. We think some people are very bad; others seem to be very good. But God does not see that goodness. He says that all ***our*** righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight (Isa. 64:6). One day there came to Jesus a man who seemed to be very good. He was respectable, for he was a teacher. Probably he was one of the best men in Jerusalem. He came to the Lord Jesus at night, and wished to talk with Him. The very first thing that Jesus said to him was "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). All Nicodemus' goodness was not enough. Jesus said he must be born again. Why is this? Why must a person who has never done any thing which seems terrible, be born again? What did Jesus mean?

The answer is this: Everyone is born with an old nature. This old nature is sometimes called "the flesh." That does not mean the flesh of the body, but is the name used for what we are before we believe in the Lord Jesus. This old nature may be educated, and trained so that it does not murder or steal or even lie, but that does not make it good. God says there is nothing good about it. It cannot please Him. Because of this, He wants us to have a new nature that can please Him. That is what He means by being born again. The first time you were born you became alive. But even though your body was alive your soul was dead. When Adam and Eve sinned their souls died, just as God has said—"For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). God wants you to

be alive, and so He tells you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When you do, He gives you a new life. He does not patch up the old one.

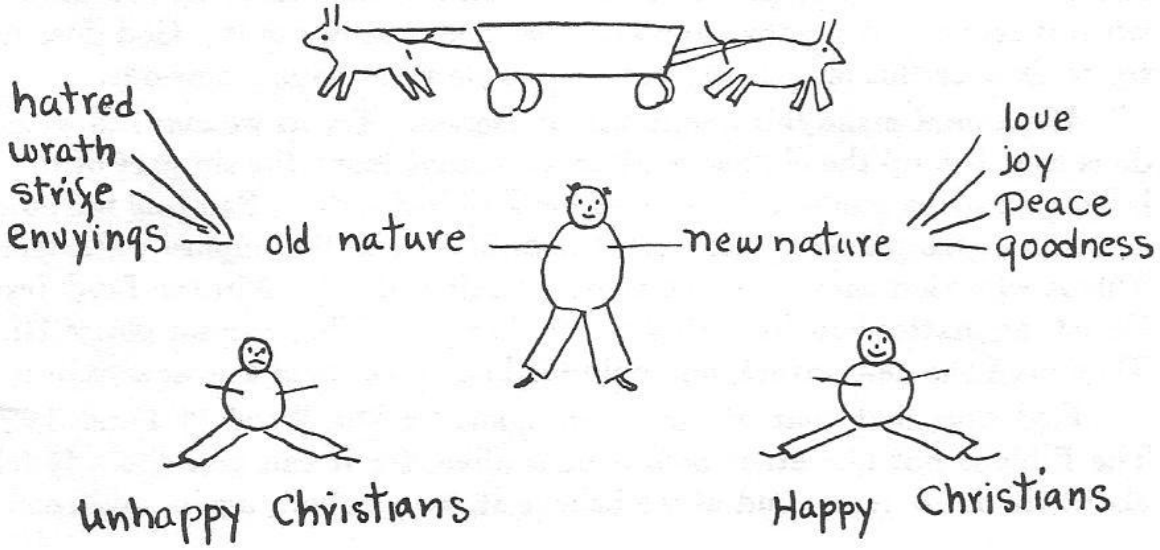
The things that God says about the old nature, the flesh, are not at all pleasant. He had to speak very plainly about it, for if He did not, people would think they could patch up their old nature enough to please God. First He says that the old nature cannot ***please*** Him. (Discuss the passages under 2a.) Even if one who was not saved should give money to a poor man, the Lord would not be pleased, for it would be the old nature that would be doing it, and as long as one does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing that he can do is good.

Then the old nature cannot ***obey*** God. That is why we cannot save ourselves. (Discuss passages under 2b.)

The old nature cannot ***understand*** God. Some people say that the Bible seems foolish to them. That is because they do not have the new nature. The ***natural*** man—that is, the one who has only the old nature cannot understand the Bible, or any of the things about God. If a person says that the cross, and the Lord Jesus dying for our sins seem foolish to them, you can be sure that that is because they have only the old nature. They are perishing (1 Cor. 1:18).

But when we have been born again, we receive the new nature, which can please and obey and understand God. All this God ***gives*** us when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTEBOOK SUGGESTIONS: Explain that many Christians live according to the old nature and are miserable, when God would have them live happily obeying the new nature instead of the old. This tug of war is described in Gal. 5:17. Following the old nature makes unhappy Christians; following the new makes happy Christians.



Name _____ Date _____ Lesson #11

The Believers Two Natures

The Big Picture

Key Verses

Psalms 51:5

Romans 8:8

Jeremiah 17:9

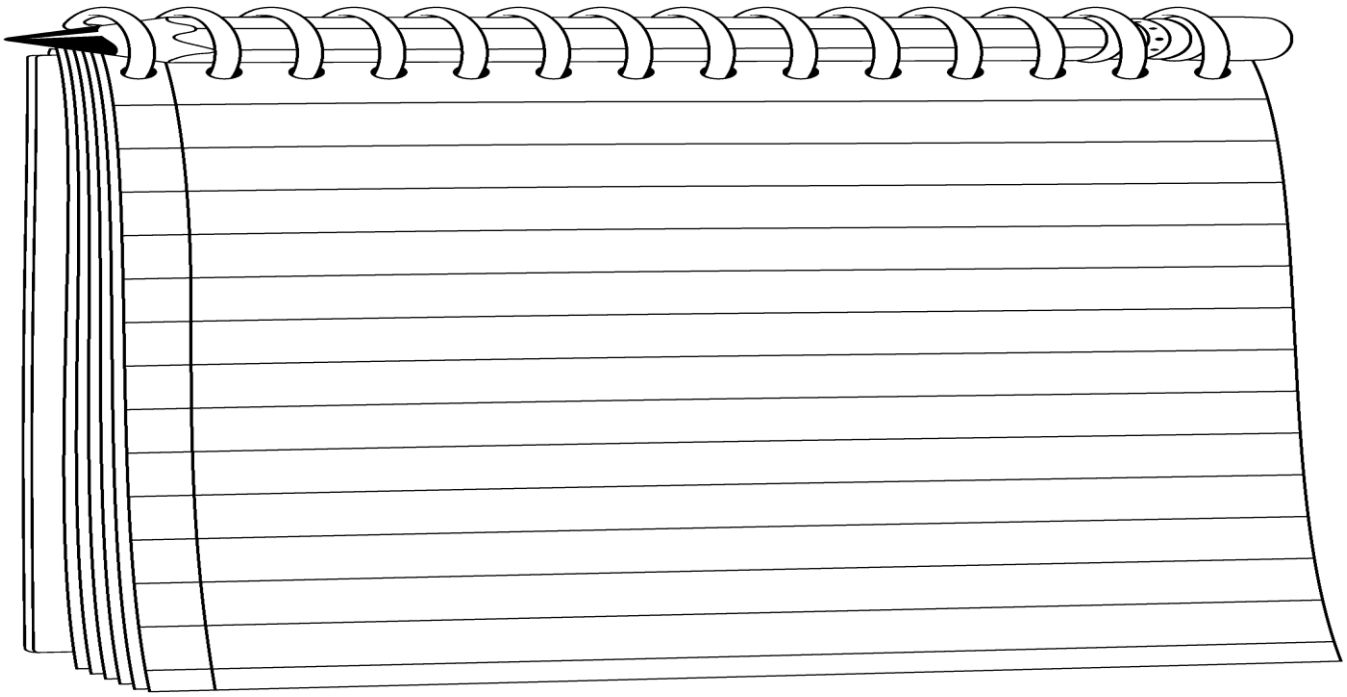
Ephesians 2:2

1 Corinthians 2:14

1 Corinthians 1:18

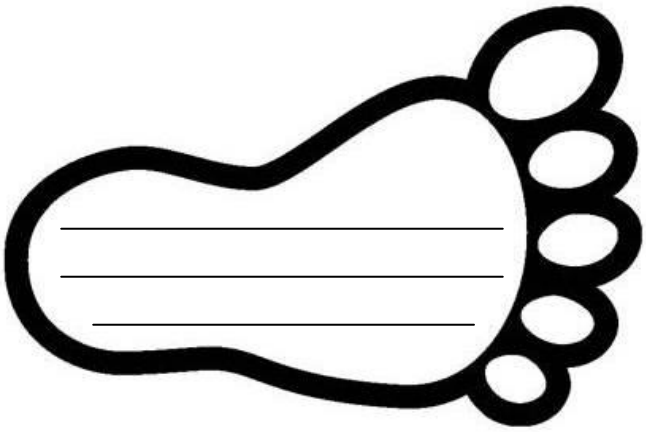
Summary

Look back at the verses that you wrote down on the other side of this page. Circle key words from each verse. Summarize what these verses mean to you in a 3-5 sentence paragraph.

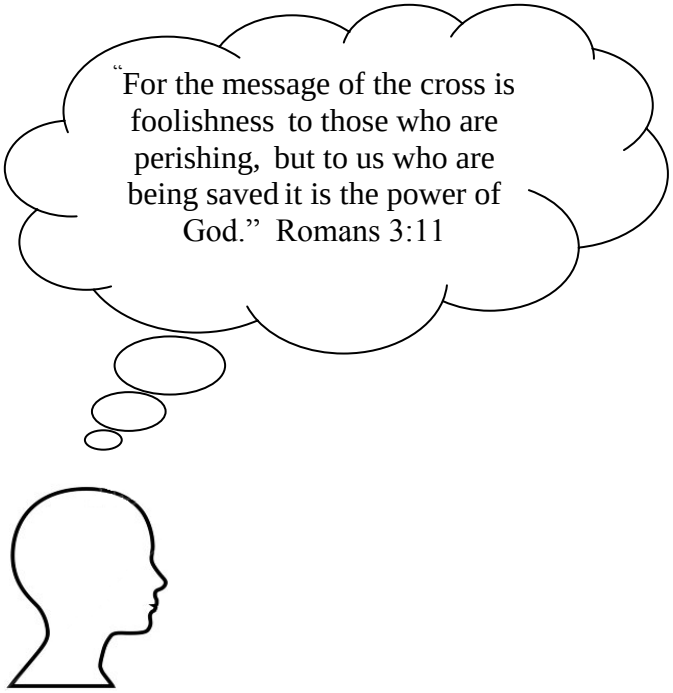


The Next Step

What is one step that you can take tomorrow to apply what you have learned today?



Memory Verse



The Believers Two Natures: The New Nature

Lesson #12

The fable of the pig with the deer's heart.

1. The need for the new nature (review of last lesson).
2. How the new nature is received—1 Pet. 1:23; John 1:12, 13.
3. What the new nature is—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3, 4; Phil. 1: 21; Col. 1:27; 1 John 5:11, 12.

THERE is an old story of a princess who had a little pig for a pet. She kept it in her room with her, and every day it was washed and had a fresh ribbon tied around its neck. She trained it very carefully, trying to teach it to be clean. One day when she had trained it for a long time, she took it out for a walk with her. All went well until they came to a mud hole, when, in spite of his pink ribbon, the little pig jumped right in and began to wallow around, happier than he ever had been before in his life. The princess was very sad, but a good fairy appeared, and told her she would make the little pig love to be clean. She would take away his pig's heart and give him the heart of a deer. A deer is a very clean animal, and so the pig, with his new heart would love to be clean, and would never wallow in the mud again.

Of course, this is only a fable, but it is a picture of what God has to do with us. Like the little pig, we have a heart that loves sin. God says that this old nature cannot please Him. No matter how carefully we train it, when it sees sin, it breaks loose and goes and wallows in it. God does not try to fix over this old nature, but tells us we must have a new one.

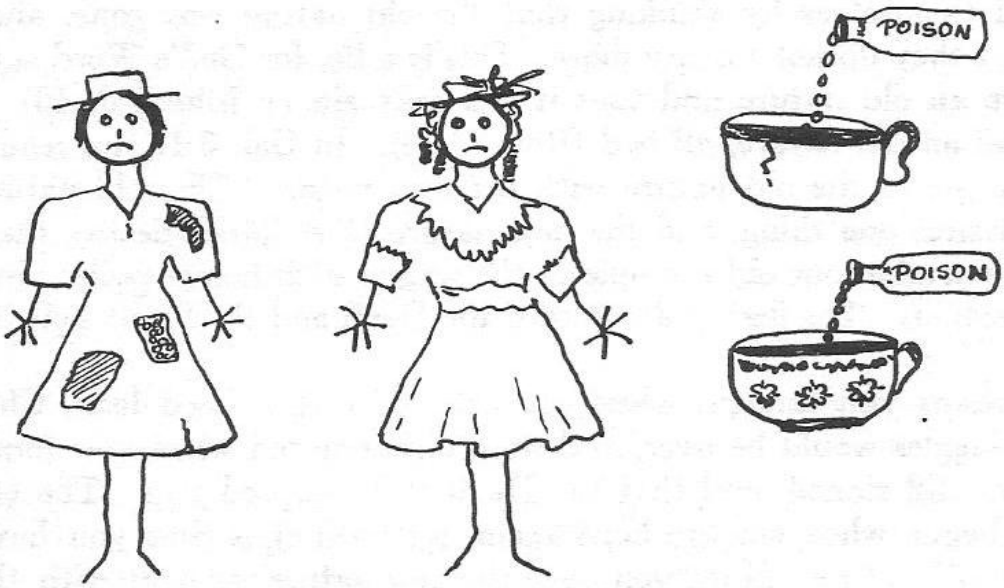
We cannot make this new nature ourselves. Try as we may, all we can do is to polish up the old nature, but we cannot touch the sin part of it. It is like painting a pump which is over a well of bad water. Painting the pump makes the pump look better, but it does not make the impure water pure. This is why God cannot accept those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter how hard they try to do right. They cannot please Him. They need the new nature, and only God can give them this new nature.

God says first that we are born again by His Word (1 Peter 1:23). The Bible is not like other books—it is alive, for it can give life. It tells about the Lord Jesus, and as we believe it, we are born again, and receive

this new nature. In John 1:12, 13 God tells us how we can become His children. We are born again of Him. It is He who gives us this new life. When you were born again the Lord Jesus Himself gave you your new life, just as when you were born the first time, it was your father and mother who gave you life. That is why God is the Father of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This new nature is not just patching our old nature. God only wants it to die, not to be fixed up. But the new nature is His life—the Lord Jesus Himself coming to live in our hearts. This is why we are called "new creatures" when we are born again (2 Cor. 5:17). Over and over we read that Christ is our life. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ." When we realize that our new nature is the life of the Lord Jesus in us, we shall want more and more to let others see Him.

NOTEBOOK SUGGESTIONS: Review the lesson as they draw; try to get the pupils to suggest their own illustrations; one may say "painting a cup will not change the dirty water in it to clean water;" "putting on a pretty frock will not change a girl with a mean disposition to a girl with a sweet one," etc. Have them draw what they suggest. Select a verse from the lesson to write beneath their picture.



Name _____ Date _____ Lesson #12

The Believers Two Natures: The New Nature

The Big Picture

Key Verses

1 Peter 1:23

John 1:12

Galatians 2:20

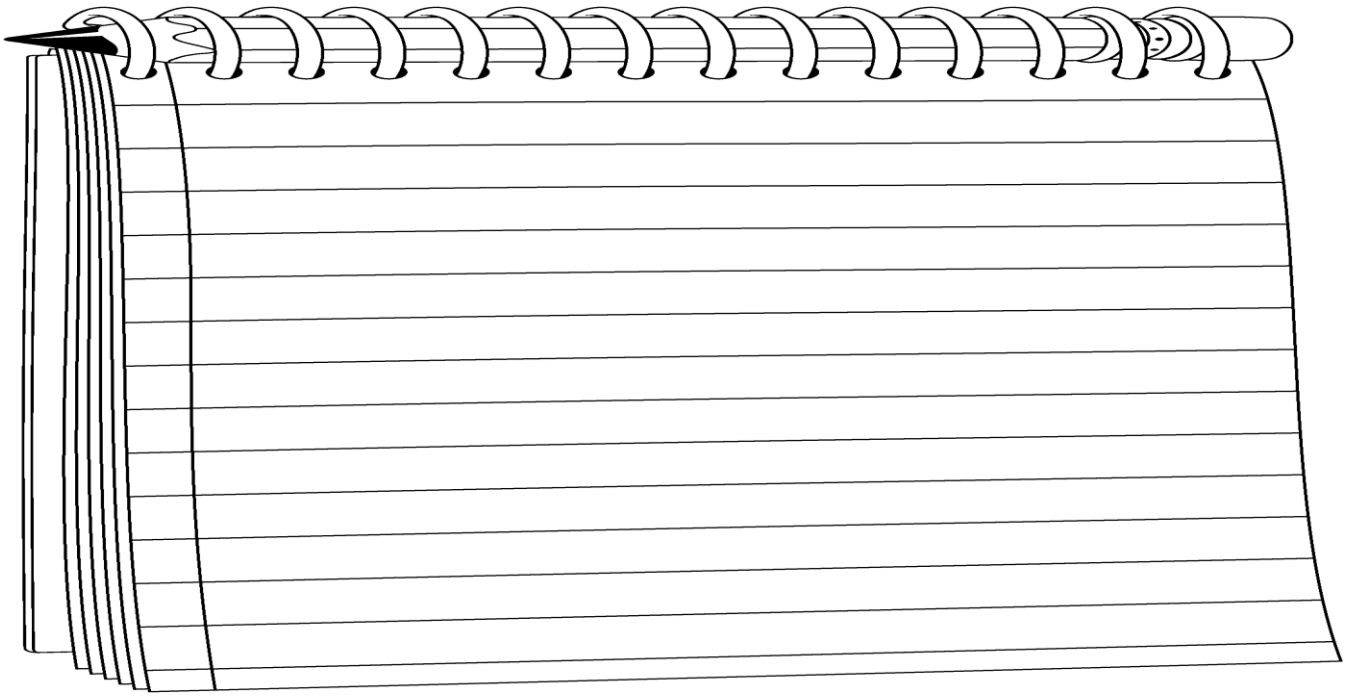
Philippians 1:21

1 John 5:12

Colossians 3:3

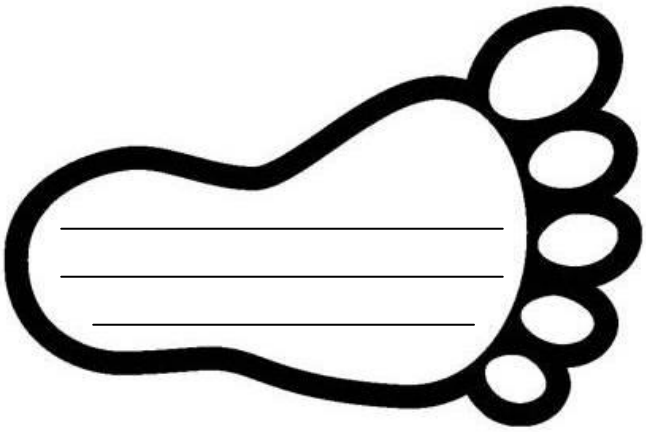
Summary

Look back at the verses that you wrote down on the other side of this page. Circle key words from each verse. Summarize what these verses mean to you in a 3-5 sentence paragraph.

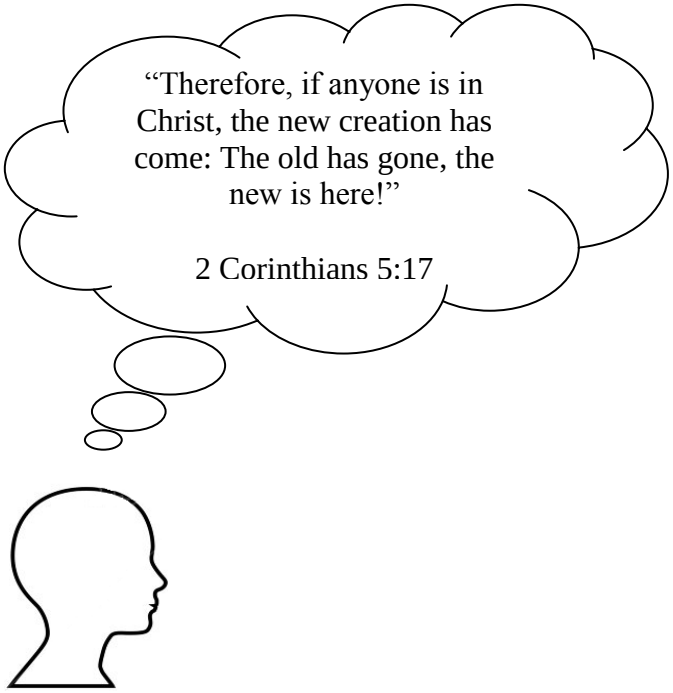


The Next Step

What is one step that you can take tomorrow to apply what you have learned today?



Memory Verse



The Believers Two Natures: The Conflict

Lesson #13

A caged lion.

1. **The old nature is not removed—1 John 1:8, 10; Rom. 7:18; Gal. 5:17.**
2. **God's provision for victory—Gal. 5:16; Rom. 6:6, 7; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 13:14.**

YOU would not like to go to a zoo if all the doors of the cages were opened and the lions and tigers and leopards and hyenas were allowed to go loose. They would immediately begin to fight and kill one another and everything else in sight. But when they are in the cages they can do no harm. They are kept from harming anyone by the iron bars of their cages.

In us we have an old nature that is as bad as a tiger. It cannot do anything good, as we have seen. God will have nothing to do with it. But when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and were born again we received a new nature that is all good—and can do nothing wrong, for it is the very life of God which He plants in us. It would be very nice if, when we received the new nature, God should take away the old nature, but He does not. He has a good reason for leaving it in us. Some people have deluded themselves by thinking that the old nature was gone, and have said that they do not sin any more. This is a lie, for God's Word says that we have an old nature and that it can only sin (1 John 1:8, 10). Even Paul had an old nature, all bad (Rom. 7:18). In Gal. 5:17, we read about the struggle of the old nature with the new nature. The old nature (the flesh) desires one thing, and the new nature (the Spirit) desires the opposite. Remember our old example of the wagon with horses pulling in opposite directions. The flesh pulls toward the Devil and the Spirit pulls toward God.

Perhaps you thought when you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ all your struggles would be over, and were disappointed when you found out that you still sinned, and that the Devil still tempted you. The struggle is only begun when you are born again, for until that time you have had only the old nature. Now, you have the new nature to fight with the old.

What is going to happen, then? Are we going to go on sinning all our lives, with the old nature coming out of its cage and sinning every day?

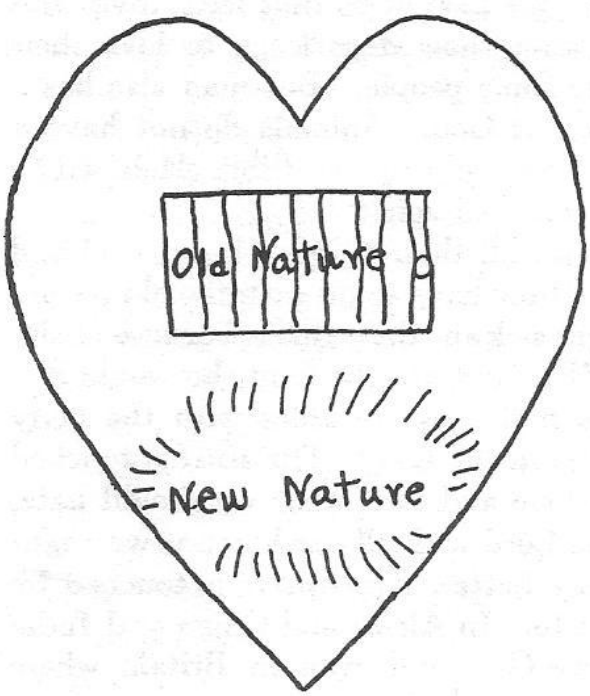
That is not what God wants. He wants us to have the victory over sin. He wants us to honor Him in everything that we do. How can we, though, with this old sin nature in us, ready to sin any moment?

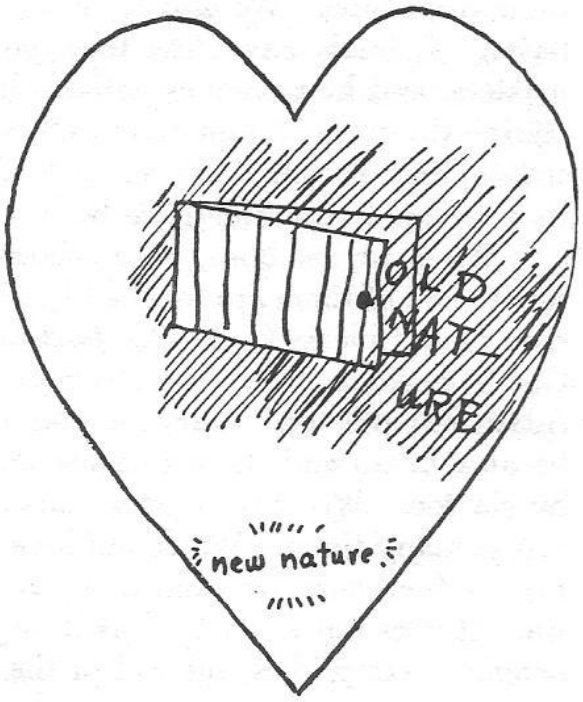
God has made a way for the new nature to have the victory. That is why the Lord Jesus died. He did not die just to save us from going to hell, but to save us from living a life of sin.

When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, God saw all who would ever believe in Him dying there too. So, He says that we are dead with Christ (Rom. 6:8). Even though the old nature is still there, God does not look at it as alive, but as on the cross, crucified with the Lord Jesus. What we must do if we do not want to have this old nature sinning, is to let God really keep it dead. We must yield ourselves to God, and ask Him to keep the old in the place of crucifixion. When we are tempted to sin we can pray to God, "Lord, I know that my old nature has been crucified with Christ, now keep it dead; do not let it get off the cross and begin to sin". God will do it if we will let Him.

Everything we do is done either by the old nature or the new. If we want the new nature to grow, we must feed it the milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), and we must starve the old nature by not giving it the food on which the world grows fat. If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 6:6, 7; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 13:14).

NOTEBOOK SUGGESTIONS: Bring a cardboard heart for the pupils to trace its outline. Have them choose a verse to write beneath the hearts.





Name _____ Date _____ Lesson #13

The Believers Two Natures: The Conflict

The Big Picture

Key Verses

1 John 1:8

Romans 7:18

Galatians 5:17

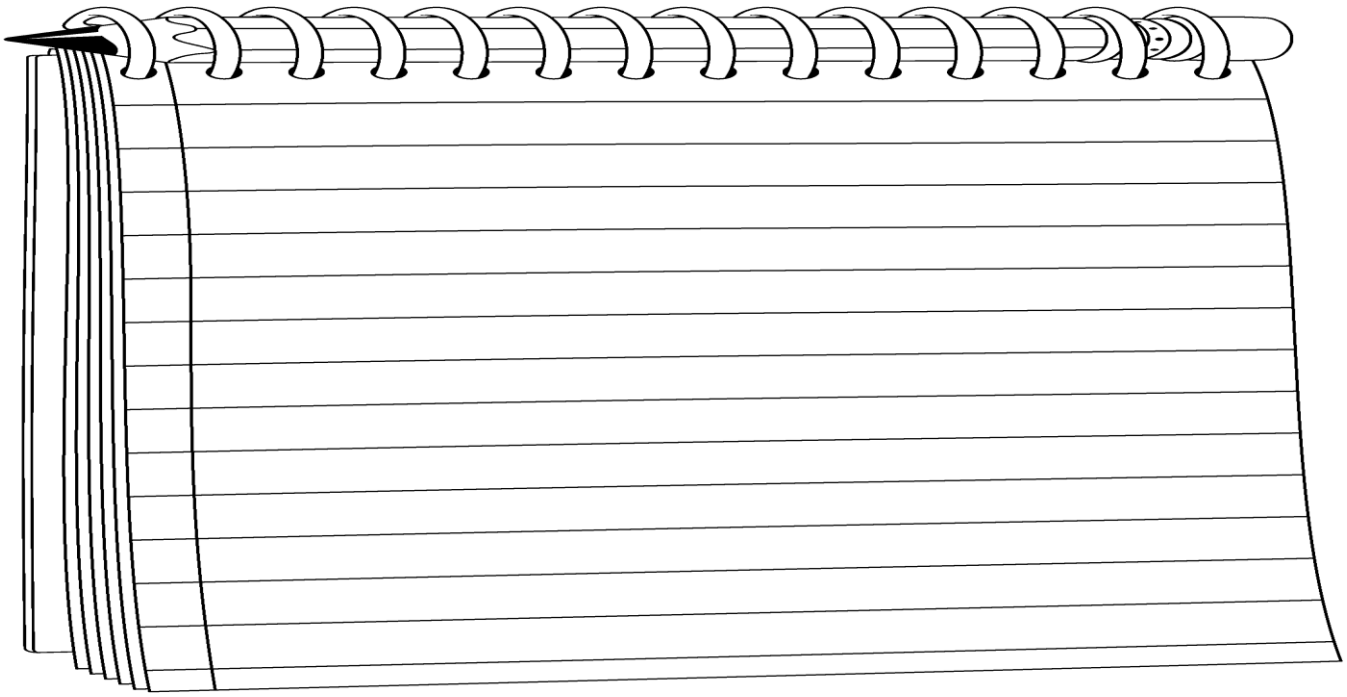
Romans 6:6

Galatians 2:20

Romans 13:14

Summary

Look back at the verses that you wrote down on the other side of this page. Circle key words from each verse. Summarize what these verses mean to you in a 3-5 sentence paragraph.



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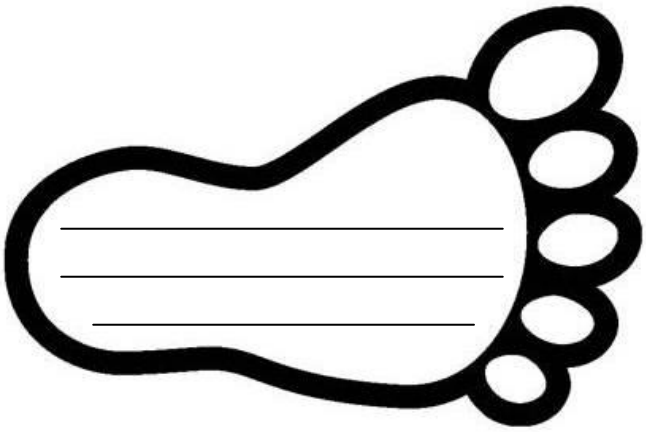

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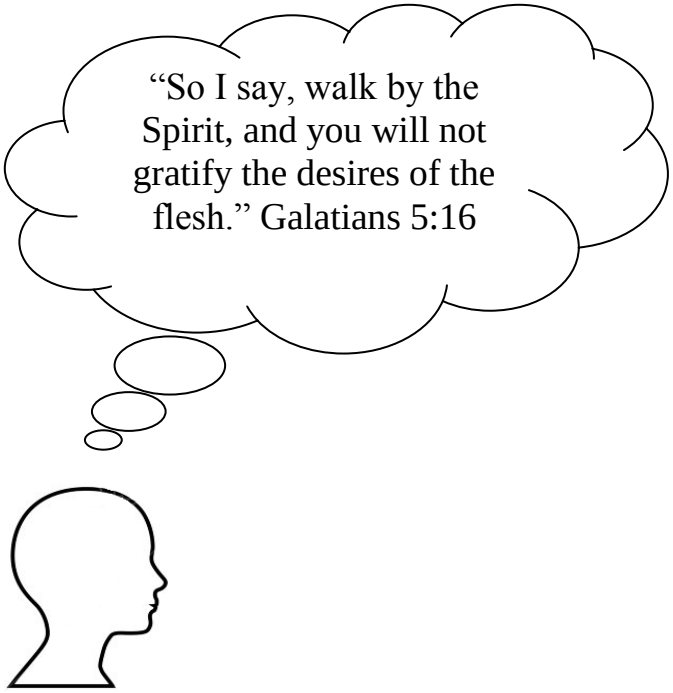


The Believers Two Natures: What They Are

Lesson #14

The difference between an animal and a man.

1. Body, soul and spirit—1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12.
2. The new spirit received at the new birth—1 Cor. 2:12.
3. The new soul—2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:20.
4. The new body—Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2.

SOME animals are very intelligent indeed. They can learn to do many things. Some dogs are trained to lead blind people safely through the city streets, stopping when they see a red traffic light, and going on when it turns green. It seems as though they know almost as much as men. There is a difference, though, between the most intelligent animal in the world, and the most stupid man, for animals do not worship any God and men always do, whether they worship the true God, or idols. Animals do not worship anything at all.

There are three parts of man, called body, soul and spirit. The body is the only part you can see. It is the part that has the five senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Through these senses we know the world around us. If we did not have bodies we would not be able to see, or smell, or hear, or taste or touch. Animals have bodies as we do, with all these five senses. We also have a soul—the part of us that feels, loves and hates. Animals have this too; you know how dogs learn to love their masters, and how they sometimes hate some people. But man also has a spirit—the part of him that knows about God. Animals do not have a spirit—they do not know about God. It is only by the Bible (Heb. 4:12), that we know the difference between soul and spirit.

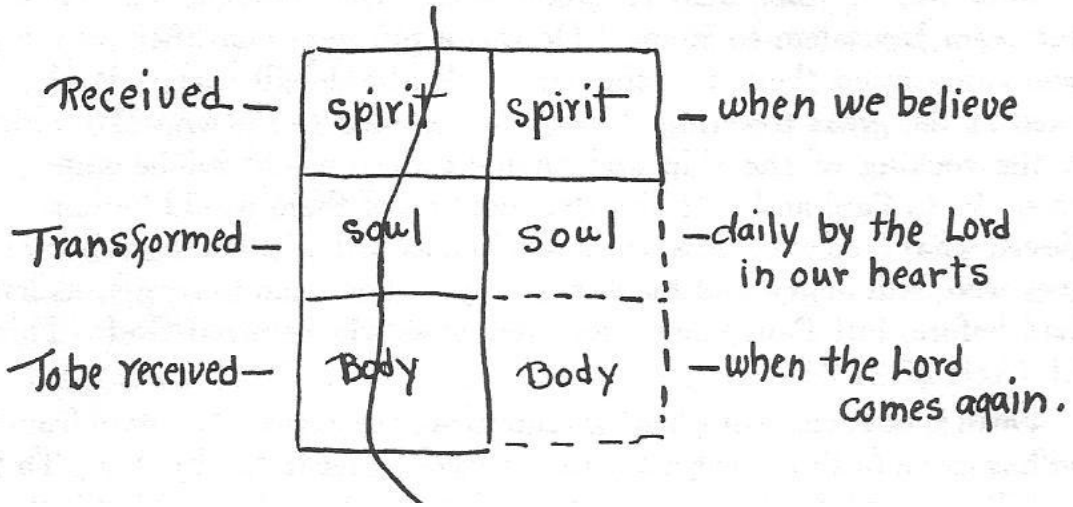
When we are born, we are born with all these things—body, soul and spirit. All of them are touched by sin—they have to do with the old nature that cannot please God. Our ***bodies*** get sick and die—this is because of sin. God told Adam that if he disobeyed Him and ate the fruit, he would die. Adam did die, and everyone else has had these troubles with the body because of sin and the sin nature that is in the body. The ***soul*** is touched by sin too. We hate what we should love and love what we should hate, many, many times. We do not love the Lord with all our heart as we ought to; we love ourselves and our own way better. The ***spirit*** is touched by sin. It does not know God as it ought to. In Africa and China and India people worship idols, instead of the true God, and even in Britain where

we have the Bible, people do not believe in Him, but imagine a God of their own, who is not like the God of the Bible. So all three parts of man are touched by the sin of the old nature, and cannot please God.

When we are born again God begins a work that is going to make new every part of man. The moment we are born again, and receive the new life of Christ, the new nature, we receive a new spirit (1 Cor. 2:12). This new spirit can understand the things of God. The spirit that belongs to the old nature cannot understand these things. That is why you will hear some people who do not believe saying that the Bible is foolish. Of course it is to them, for they do not have the new spirit. But what about the soul? Is God just going to make it over? No; God never patches anything; He always makes everything new. So He begins to make a new soul, a soul that will love His will and hate sin. He does not do all this at once; but day by day, as we let the new nature rule. This will be finished when Jesus comes, for "we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as as He is." He is not even going to leave us with this sin-touched body, for when He shall come, even our bodies will be made like His. Then we shall be perfect.

When we die, or when Jesus comes again, we lose our old nature for ever, and at His coming we will have a new body and be perfect in Heaven for ever.

NOTEBOOK SUGGESTIONS: Let the teacher explain that the new spirit is received the moment we believe; the soul is made new day by day as we obey Christ (dotted line to show it is not yet complete); the new body will be received when He comes. Let the pupils choose a verse, or choose one for them, to write under the illustration.



Name _____ Date _____ Lesson #14

The Believers Two Natures: What They Are

The Big Picture

Key Verses

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Hebrews 4:12

1 Corinthians 2:12

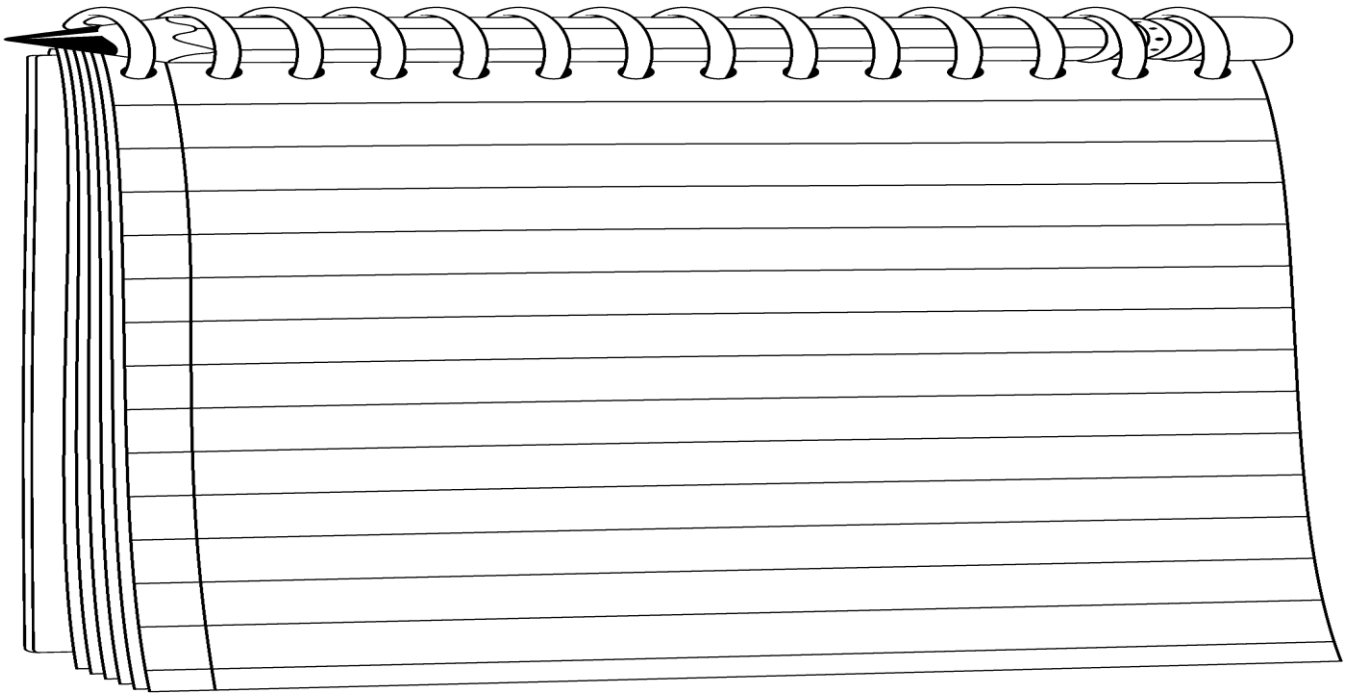
2 Corinthians 3:18

Philippians 3:21

1 John 3:2

Summary

Look back at the verses that you wrote down on the other side of this page. Circle key words from each verse. Summarize what these verses mean to you in a 3-5 sentence paragraph.



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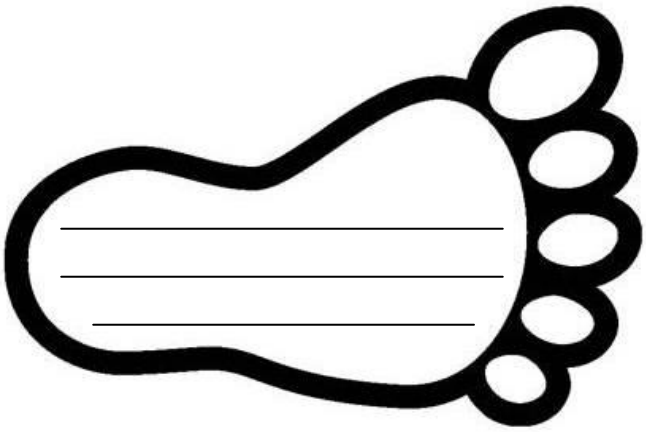
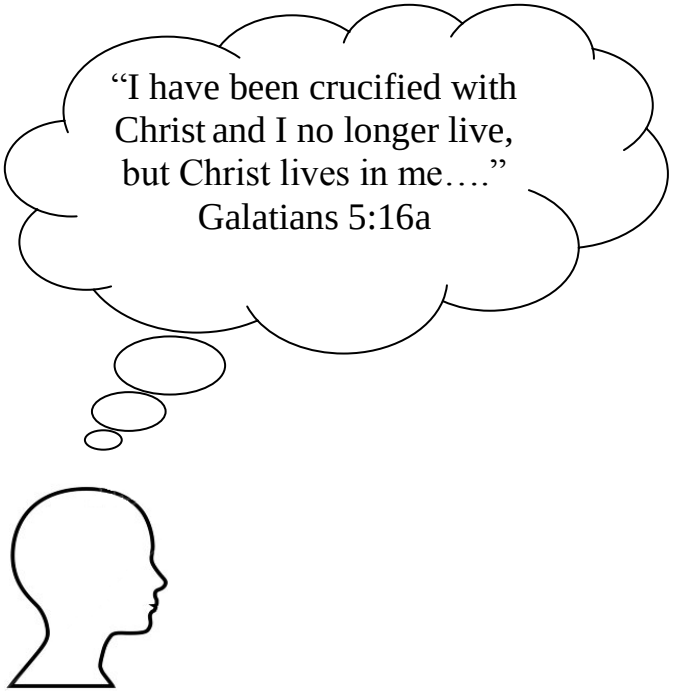


Memory Verse



What is in the heart of all people when they are born?

Name three (3) things that God says about the old nature.

Can people who have not been born again understand the Bible? Why or why not?

Does God make our old nature good?

How do we receive the new nature?

What is the new nature?

What does God want done with the old nature?

Are Christians ever tempted to do wrong? Why?

How can we have victory over the old nature?

What three parts does every man have?

Memory Verse:

"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

Galatians 5:16

Memory Verse:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me…."

Galatians 5:16a

Memory Verse:

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Romans 3:11

Memory Verse:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17

What is one thing from the last four lessons that you have applied to your life?

In one sentence, tell what the last four lessons have been about.

Describe what this illustration means:

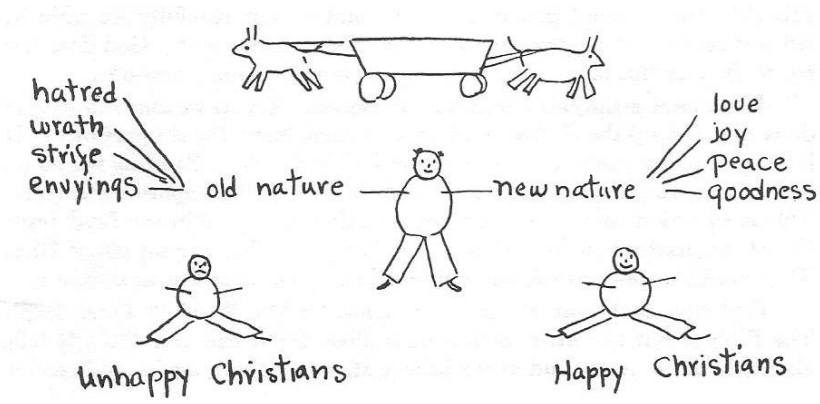
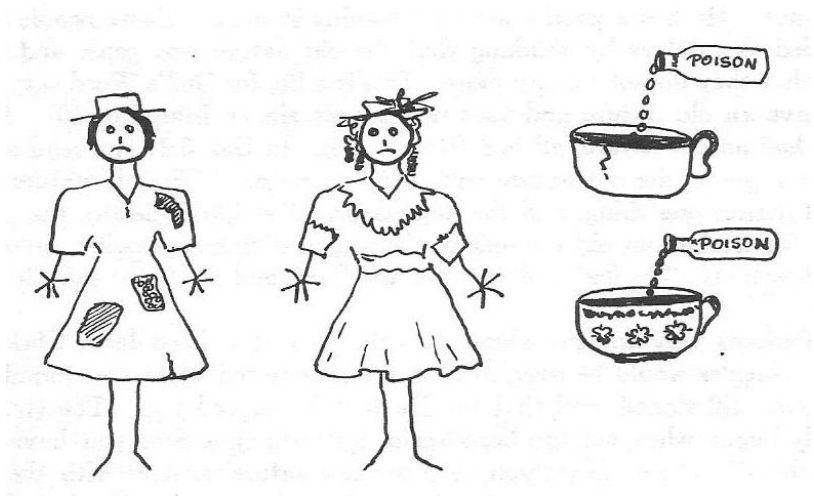


Illustration from *Teaching the Word of Truth* by Donald G. Barnhouse

Describe what this illustration means:



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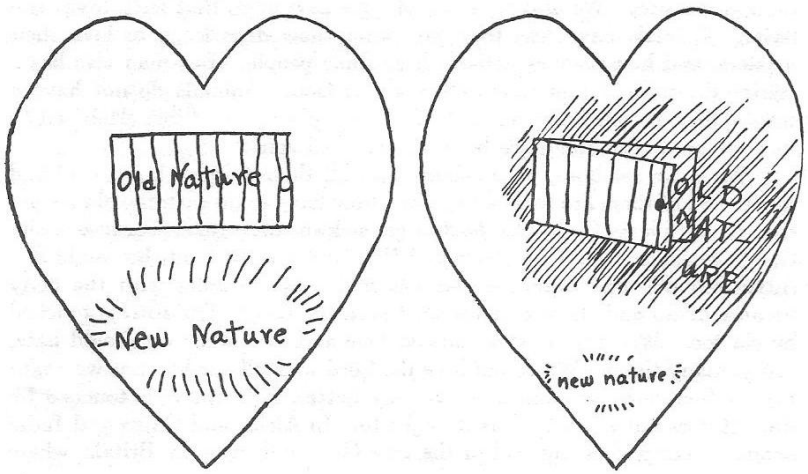

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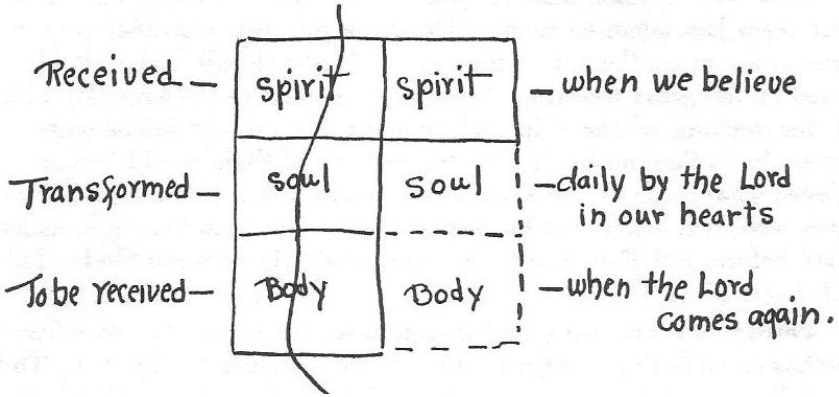

Illustration from *Teaching the Word of Truth* by Donald G. Barnhouse

Name _____ Date _____ Lesson #15

Quiz for Lessons 11-14

1. What is in the heart of all people when they are born? _____

_____

2. Name three (3) things that God says about the old nature. _____

_____

3. Can people who have not been born again understand the Bible? Why or why not? _____

_____

4. Does God make our old nature good? _____

5. How do we receive the new nature? _____

6. What is the new nature? _____

7. What does God want done with the old nature? _____

_____

8. Are Christians ever tempted to do wrong? Why? _____

_____

9. How can we have victory over the old nature? _____

10. What three parts does every man have? _____

11. Write down ***one*** of your memory verses from the last four lessons. You may choose from any of the following verses. The first two words have been provided to help you.

Romans 3:11 "For the…" *2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if…"* *Galatians 5:16 "So I…"* *Galatians 5:16a "I have…"*

_____

_____

12. What does the verse that you wrote above mean? _____

_____

13. Draw one of the pictures from the last four lessons and write what it means on the lines below the picture.

_____

_____