

LESSON PLAN

THE BELIEVER'S TWO NATURES

Romans 6-7

Lesson Memory Verse: Romans 6:11 - 'Reckon . . . yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Lesson Aim: 1) Teach unsaved children that they have an old nature and need a new nature. 2) Teach saved children that they have both an old and a new nature that struggle against each other to control their lives. Teach all the children that they need the new nature in control of their lives to please God.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Have you ever seen two tractors hooked together by a strong chain facing opposite directions? At the signal to start the drivers of the tractors try to pull the other one backward. Did you know that a Christian has two natures that are pulling against each other? He or she has an old nature that he received when he was born and a new nature that he received when he was born again (was saved). His old nature wants him to love sin and do wrong but his new nature wants him to love God and do right. When you are tempted to sin, you make the choice as to which nature wins. I want to teach you how your new nature can win so that you do not sin. A Christian does not need to be a slave to sin. Our memory verse tells us how this can be done.

HE (for Authority): When Jesus died, He paid the penalty for your sins. When He rose from the grave, He won the victory over your sin and death. When you receive Jesus as your Savior, it is like you died with Him on the cross and rose with Him from the grave. So when you died with Christ, your old nature died to sin; a dead person is no longer tempted to sin. When you rose with Christ, you were given a new nature that loves God and does what is right. "Reckon" means to think or consider. When you are tempted to sin, you are to think of yourself as dead to sin and alive to God--to obey and please Him.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Today we are going to learn what the Bible says about our old and new natures. We will learn how to make the old nature lose and the new nature win so that we can please God.

OUTLINE OF THE DOCTRINE

I. The Old Nature

A. What is the old nature?

The old nature is your character before you were saved. The old nature is deceitful or dishonest (Eph 4:22; Jer 17:9). It cannot please God (Rom 8:8). It does not obey God (Mk 7:21-23). The old nature cannot understand God (1 Cor 1:18; 2:14; Rom 3:11). Even though we try to train our old nature not to murder, steal or even lie, it still lurks in our hearts. God says there is nothing good about it (Rom 7:18).

B. Who has the old nature?

Everyone has the old nature. We are born with it (Ps 51:5). Yes, babies have a sinful old nature. They begin to sin when they are very small. They become angry and cry because they want their own way.

All children, men and women, have sinful old natures. We think some people are very bad (murderers, thieves, etc.), and others are very good, but God says that everyone is bad because everyone has an old nature. Nicodemus seemed to be a very good man. He talked kindly to Jesus when He was on earth. Yet he had a sinful old nature and Jesus said that he needed to be "born again" (Jn 3:3). The first time you are born, you become a child of your mother and father. That is when you receive your old nature. When you accept Jesus as your Savior, you become a child of God. God calls this "being born again." When you are "born again," God gives you a new nature that wants to please Him. He also gives us the Holy Spirit to live inside us. Even though Nicodemus was probably one of the best men in his city, a man that people liked and looked up to, his goodness did not please God. (Review the lesson on sin by using Isa 64:6). Why do you suppose a person who tries to help other people and never seems to do anything really bad has to be "born again"? (He has an old sinful nature which sins against God.)

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WE: We have an old nature that is sinful and cannot be retrained to be good. We need to receive a new nature. We need to be “born again” just like Nicodemus.

II. The New Nature

A. Who needs a new nature?

Every person needs a new nature. The old nature is worthless and gets us into serious troubles.

B. What is this new nature?

The new nature is not the old one trained to do good things. It is a brand new nature given to us by God (2 Pet 1:4). The new nature wants to please, obey and understand God.

C. How can a sinful person have a new nature?

God gives a sinful person this new nature when he believes that Jesus died for his sins and rose again to give him life. He must receive Jesus as his Savior confessing and turning away from his sins and asking Jesus Christ to forgive him.

WE: When we asked Jesus to save us, He gave us a new nature and His Spirit is living inside of us. Before we were saved, we could not please God; we could only sin. But once we are saved, we can do what is right and please God. Our new nature wants to do what is right and the Holy Spirit will give us the power to do it.

III. Two Natures in a Christian

A. The old nature in a Christian.

A Christian still has the old nature and it wants him to sin (1 Jn 1:8, 10; Gal 5:17). Even the Apostle Paul had a struggle with his old nature (Rom 7:14-24). But the old nature lost its power when the Christian was crucified with Christ (Rom 6:3-11; Gal 2:20). It has no power over a dead person. As long as a Christian considers himself to be dead with Christ, the old nature cannot draw him into sin. But, if a Christian forgets that he was crucified with Christ and begins to live his life like he did before he became a Christian, his old nature will spring into action and drag him into sin just like it did before he received Christ.

B. The new nature in a Christian.

A Christian is given a new divine nature when he is born again (2 Pet 1:4). It wants to please God and do what is right. The believer's new nature draws power from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Jesus rose from the dead, he conquered sin and death and that victory is passed on to those who die and are raised with Him. As result of Jesus' victory, the Christian can have victory over all kinds of sins as long as he depends on Him. The Holy Spirit has been sent to live in the Christian to help him live a godly life and keep him free from sin (Rom 8:2). When a Christian fails to live by his new nature and sins, he must confess his sin by name and turn from it so he can be forgiven (1 Jn 1:9; Prov 28:13). Once again his life will be governed by his new nature and bring many blessings into his life (Gal 5:22-23).

APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE

This is a story about a little girl who had a battle between her old and new natures. Sally came home from school very excited. There was going to be a drawing contest at school the next day. Each child was supposed to draw his very own picture. No one was to copy an artist's picture. Each picture was to be a new idea. The teacher said they were to make a Thanksgiving picture. The prize would be a box of 48 crayons and a large coloring book. Sally was a Christian, but right now her old nature tempted her to sin. Sally wanted to win the prize. She wanted so much to win that she was willing to cheat to do it.

Sally hurried to her room and flipped open a book about the pilgrims. In it were many really pretty pictures about Thanksgiving. Sally turned to page 70 where there was a beautiful picture of pumpkins and wheat sheaves with a big bright moon in the night sky. She knew that if she could learn to draw this picture, she could win the contest. All evening Sally sketched and colored until she could do the whole scene without even looking. She knew it would be wrong to use the picture because she would be cheating by copying an artist's picture. Also she would have to lie about it by saying it was her very own idea. But she wanted to win the contest so much she didn't care at the moment.

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WE: Do we ever want anything so badly that we would do something wrong in order to get what we want?

The next morning Sally rushed to school. She could hardly wait till recess was over so she could draw the picture. At last it was time. Sally worked carefully and the picture did look very nice. When everyone was finished, the children handed in their drawings. Mrs. Pierce looked through them carefully and showed several of the best ones to the class. They all decided that Sally's picture was the best. She had won the contest!

As Sally sat down in the lunchroom to eat, she bowed her head and began to pray, "Father..." and then she stopped. She had planned to thank God for her food and for winning the contest, but suddenly she realized that God had been watching her cheat. He had seen this very sinful thing that she had done and He was very sad that Sally had allowed her old nature to sin.

WE: We know that God sees all that we do. He is sad when we let our sinful old nature win. He knows it will make us weak in our fight against sin. We will also be miserable when we sin, just as Sally was. And, God may even have to punish us for our sin.

Sally felt so guilty that she didn't want her lunch anymore. She actually felt sick. While the other children talked and laughed and ate their meal, Sally sat quietly doing nothing – at least that's what it looked like to the others. Actually Sally was having a terrible fight inside. "Just forget it, Sally" her old nature seemed to tell her. "You can't tell Mrs. Pierce. She won't like you anymore and the other kids will all laugh at you when they find out what you've done."

But another voice inside her seemed to remind her, "Jesus loves you, Sally, but He is very displeased about your cheating and lying. He will help you to tell your teacher and it really doesn't matter what the other children think. It only matters that you do what is right and please God."

Finally Sally could stand it no longer. She walked slowly back to the room. Mrs. Pierce was alone. Sally couldn't even look her in the eye. Her heart was pounding. With her head down, she told Mrs. Pierce what she had done. "So you see, Mrs. Pierce," she explained, "I really didn't win the contest because the picture wasn't my own idea."

WE: Are we willing to confess our sin when we have done wrong – even though it may be very hard to do?

Mrs. Pierce reached over and put her arm around Sally. "I knew that all along, dear," she said. "You see, I have the book with that picture in it and I use it often."

That afternoon Mrs. Pierce helped Sally tell the other children what had happened. Then, because Mrs. Pierce was a Christian, she was able to explain to the boys and girls how awful each of their sins was in God's sight. Then they all bowed their heads and told God about it.

Sally skipped all the way home after school. She had lost the contest – but she had won a greater victory. Now God was pleased with her.

BE (for Action): All of us have struggles inside, just as Sally did, but we can only win those battles if we are saved and have a new nature. Have you ever asked Jesus to save you? If not, you cannot win the victory over sin because you do not have a new nature from God. Would you like to ask Jesus to be your Savior and have Him give you that new nature? (Give the children an opportunity to choose to receive Christ.)

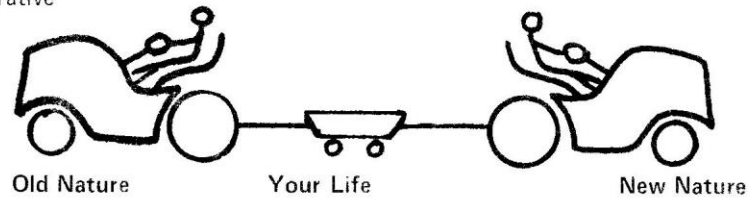
If you are a Christian, then you can defeat the old nature just as Sally did. Obey God and confess and turn from your sins. Do you have some sins to confess? (Give the children an opportunity to let you know if they need to confess some sin.) Close with prayer by asking God to help each one to win the victory over sin during the coming week.

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WHITEBOARD SUGGESTIONS

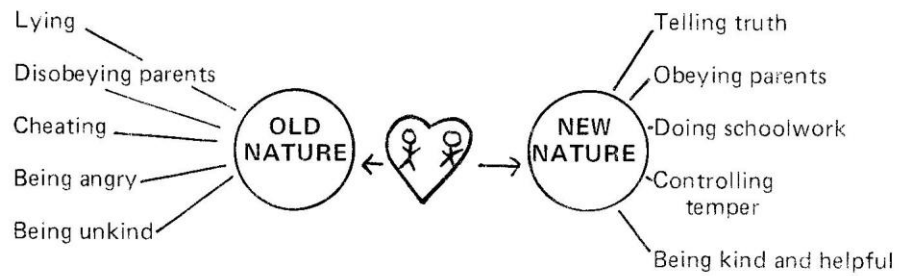
(For Grades 4 – 6 only)

1. Figurative



(For all grades)

2. Literal



3. Practical

UNHAPPY CHRISTIAN



HAPPY CHRISTIAN

