

Abstain from Evil

III JOHN 11 (Imitate GOOD)

I Thessalonians 5:22

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 human soul has the following characteristics:

- 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. 8:6-8](#)). 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, etc.

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 immorality or lasciviousness. ([Rom. 1](#)) Others have trends toward morality or asceticism. Either trend is a product of Sin Nature activity.

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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. There is nothing the unbeliever can do that is 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 God's plan, 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. Legalistic shock concludes it must have been a "head belief and not a heart belief."

Born-again believers still have 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 unbelieving counterpart would commit, i.e., an unbeliever with a compatible old sin nature.

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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) – [Psalm 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 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](#); [Matthew 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. [Romans 5:12](#); [Ephesians 2:1, 5](#).

The sin nature is perpetuated in human beings through physical birth. [Psalm 51:5](#); [1 Tim. 2:13, 14](#). The believer continues to have his sin nature after salvation ([1 Corinthians 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. [Revelation 20:11-15](#).

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The believer's sins were borne on the cross by the Lord, as were those of all people [II 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 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](#)

III JOHN 11

"Beloved, imitate not the evil, but the good. The one doing good is out of God. The one doing evil has not seen God."