

The Good News Club - Guide to Christian Living

What Happens When We Become Born Again

When God created people, He did it as the Bible says "in his image" or likeness. We were made with his characteristics. We have emotions so we can feel happy and sad, good and bad, we have dreams, ideas and concepts that can be brought into fruition. We have a powerful mind to work things out. This is the nature or characteristics that God put into us. There was once a unity and oneness with God, people thought like Him, they acted like Him, their thoughts and attitudes were towards Him and at one with Him. Long before you and I were born, Satan came along and questioned what God had said by saying "Did God say ...?" Mankind listened, doubted God and brought sin into human nature.

Today, Satan still poses the same question "Did God say ...?" He puts doubt in our minds as to whether we can trust God, so we make our own decision and do what we want to, using our own reasoning and logic rather than what that Godly nature planted in us by God would have us do. Doing our own thing in this way is disobedience to what God has said and to what we ought to say, do, think, act and react. The Bible refers to it as sin.

Just as obedience to God brings into our lives what God wants for us, that is, love, joy, peace, health and life, so disobedience to God (sin) brings the opposite, that is, hate, sadness, unrest, sickness and death. We are deceived into believing we know best, we choose to go our own way, do our own thing, not realising (because we are blinded to the truth by accepting a lie) that the end result of disobedience is death.

As a result of our rejection of the guiding force God has put within us, we develop a self-centred, self-promoting nature. In the Bible it is referred to in a number of ways - the Apostle Paul calls it our Lower Nature, others call it being carnally (worldly) minded or living in the flesh, that is, living with a worldly, non-Godly, human, self-motivated purpose and direction. This is what we are like before we became a Christian. We do what you want, we are motivated by what pleases us, but unfortunately we also suffer the consequences, and boy are there plenty of them. Satan has a field day. As a result of our focus on ourselves and the things we do that are self-centred, we began to say and do things that are not good for us and we began to lose control of our lives. Fear and hate can take control of your emotions, and because they are hellbent on destroying us, they make us agitated, angry and frustrated. They rob us of your joy, our peace, even our ability to eat and sleep in a balanced, positive way. They also bring guilt, lots of it.

But God sees us and hears the cry of our heart for Him to help us. He can see why you were like we are and hat deep down, underneath all of those selfish desires, the rebellion, the out of control and anything else that we don't like about yourselves, is a beautiful person who God had created in his likeness.

When we pray and asked God to forgive us of all the bad things our lower nature had caused us to do, we effectively ask Him to come into your life and clean it up. That is our life-changing moment. What happens then is God establishes a new control centre in us that is motivated by Him, to please Him and not ourselves. It gives us the ability to live as we were designed to live, taking on His nature and attributes with the subsequent benefits that living His way brings, that is, overflowing with love, joy peace and life. This new control centre, which I like to call our Upper Nature, brings a unity and oneness with God, it gives us the ability to act like Him, our thoughts and attitudes can now be towards Him and at one with Him. A new motivation to live a new different kind of way of life is birthed in us, which is why Jesus calls it being born again.

This sounds great, and it is, but unfortunately that old nature, the worldly, self-centred control centre, is still there and will remain there until we die. It still operates contrary to the new Upper Nature and it is still trying to take us down its path of destruction and death. So we now have two control centres, both actively working on us that are

diametrically opposed to each other. By nature, we automatically follow the Lower one, so to do as the Upper Nature dictates, it becomes a matter of choice - we have to CHOOSE to follow it, it doesn't come automatically. And therein lies the key to getting back to where God wants us to be - obedience.

Now, having got to that place where the Upper Nature begins to take control, quite often we start to feel guilty about what we are doing, or more to the point what we are not doing, like not praying enough or enough. When we feeling guilty for not praying enough we must realise it is not so much that God is making you feel guilty. What is happening is our new Upper Nature is saying "Hey, if you prayed a bit more, the Lower Nature will have less control over you". All it's doing is giving you some good advice so don't feel guilty or bad. Just be happy and thankful to God that you now have a positive voice in you that's speaking loud enough so you can hear it. Know that it is simply showing you a better, more profitable way and that you should take notice of it.

When a lot of people come to Jesus for forgiveness, they become acutely aware of what is wrong with them, but unlike God who forgives and forgets, they hang onto it. If that is you, this can hinder the good new work God is trying to do in us. Sure, we are not worthy of God's forgiveness and grace (unmerited favour), but it's ours to have and to do us good, so let's not squander it. Start adopting a more positive attitude towards yourself, after all you are now taking on God's nature so you should start taking on His attitude towards you, rather than retaining the negative view your old Lower Nature had towards you. God now wants you to start building a more positive image of yourself because if you don't, by listening to all those negatives your old nature has been dragging up and parading in front of you, all that will happen is you'll be taken back down that a path which leads to destruction. As you change your attitude towards yourself, your attitudes towards school, your family, teachers, friends, but most importantly, yourself - everything will change for the better. God wants to take you forward to a bright future where you will be living in love, joy, peace and happiness. That's what Jesus came and died on the cross to purchase for you. It's your inheritance in him, don't let anything or anyone steal it from you.

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