

# Ye Are Yet Carnal

by David Shelby Corlett

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*David Shelby Corlett's sermon explores the ongoing struggle with the sinful nature in born-again Christians and God's call to holiness.*

**Scripture:** John 17:17, Romans 8:5, Galatians 5:17, Hebrews 3:12, James 1:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Sanctification"

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## Description

David Shelby Corlett preaches about the ongoing inner conflict experienced by born-again Christians due to the presence of the sinful nature, highlighting the struggle for spiritual maturity, the limitations it imposes on one's service to God, and the inner clash of conflicting emotions and desires. He emphasizes that this sinful nature was evident even in the lives of the disciples of Jesus and individuals in the New Testament churches, affecting their faith and actions. Despite this struggle, the born-again Christian can have victory over sin through constant watchfulness and spiritual warfare, but God's ultimate plan is for His children to be delivered from all sin and to live in complete harmony with His will.

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## Transcript

1. What is the state of the Christian who has been born again?

He is conscious of a new spiritual life, but he is also conscious of a remaining inner disorder, or a proneness to evil -- an inner strife between these conflicting principles or natures.

2. What is this nature in man which is contrary to the spiritual life?

It is the sinful nature, which as his misfortune was within him when he was born into the world; the same nature of sin which as a natural man caused him to do wrong. While as a child of God he is forgiven of all the wrongs he has done and he has become a partaker of the divine nature, nevertheless this nature of sin remains within him as the enemy of the spiritual life.

3. What are the Bible terms used to designate this remaining nature of sin?

There are numerous terms used to designate this nature of sin: the old man, the carnal mind, the flesh, the body of sin, the law of sin, sin that dwelleth in me, sin as used as a noun in contrast to "sin," the verb.

4. Do holiness churches alone teach that sin remains in the nature of the child of God after he is born again?

No. It is the universal teaching of orthodox churches, and the universal experience of born again Christians.

5. Was this sinful nature manifested in the lives of the disciples of Jesus?

It was. Even though they were disciples of Jesus, were members of the true Vine (John 15:5), had their names written in heaven (Luke 10:20), were not of the world even as Christ was not of the world (John 17:9, 14), yet they were revengeful (Luke 9:54 - 55), were bigoted (Mark 9:38), filled with indignation toward each other (Matt. 20:24), self-seeking (Mark 9:34), and were vacillating in their relation to Jesus -- Peter denied Him and the others followed afar off.

6. Was this nature of sin manifested in the lives of individuals in the churches of the New Testament period?

It was. The Romans faced the alternative of walking either after the flesh or after the Spirit (Romans 8:1-13). The Corinthian Christians were "babes in Christ" and "temples of the Holy Spirit" and were "yet carnal" (I Cor. 3:1, 4, 16). The Galatian Christians had "the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). The Ephesian Christians had "the old man" which was "concerning the former manner of life" in opposition to "the new man" -- their spiritual life (Eph. 4:22-24). The Thessalonian church enjoyed a high state of religious life (I Thess. 1:1-10); and still had something lacking in their faith (ch. 3:10); and hence needed to be entirely sanctified (ch. 4:3; 5:23).

7. Is this sinful nature an active working principle?

It is. "The old man waxeth corrupt according to the lusts of deceit" (Eph. 4:22, R.V.). "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. 5:17). Those who walk after the flesh "do mind the things of the flesh" (Romans 8:5). It is a nature inactive opposition to the spiritual life within the child of God.

8. How does the presence of this sinful nature affect the child of God?

It limits one's spiritual development, the Corinthians were "babes in Christ," when they should have been more mature Christians, because "they were yet carnal." It deprives one of rendering service to God as he really desires to do; "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). At times it produces an inner clash of conflicting emotions and desires (Gal. 5:17). Often one is made conscious of the pollution of his nature through impure or carnal affections as he is prompted to fulfill the "lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16): There is a recognition of an inner instability of character because "the double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). It may manifest itself by a "root of bitterness" which if permitted to spring up would trouble the Christian believer and defile others" (Heb. 12:15). Or there may be a proneness to evil in "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).

9. Does the child of God suffer continuous defeat because of the presence of this sinful nature?

No, he does not. The born again Christian has dominion over sin, but he is conscious in a more or less degree of an inner disorder or of the presence of this sinful nature warring against the spiritual life. There will be in his heart a continuous effort to keep victory and a struggle against this evil principle. There may be an "up and down" life experience, where he lacks constancy in his Christian victory. He may however live in victory over this sinful nature, but it is only won at the price of constant watchfulness and by struggling against its presence.

10. Is this condition of inner conflict the highest state of Christian living that God has planned for His children?

It is not. God has planned that His people should be delivered from all sin -- sin in the nature as well as all sinful practices. He therefore calls all of His children to holiness -- a state of full inner harmony with God's will or of complete deliverance from this sinful nature.

He did. He prayed for them that they might be sanctified (John 17:17); and commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem for the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5); which experience purified their hearts from the sinful nature (Acts 15: 8, 9).

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