

I'm saved so why do I still struggle with sin?

The term "flesh" occurs 128 times in the New Testament. It refers not just to meat but also to our physical body and to our old nature, the part of us that is not saved or born again. When you trusted Jesus Christ, **(1)** your soul got saved, Romans 10:13, **(2)** your spirit got born again, John 3:3-8, and **(3)** nothing happened to your flesh, Galatians 2:20.

Your saved soul and born again spirit dwell in your fleshly body and that causes a struggle between your two natures, Romans 7:15-25. Your flesh is your old nature, inherited from Adam and from your parents. Your born again spirit is your new nature, gifted to you by God when you got saved. Spiritual growth and blessing depends on which nature you feed, your flesh or your spirit. This will be a life-long struggle because your fleshly body will not be redeemed until the rapture, 1 Thess 4:16-17, 1 Cor 15:51-54, 2 Cor 5:1-6.

1. Why is my prayer life so weak?
2. Why do I resist reading the Bible?
3. Why do I still give in to lust and temptation?
4. Why do I still struggle with impure thoughts?
5. Why do I want to do things I know are sinful?
6. Why do I struggle to do what I know is right?

"Sometimes I still live like I am unsaved and that makes me sad. I want to do better but there's a battle going on inside me. Please, can you help me understand this and find victory in Jesus?"

You've asked some excellent questions and I'm happy to help with Bible answers. As human beings we were created in God's triune (three part) image. God has revealed Himself in the Bible as a Trinitarian Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9. The way that shakes out is that when God created us, He made us with three parts, a spirit, a soul and a body. These three parts are mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and other places in the Bible.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." - 1 Thess 5:23

1. According to 1 Thess 5:23, what are the three parts which make up a human being? _____

When you trusted by grace alone through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone and got saved, here's what happened.

1. Your soul got saved, Matthew 10:28, 16:26, Hebrews 10:39, James 5:20.
2. Your spirit got born again, John 3:5, Ephesians 2:1.
3. Your flesh or body did not get saved, Romans 7:15-19, 8:23, 2 Cor 5:1-4.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." - John 6:63

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." - Galatians 5:16-17

2. Did your spirit get saved or did it get born again? _____

3. Did your flesh get saved? Yes or No.

4. For Christians, the inner struggle we experience is our _____ fighting with the indwelling Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:17.

This struggle creates problems when we obey the flesh or the flesh nature instead of obeying the Holy Spirit. Obeying the flesh isn't always something like viewing porn or robbing a bank or telling dirty jokes. We are also obeying the flesh when we don't read the Bible consistently or don't study the Bible consistently or when we ignore our prayer life. Have you experienced this inner struggle in your walk with Christ? Yes or No.

Genesis 1:26 says that God created us in His image. That cannot mean a physical likeness because God does not have a body like humans. Jesus taught in John 4:24 that God does not have a body.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." - John 4:24

5. According to Jesus, does God the Father have a body or is God a Spirit?

I. God created the human race in His mental likeness. That means we are not highly evolved animals. We are specially created human beings with intellectual capacity far superior to the animal creation. Adam and Eve were given dominion over the animal creation, Genesis 1:26, 28, over the plant creation, Genesis 2:15 and Adam used his intellectual ability to name the animals but was not one of the animals, Genesis 2:19-20.

II. God created the human race in His moral likeness. Of everything God created, man alone is sentient or self aware, capable of knowing and worshipping God. After the fall of Adam in Genesis 3:1-7, we have an innate moral awareness of good and evil, a conscience, 2 Cor 1:12, 1 Tim 1:19, Romans 2:15, which operates in the realm of our human spirit.

III. God created the human race in His triune likeness. That means that we have three parts: spirit, soul, body, 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

6. Of the three parts all humans beings have, which part does not get saved? _____

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Those verses describe a believers battle with sin, with our unsaved flesh, with our old human nature. Because our flesh did not get saved, we still struggle with sin and lust and spiritual laziness. The flesh rebels against God while our born-again spirit loves God and wants to serve God. Our flesh doesn't want to read the Bible and pray. What can we do about this? We exercise our will, just like we make ourselves get up and work, even when we'd rather sleep in.

The conflict between our flesh and the indwelling Holy Spirit in a Christian is why we struggle with sin. That is what is described in Galatians 5:16-17. Paul describes this struggle in more detail in Romans 7:14-25.

7. In saved people there is a battle going on. What part of us lusts against the Spirit? _____

8. In Galatians 5:16, what must we do to get victory over our flesh?

I am saved so am I righteous in Christ?

Yes, when we receive "*grace and the gift of righteousness,*" Romans 5:17, we are justified by faith, Romans 5:1, yet the gift, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us when we get saved does nothing to change our flesh. Our flesh will get changed at the Rapture or the resurrection but not down here on earth.

Do you know what it means to be justified by faith so that we have the imputed righteousness of Christ as a free gift from God? It means God has forgiven all our sins and in their place, has given us His righteousness so that God sees us as perfectly righteous as Jesus Christ.

In spite of the fact that we still wrestle with the flesh, God views all saved people as sinlessly perfect, clothed in the perfect righteousness of His Son so that it is as if we had never sinned and never would. That is our standing in Christ because we are justified by faith. Our actual state, our actual condition is that we are still sinners because we are still in the flesh.

Saved people are simply sinners saved by grace. Every one of us still has the old fleshly nature. We're born with it and it causes us to sin and rebel against God. We battle the flesh every day of our life. If we give in to the flesh, we soon slow down or stop our Bible reading. Refusing to read the Bible is a sin of the flesh. Refusing to pray is a sin of the flesh. You can always tell when you're walking in the flesh. If you're not reading your Bible and praying consistently, you're walking in the flesh. Here is how God describes the heart of an unsaved person.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" - Jeremiah 17:9.

9. Based on this verse, which of the following statements is true? Circle the correct answer.

- a. Our heart is basically good and pure.
- b. Our heart is basically wicked.

Jesus taught us about the human heart in Mark 7:20-23, where He listed 13 negative things about our old flesh nature.

"And he (Jesus) said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit,

lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." - Mark 7:20-23

10. Did Jeremiah and Jesus have pretty much the same view about sinful human nature? Yes or No.

11. List six things from the list Jesus gave which prove our old fleshly nature is wicked, Mark 7:20-23.

12. What word did Jesus use to describe what comes from inside our old human fleshly nature? Mark 7:23 _____

Summary: **1.** Our spirit gets born again, John 3:3-8. **2.** Our soul gets saved, Romans 10:13. **3.** Nothing happens at salvation to change our flesh. For that reason, even though we are saved, for as long as we live, our flesh will battle our born again spirit. As we learn to *walk in the Spirit*, Galatians 5:16, relying upon and obeying God instead of giving in to our flesh, we will experience joyful daily victory in our Christian life. This daily victory always and only comes from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Galatians 2:20.

When we sin, we need to remind ourselves that ALL of our sins were paid for by Jesus when He took the wrath of God against sin upon Himself on the cross. All of our sins were forgiven when we got saved. That means ALL - past, present and future sins - ALL were paid for at Calvary. The beautiful old hymn says: Calvary covers it ALL! That is something to praise God for!

Jesus is our Advocate, our Lawyer and He cleanses us from ALL sin at salvation. When we sin after we get saved, Jesus restores us to fellowship with God. Confessing our sins to God isn't to get them forgiven. They are already forgiven. Confession of sins is to restore fellowship, to keep the lines of communication open between us and God.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" - 1 John 2:11