

## Human Nature Cannot Rise Above Human Nature

I would like to say at the very beginning of this lesson that I do not believe there is a more important subject for the Christian to study than this one. We as Christians cannot keep the divine laws of God with our own human power (human nature). The main reason I was motivated to write this lesson is because of my many failures trying to keep God's divine laws by my own human power. I soon learned that it was impossible for my human nature to accomplish. Question: What was the cause of my many failures? Answer: I had not learned about the divine power that God had given to me when I became an obedient believer. If this had been taught to me, I failed to understand it; when I read it, I did not comprehend its meaning.

We can read about this divine help that we must have within us before we can keep the divine laws of God. This divine help is called the Holy Spirit of God. Now let's read it in Acts 2:37-38. The apostle Peter was preaching the first gospel sermon after Jesus ascended to Heaven. While he was preaching this sermon to a multitude of people, he convinced them that they were guilty of crucifying the Son of God. They then cried out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, <sup>37b</sup>...*Men and brethren, what shall we do?* <sup>38</sup>*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,* (now listen to the rest of the verse) *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* In God's wisdom, He knew that He did not create man with the power to direct his own steps in life concerning the keeping of the spiritual laws of God. God had purposed a plan before He ever created man about how He was going to empower man when the time came that He had chosen for this to take place.

Before this would take place, however, God gave man a long period of time to learn that he could not, by his own manpower, save himself. Man had tried with all of his human nature and had failed to keep the divine laws of God. Now let's notice in Galatians 4:4-6 how God explains to us how and when He chose to empower mankind to keep His divine laws. <sup>4</sup>*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* <sup>5</sup>*To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* <sup>6</sup>*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* The apostle Paul explains these verses very well in I Corinthians 3:16 where he wrote, <sup>16</sup>*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Question: Why is it so important for the Christian to understand this?  
Answer: Because of what John says in I John 4:4 <sup>4b</sup>*Greater is He* (the Holy Spirit) *that is in you, than he* (Satan) *that is in the world*. So we can easily see that God has not left out anything that needs to be done so that we can live a victorious life in this world, and that Heaven will be our home when this life is over. Praise the Lord for His wisdom and love that He has manifested toward us! This is one of the greatest truths that we can ever learn. I am not saying that I have this problem of human nature solved in my life, but I am saying that now I know where the spiritual help is, and I also know how to let this power work for me.

My prayer today is, “Dear God help me to let the Holy Spirit accomplish in my life that which He wants to do for me.” The apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 4:30 that it grieves the Holy Spirit of God when we refuse to let Him do His work in our lives. Praise God we can now win all of our battles against Satan if we will just let the Holy Spirit do His work. What we must learn is this: We cannot lift ourselves spiritually by our own physical boot straps, but we can lift ourselves up spiritually by the spiritual boot straps of the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord.

Most of us were raised in an environment that taught after the apostles died and those the apostles had laid their hands upon died, the power of the Holy Spirit in Christian’s lives came to an end. So we struggled through life trying to keep the divine laws of God by the power of our own human nature which was totally impossible, and we continued to experience defeat in the problems of our everyday living. This certainly has a weakening effect on our faith which leads to doubts, fears, depression, and on and on we can go—and all because of our failure to understand the work of the Holy Spirit that God has given to us for our spiritual power source.

I have heard it said by more than one speaker that there are more people in the mental institutions from the church of Christ than from any other religious group in the world per number of members. I do not know whether this is a true statement or not, but I do believe that it could be. The reason I believe that is because there is a large number of members of the Lord’s church who have a tendency to try to carry their burdens alone. This usually leads to different degrees of depression, and depression will lead to all manner of mental disorders.

Please listen very carefully to what I am going to say. I am going to use a word that is very offensive to a lot of members of the church. This word is supernatural. Please, do not let this word close our ears to the rest of this lesson. We must live in the supernatural realm if we are going to live a life of victory over

every problem that Satan will throw at us. Let's read 2 Peter 1:2-4 *<sup>2</sup>Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, <sup>3</sup>According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: <sup>4</sup>Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature of God.*

I hope we all noticed what Peter was really saying in these verses. He is saying that obedient believers have been delivered from the human nature state they were in before they were born into the family of God and have now been given everything they need to live in the supernatural realm of their new life. Paul also talks about this supernatural life in Christ Jesus in II Corinthians 5:17 when he said, *<sup>17</sup>Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Question: Are we understanding what the apostle Paul is saying? He said that everyone who is in Christ Jesus is a new creature. This means that we no longer are letting human nature fight our battles for us. We are now a new creature and the Holy Spirit is fighting our battles for us if we will just let Him. This is called supernatural living because old things have passed away and all things have become new. How could these two apostles make it any clearer for us to understand? If after we have read these verses and are still having problems in living the supernatural life, we can blame only ourselves for not believing and practicing what God has promised to us.

Let's read some more words on this subject that we are discussing. This time let's read what Luke has to say in Luke 1:37 *<sup>37</sup>For with God nothing shall be impossible.* Luke is defining who it is that makes it possible for us to live this supernatural life in Christ Jesus. Luke wants everyone to understand what he is saying, so he repeats it in Luke 18:27 *<sup>27</sup>And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.* I pray that we are all beginning to see the importance of studying the word of God every day with an open mind wanting to know the truth of the word of God.

Question: How many of us ever ask God to do for us the things that are impossible for us to do? That is what God wants us to do. What need do we have for God if we just ask Him for things that we can really do for ourselves? There is a verse in Isaiah 64:6 that really puts us in our place when we are trying to please God by our own human nature. Isaiah writes *<sup>6a</sup>But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* We read in Luke 17:10 where Jesus

says <sup>10</sup>*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.* I can remember back in my life when I had a very difficult time understanding this verse. I could not see that my life was unprofitable unto God. We were having Bible studies and baptizing a lot of people. Why then was I not pleasing God? I finally recognized my problem. I was working for God, but I was working through my own human nature. When we do that, we are going to give all the glory to ourselves for the successes we are having instead of giving God all the glory. When we are living in the supernatural realm, there is no problem in giving all the glory to God for our successes.

Here is something for us to think about. If our human efforts could save us, then Jesus died in vain. The people who lived under the old law tried this human effort thing for years. They all came up short in pleasing God. Here is a poem that has a great message in it for each of us who is trying to live our life by human effort.

As children bring their broken toys  
with tears for us to mend,  
I brought my broken dreams to God  
because He was my friend.  
But then instead of leaving Him  
in peace to work alone,  
I hung around and tried to help  
with ways that were my own.  
At last I snatched them back and cried,  
“How could you be so slow?”  
“My child,” He said, “what could I do?  
You never would let go.”

This is human nature at work. This poem should get our attention to the fact that if we are not careful we will take our bag full of cares and woes to the throne of God in prayer and dump them at His feet and ask Him to help us with them, then put them right back in the bag and take them back home with us. If we are going to have peace in our lives, we must learn to live by the concept of “Let go and then let God.”

Question: How are we going to be able to overcome this human effort concept that we sometimes have in our lives? There is only one way and that is to believe in what the word of God says about it and not what man has to say about it.

I had a member of the church say to me not long ago that when the apostles and the ones they had laid their hands upon all died, that the Holy Spirit went back to Heaven to wait for the day of judgment, because the Holy Spirit had accomplished what God had ordained Him to do. There is another verse that we should always have in our hearts when something like this is said to us, and that is Romans 3:4 where we read, <sup>4a...</sup> Let God be true, but every man a liar.

Question: What does God have to say about divine nature? Let's read it in Romans 8:9 <sup>9</sup>*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*  
Question: Where does God say that the Holy Spirit is now dwelling? Is the Holy Spirit in Heaven only as the man said to me, or is He also dwelling in the hearts of all those who have obeyed the gospel? We just read God's answer: The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of His children. Now there is no problem in knowing what is truth on this subject. Let's now read Ephesians 6:10 where Paul writes <sup>10</sup>*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, (now notice) and in the power of his might.* This means that God has equipped us with supernatural powers so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil. Paul has already told the Christians that were in the Ephesian church that the Lord will strengthen them by the power of the Holy Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16). We must also read verse 20, because it just has so much good stuff for us to know. Here is what it says <sup>20</sup>*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* Praise the Lord for His power and wisdom.

I feel sorry for the person who said to me that he did not believe the Holy Spirit helps us in any other way except through His words which we read in the scriptures. Can we see what this man is saying? In essence he is saying, "I can keep the divine laws of God by my own human efforts," even after reading all of these scriptures that tell him he cannot. There are some who may be saying, "How can this be?" Jesus gives us the answer in John 8:43 where He says <sup>43</sup>*Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.* We must give our full attention to what Jesus is saying unless we too fall into this kind of thinking. We must do whatever it takes to stay tuned in to what the word of God says. The word of God must always be of utmost importance to us, because Jesus says in John 12:48 <sup>48b...</sup> The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Question: How can we read these kinds of verses and straightway forget how important they are to our eternal security? Sometimes our actions make it

very clear that we believe when Jesus and God speak they don't really mean what they say—they are just trying to scare us into doing what they want us to do. Let's read Luke 16:23-24 and let the rich man tell us if Jesus and God say things to just scare us. Let's notice what was said about this rich man. *23And in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.* He had a final request. He asked for someone to be sent to his five brothers back at his father's house and tell them that Jesus and God mean exactly what they say. Question: Can God and Jesus make it any plainer than this that they do mean what they say? I believe this is just as plain as it can be.

We read in Hebrews 11:6 *6aBut without faith it is impossible to please him.* Romans 10:17 says *17So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* There are many believers who read their Bibles regularly but who never learn what the truth of the word is. Question: Why is this? Answer: Because they are not truth seekers. We will never learn any more than we know right now if we read with our minds made up on what we believe. We must read with an open mind and with a strong desire to learn what is truth so we can believe it and repent of our false views and teachings. If we will do this, God will then bless our understanding of His word as we study it with an understanding that it will fill our hearts with a peace and comfort of mind that we have never had before. Then we will have a true hunger and thirst for God's word, and that will cause us to be a daily Bible reader with a true zest for living. Praise the Lord.

Now let's read about this in Psalms 1:1-3 *1Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.* Isn't this a beautiful picture of a beautiful life?

There are many promises of God in the Bible to the obedient believer that will drive human nature far from us, but we must know and believe these promises of God before we can claim them. Examples: We read in I Timothy 4:4-5 where the Holy Spirit says *4For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.* I read about a missionary one time who was preaching in what was called

the bush country of Africa. It was very difficult to find clean water to drink. One time he was very thirsty and the only water that he could find had all kinds of very small insects in it. He was aware of this promise from God in I Timothy 4, so he decided to claim it. He said a prayer and then he cupped his hands and reached into the water and drank with no ill effects. Human nature here was defeated by the divine nature that God had given him. Another example of our divine nature at work is found in Luke 10:1-8. When we are in other peoples' homes sharing the word with them, Jesus tells us whatever those people set before us, for us to eat with them.

Here is another promise of God which our divine nature must be well aware of. It is found in Psalms 34:7 *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* We are in good hands with the Lord. Praise God for His care. So every night in our prayers to God before we go to sleep, let's ask God to send His protecting angels to guard us through the night. If we will believe this, we will have a more peaceful rest than we would otherwise have.

I would like to share several scriptures about this divine nature that God gave to us when we became obedient believers. Acts 2:38 tells us the gift of the Holy Spirit was a promise to every obedient believer. Acts 5:22 says the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to everyone who obeys the gospel. Paul says in I Corinthians 3:16 and I Corinthians 6:19 that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit which we have from God. In Romans 15:13 we read that we are filled with joy, peace, and hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 1:19 we can read about the great power that God has given to us. There are many, many verses in the New Testament that we can read on this subject which tell us about the divine nature God has given to all those who obey Him so they can live this supernatural life in God's spiritual family.

God has given us the recipe on how to obtain the divine nature of God, and Isaiah says in chapter 35 verse 8 that it is so simple that a wayfaring man need not err therein. Here are some verses that are in this recipe book: II Corinthians 8:7 says we are to abound in knowledge with all diligence; I Peter 2:2 tells us to desire the word of God that we may grow thereby. Here is a helpful thought—always, before we ever start reading the word of God, we should go to Him in prayer and ask Him to help us read with an open mind and a receptive heart and to help us better understand His word. We should also ask Him to help us as we study His word that it will feed our souls. Additional scriptures and prayers are:

Psalms 119:18 *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

Psalms 119:15 *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. Help me to meditate upon Thy word and have respect for it.*

Psalms 119:16 *I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. Help me to find delight in studying your word.*

Psalms 119:34 *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*

Psalms 119:97 *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Lord, help me to love Thy word.*

Psalms 119:103 *How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! O Lord, help me that your word will be sweet to me.*

Psalms 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Lord, I pray that Thy word will be a lamp to my feet and a light to my pathway.*

Psalms 119:116 *Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. O Lord, help me to live according to your word.*

Psalms 119:160 *Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. Lord, help me to know that your word is true.*

Psalms 119:165 *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. O Lord, help your word bring great peace into my life.*

Psalms 119:171 *My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. Lord, help my lips that they will speak praise unto you.*

God says in II Timothy 2:15 that when we study His word, He approves of that. In John 14:23 Jesus says that if we will keep His words that He and His Father will come and make their abode with us.

After reading all of these scriptures, surely we are beginning to understand where our divine nature is coming from. We have read where we have God, Jesus,

and the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. We have no excuse for not living a supernatural life. We all should be able to agree with that.

Human nature cannot move mountains, but God can. We read in Mark 9:17-27 where a father brought his son to Jesus and said, *17...Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. 22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. 23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. We need to pay close attention to how this father responds to the words of Jesus. 24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Please notice the sincerity of this man's heart. He knew that he believed, because he said he did, but he was not sure just how strong his faith was. He so much wanted his son to be healed, but he knew what the right thing to do was. It was not the time to depend upon his human nature, so he made a very intelligent decision and cried out to the One who could help him. We can sure use this example in our everyday choices that we must make and never use our human nature in trying to make the right decision on spiritual matters.*

I would like for all of us to read together a prayer that the apostle Paul prayed for the members of the church in Ephesus. We will begin reading in Ephesians 3:14-21. Please do not let this long reading hinder us from receiving and learning from these beautiful words in this prayer. Paul begins by saying, *14For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

I hope we all noticed that Paul did not refer to our human nature a single time, because it was replaced with God's divine nature when we became a member of His family. Did we notice how many times he mentioned the power and strength he has given us? Why? So we can live above our human nature in a realm of life that is called the supernatural. It would be wonderful if we could

view what all we have from God to help us live for Him like the apostle Paul views it. We too can have this same view if we would spend the time in studying the word and in prayer that Paul did. Let's each one of us spend more time at it. I believe we will be pleased with the results.

Human nature will not motivate us to study the scriptures searching for verses that teach about the divine nature that God gives to every obedient believer. Human nature will not let those kinds of verses into our hearts. Jesus explains it perfectly in John 8:43 when he says *43Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.* There is no way that we can overemphasize the importance of this verse. If we often wonder why so many of us cannot understand the truth of God's word these words of Jesus could not be any plainer.

Now we need to listen to this statement: If we have the divine nature of God dwelling within us, and we are not quenching His work, we will have no problem in studying our Bibles on a regular basis. Here are some examples of human nature at work in our lives. Human nature is very time-conscious in our lives.

1. Human nature loves short announcements.
2. Human nature loves short prayers.
3. Human nature loves short communion services.
4. Human nature loves short songs.
5. Human nature loves short sermons.
6. Human nature says, "I will give one hour of my time in Sunday morning service, but my heart's desire is for everyone who has a part in this one hour of worship service to make it just as short as you can, and I will appreciate it very much."

Question: How time-conscious are we? Have we let human nature take front seat in our lives?

Let's read an example from Nehemiah 8:1-6. Ezra the scribe read from the book of the Law of Moses. He read from the morning until midday. In verse 5 we read *5And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: 6And Ezra blessed the*

*Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.* Here is a great example for each one of us to examine our own lives (and not the life of someone else) and see what is ruling our life. Is it human nature or the divine nature of God that was given to us when we obeyed the gospel? Please, we need to listen very carefully to this. Human nature is not time-conscious when it comes to things that our flesh loves to do.

For example, in our favorite sports two or three overtimes in the games do not cause us to lose interest in the game. To the contrary, we usually become more excited. This should cause us to seriously examine our own hearts and see if we truly love the Lord with all of our hearts, or do we just have a form of worship that we go through every Lord's day waiting impatiently for the closing prayer to be said? This is becoming a real problem in the church. Here are a few facts: Some members will leave the church services before a baptism because they have given their one hour. Some will start leaving before the closing song and prayer, and they feel no guilt at all because they have kept their one hour commitment. Some will even back their cars into their favorite parking place so they can leave as soon as possible without having to wait on anyone to get out of their way. If we let human nature get just a small hold on our lives, it will soon have full control of our divine nature. We can read about this in Galatians 3:3 where the apostle Paul writes *3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?* Paul is telling the members of the church in Galatia that they began their Christian life by living the supernatural life, but now they are living in a very foolish way because they went back to their own human nature trying to perfect their life. He tells them in verse four that their efforts are in vain. Paul writes in Galatians 5:16 *16This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* Now Paul shares with them the only way to get rid of their human nature and that is to walk in the divine nature of God. Thank God that He has given us the solution to our fleshly problems.

Here are some very simple ways to tell if we are letting the divine nature of God rule our lives:

1. If we can forgive those who sin against us.
2. If we are able to love those who are unlovable.
3. If we can find joy in the midst of persecution.

4. If we have peace in our lives spiritually.
5. If we are long-suffering with others.
6. If we treat others with gentleness.
7. If our lives are filled with goodness.
8. If our faith is growing in our trusting God.
9. If we are exercising self-control.
10. If we are glorifying God instead of ourselves.

We find this list in Galatians 5:22-23 and in Ephesians 5:8-12.

Paul is saying to us that these are the fruits of the divine nature of God, because human nature cannot accomplish any of these things completely. We read in Philippians 2:13 *13For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* So again we read where human nature cannot rise above human nature and keep the divine laws of God. We must let God give to us of His divine nature and then let Him work in our lives. Now let's notice what Paul again writes in Philippians 4:13 *13I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* In the future let's not be fearful to share with others that it is a true saying that we must live a supernatural life if we want to live the kind of life that God has ordained us to live.

Thank you for reading and studying this lesson.

In Christian love,

Herb Trout  
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