

# THE EVIL CARNAL NATURE OF SINFUL MAN

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The *carnal mind* which is controlled by the devil, always depends on something or somebody besides God. To realize that is very valuable for a Christian to know, so that evil root of sin can be gotten rid of. It must be removed, and it will bring deliverance from every other sin as well, through having that root destroyed and removed by God. That root of sin is born in us, and until (by God's grace) we are delivered from it, we will always be influenced and tempted by Satan to commit sin of other kinds. That hidden evil nature will give the devil a dominating power over us (whether we are aware of it or not). That is of utmost importance for us to know (and to understand), so we can be sincere in wanting God to remove it from our heart.

If we had a poison weed growing in our yard and we did not remove the root, it would come up again. If we got down to the roots, however, and destroyed it, that would put an end to growth. Jeremiah said that we do not know that the root of sin is within our heart. He said that the natural disposition of man is hidden in our heart (that sin-nature inherited from Adam, which is the root and cause of trusting in man, instead of trusting God). (Jer.17:9) "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" No one of themselves would know it!! God must reveal it!

If you would tell a worldly person (or the average denominational church member) that they have an evil root in them, (and, that they stand in need of repentance), they would be highly insulted, and yet you would be telling them the truth.

But when God gets hold of us (as result of a real repentance and a real surrender of the self-life), then He can search the heart. God will expose that condition of our heart to us. (Jer.17:10) "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings."

"I try the reins" means that God brings out in the open the hidden things of that evil root in the heart (for everyone who will allow Him to do so). He then delivers us from it by revealing His plan or way of escape from that root of sin.

We need to see that in its true light, and to

realize how much worse it is even than murder, adultery, stealing, and lying. It is most terrible, and it is the root of all these other sins mentioned, because it can continue to dwell in a person's heart, without them having any idea that they have that viper in their heart. However, if we will allow God to work in our life, He will expose it, and He will enable us to get rid of it. We cannot get rid of it by ourselves. It is in the carnal (or worldly) mind. "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (the Bible says.)

The carnal mind will trust in something besides God, something that man has made or devised (which is called idolatry). That is what trusting in the self-life is called in the Scriptures, and it is the worst sin that could possibly be. (Jesus said) "He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgement." But of those who are not obeying God and not trusting only on His Son, Jesus said (John 3:18) "He who does not trust has already received sentence, because he has not his trust resting on the Name of God's only Son." That is the seriousness of not getting rid of an idolatrous carnal nature.

God requires a believer (and everyone else) to trust on (His Son) the One whom He has sent, and Jesus said, "only those who are obedient to my Father in Heaven, will enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt.7:21). To the others (who are not found to be obeying Him by not trusting on His Son), He said, "I will tell them plainly, >I never knew you; begone from me, you doers of wickedness." (NKJ version, calls it practicing lawlessness, because God's will or His law had not been obeyed.)

(1 Cor.10) describes some of the idolatry that the Israelites took part in (as well as troubles they went through because of those sins). Apostle Paul warned, "Do not be idolaters as some of them were" (referring to the time after the Israelites had left Egypt when Moses was called by God to come up the mountain, and he stayed there for forty days. That was at least 39 3/4 days longer than he had to stay to know what God wanted him to hear). But he was kept there by God to test the hearts of the Israelites. After he had been there for quite a while, the people began to wonder, and to say to each other "something has happened to Moses, and he is never going to come back." (Exod.32:1) "When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, 'Come, make us gods who will

go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him'."

The people asked Aaron to make idols for them to worship (and who would lead them to their *Promised Land*). Because they had not believed God's Word (nor many miracles that He had performed in their sight), the carnal nature was still in their hearts. The Israelites gave Aaron all the jewelry they had borrowed from the Egyptians. Aaron made two golden calves in imitation of the gods of Egypt, and they held a feast to those golden calves. Then they stood up to dance and make merry before the metal gods they had created. (NIV translation calls it pagan revelry). In any case it was one of the worst forms of idolatry, a false place of trust on something made by man, and direct disobedience of the first two commandments that God had given Moses for the people to obey. The people said to each other (vs.4) "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

That was another piece of evidence that the natural heart (as controlled by the self-life), wants to see where the deliverance will come from. They had more confidence in those metal calves, than in a God Who had made Heaven, the earth (and everything in the universe). The spiritual mind with the carnal nature removed, however, has no trouble putting faith in the unseen God, and it wants to place its trust on the One whom God had sent. That is God's great command, the one condition or requirement that He places on all true believers.

God said to Moses (vs.7-10) "Go down, because your people (whom you brought up out of Egypt), have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol, cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'" "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

"Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God," He asked, "What will become of your great Name?" He meant, you told Israel, and you told me, that it paid to serve and trust you. Now if you destroy this people, the heathen nations of the

earth will hear about it and say, you just brought them out to kill them.

Then Moses asked God if He would pardon them, and God did pardon them as Moses prayed. (Vs.14 says) "So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

We should take notice that in Israel's experiences (when they were defeated by their enemies), it was the result of idolatry in a carnal mind (that had never been revealed nor forsaken). That is, they were trusting in man instead of God, or, in things that could be seen, *instead of trusting in the unseen God*.

In (1 Cor.10:6-10), Paul said, "Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and (then) got up to indulge in pagan revelry.'" (Trusting in their metal gods was idolatry, and it soon led them into many other forms of idolatry (as the apostle described). "We should not commit immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble and be discontented as some of them did—and (they) were killed by the destroying angel."

Because the Israelites did not fear the Word of the Lord, they did not obey Him. Prophet Samuel was inspired by God to say (1 Sam. 15:22-23), "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion (in the human heart) is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."

Since the Israelites were not sincerely committed and had not made a final surrender of their life to God, they still had rebellion in their heart so God could not help them and could not remove that carnal nature from them, against their will. We must want to be delivered, and willing to allow God to submit us to His will and His plan for our life. The carnal nature of self (that we were all born with), must be removed, and be replaced with the Christlike nature. It is an Eternal Life issue!

As a result of their stubbornness and rebellion, the idolatrous actions of the Israelites continued to multiply (all originating from that carnal nature of the self-life, still in their heart). They had not learned to trust in a God whom they could not see, but Who had made Heaven, the earth, and everything in the universe and, Who had worked many miracles before their eyes in delivering them from the Egyptians, even parting the waters of the sea to enable them to escape the Pharaoh. "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people." *They refused to be pliable under God's teaching, as clay in the hands of a potter.* They wanted to depend on their own knowledge, and to trust in things which could be seen. They had not given the Holy Spirit the opportunity to remove the carnal nature (of self-trust) from their heart.

Paul told the Corinthians that we need to depend on Spirit-taught Truth, that which the Spirit teaches, "so that your trust might rest not on the wisdom of man but on the power of God." (1 Cor.2: 5). It is through the 'sanctifying work of the Spirit' that the carnal nature of self is removed from our heart. That is "the office work of the Holy Spirit," the Pastor said. We want to be among God's own people (1 Pet. 1:2) "Chosen in accordance with the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, with a view to their obedience and to their being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ."

The writer to the Hebrews explained that it is the surrender of man's will (the self-life) that God wants to see in us (and it needs to take place in everyone's life). Without having the carnal nature of the self-life removed, no one will go to Heaven. (Heb.10:7) refers to a Spirit inspired message from Jesus (as given in Psalm 40:7-8) "Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book, it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart."

Jesus was speaking of His Father in Heaven, and of delighting to have His Father's will within His own heart. (Vs.10 speaks to us), "It is through that divine will that we have been set free from sin, through the offering of Jesus Christ as our sacrifice once for all." That tells us that through our believing on the sacrifice of Christ and accepting into our heart what that has accomplished for us, we should then realize from God's Word that His sacrifice has taken away the

desire to sin from a truly surrendered heart. (By Scripture saying, "through the offering of Jesus Christ as our sacrifice once for all," God's Word means that the power of Jesus' Blood is just as effective today *as the day He went to the Cross in our place, to take away the carnal, sinful nature of self, if we will accept and believe it*.

A believer has that responsibility to see themselves as God word says they are, and not listen to the devil telling us that we have not been cleansed, pardoned, and forgiven by the work of Christ on the cross. (Gal. 2:20), "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me; and the life which I now live in the body I live through faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up to death on my behalf."

At the same time, we are to always leave ourselves open to further conviction through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, as we live a life of faith on the Son of God. (Acts 26:18) "that they may turn from darkness to light and from the obedience to Satan to God, in order to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified through faith in Me." (Jesus was speaking to Paul.)

As a person is sincere in wanting to live a life of faith, the Holy Spirit will expose the carnal nature within their heart so that it can be forsaken (removed by a sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and be replaced by a Christlike nature). It is a lifelong process within a person's heart (as we are never finished learning about God's will and His plan for the believer). Having the carnal nature removed from our heart is essential to one's preparation for Eternal Life with Christ, because the heart is where the wrong places of trust (idolatry) are embedded.

Idolatry is what God had to expose to the Israelites through Gideon. It was the hindrance that had to be removed, in order for God's power to work to deliver them from the persecution of Midian *and to open the way for spiritual progress to be made*. At the time when the judges ruled Israel, the Midianites would come and take the grain from them when it was ready for harvesting. What little they could keep for themselves; they had to hide and thresh secretly. Gideon was threshing wheat behind the winepress to hide it from the Midianites, as the Israelites had no power whatever against them. An angel from the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said, (Judges

6:12-15) “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” Then the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?” (God used sarcasm to expose the Israelites lack of trust on Him, and how weak we are of ourselves.) So, Gideon said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.”

The place of self-trust had been exposed, and Gideon greatly feared, because the Midianites had come with a vast army of well-trained soldiers. Then the angel gave some real spiritual light to Gideon *if he would accept and follow it.* (vs. 16) “And the Lord said to him, ‘Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.’” *Gideon had to believe that Word of God to obey it.*

That same night the Lord gave Gideon the first step. “Tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, cut down the wooden image that is beside it; build an altar to the Lord your God and sacrifice the second bull of your father's herd on the altar as a burnt sacrifice.” **The idolatry of those carnally minded people (the spiritual cause), had to be removed first.** Gideon must have believed the Lord's words, “I will be with you”, because he made the right choice. He chopped down the idol and built an altar to the Lord *even though he greatly feared the people.* Gideon had faith to act, only because he believed the word of the Lord.

The second step was for Gideon to choose a few thousand men to go against Midian, a very insignificant number to go against the vast number of Midianite warriors. The Lord then reduced Gideon's men to three hundred (and there was a reason for that). It gave the opportunity for faith in God to be exercised, for there was nothing left to do but to have faith in God to defeat the vast army coming against them. *That is how battles were won in the Bible, with the carnal nature of dependance on self removed, and it is the same today.*

To make a long story short, Gideon went

to a battlefield in full dependance upon God's power to deliver them. The enemy was defeated by God in a remarkable way, and that fulfilled what God had said, that if His people (which can include each one of us) would obey and follow Him, “one would chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.”

What we need to learn from this, is the value of finding out the cause of our troubles. The cause of the Israelite's trouble was depending on something man had devised (something besides God). It was idolatry in the carnal nature of sinful man that God exposed to Gideon. Their victory came the moment they exercised faith on God alone with nothing else left to trust on. If we will put aside our self-efforts, and our trust on plans devised by man, and give God the opportunity, He will also bring us to victory over the carnal nature of the self-life. With the self-life removed from our heart, we can make progress in the full Truth of God and enjoy being prepared for Eternal Life. &&&&&&&&&

#### SOME MAIN POINTS:

1. The root of sin is part of the *carnal nature* that everyone since Adam has been born with, and we must allow God to deliver us from that influence of Satan.
2. That sinful nature is within a person's heart without them knowing it, because the Bible says the human heart is deceitful above all things.
3. The *carnal nature* conceives *idolatry*, because that is Satan's object, (to take everyone's faith away from trust on God.)
4. God used sarcasm with Gideon to expose the Israelites idolatrous lack of trust on Him, and, to reveal how weak sinful man really is of themselves.

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