

Devotional: Spiritual Conflict

Christian Devotional about the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit

But I say, walk habitually in the [Holy] Spirit [seek Him and be responsive to His guidance], and then you will certainly not carry out the desire of the sinful nature [which responds impulsively without regard for God and His precepts]. For the sinful nature has its desire which is opposed to the Spirit, and the [desire of the] Spirit opposes the sinful nature; for these [two, the sinful nature and the Spirit] are in direct opposition to each other [continually in conflict], so that you [as believers] do not [always] do whatever [good things] you want to do.

- Galatians 5:16-17 (AMP)

Galatians 5:17 reveals that we, as believers, have a 'sinful nature' or 'human nature' that is continually in conflict with the Spirit. But what is the 'sinful nature'? I believe the 'sinful nature' or 'human nature' is 'the weakness of the flesh'. We all have human weaknesses, which aren't always necessarily 'sinful', but can lead to sin if we give in to the weakness and allow it to control our actions. The conflict, I believe, is between the 'resistance' of the weakness (or the evil desire of the flesh) and the 'willingness' to choose instead to surrender ourselves to what the Holy Spirit desires.

When tempted, we have a choice: we can either give in to the temptation (the wrong desires of the flesh) or give in to the Spirit (the desires of the Spirit)—and this is the conflict we have, the resistance or struggle to choose. Our flesh wants it, but the Spirit says no. We so often find ourselves justifying it or telling ourselves it's not really that bad or making some other excuse to satisfy the flesh. When we do that, we're playing into the enemy's hand as he wants us to make the wrong choice. And it really does come down to a matter of choice! I do believe we actually choose *to* sin or choose *not* to sin.

The Holy Spirit will always be in direct opposition to the wrong desires of the flesh. The flesh, as the amplified bible puts it, is our sinful capacity, worldliness, disgraceful impulses, selfishness (Galatians 6:8 & 5:1). We have the capacity to sin in the flesh, but we can, by the Holy Spirit, resist it as we choose to submit to the desires of the Spirit. In v16, it says that the sinful nature responds impulsively, without regard for God and His precepts. When we are living from the flesh, we respond and react in accordance with the flesh—often in ways that do not reflect Christ in us. Our flesh needs to come under the Lordship of Christ. We are body, soul and spirit, which needs to be fully surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus. This way, we won't just respond impulsively without regard for God or His Word.

Temptation to give in to our fleshly weakness seems to be forever before us; Satan tempts us in our weakest, vulnerable areas, but we can resist through the help and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Temptation, in itself, is not a sin (after all, Jesus was tempted in the wilderness), but 'acting' on it is. We need to learn to deny ourselves, choosing instead to live a surrendered life to God and to say 'yes' to the Spirit!

Additional Scriptures: [Galatians 5:24-25](#) (AMP); [Matthew 26:41](#) (AMP); [Romans 8:5](#) (AMP);
[1 John 5:18](#) (AMP); [1 John 3:9](#) (AMP); [Romans 8:12-13](#) (AMP); [Romans 7:6](#) (AMP); [Romans 6:11](#) (AMP)
[Romans 6:6-7](#) (AMP); [Romans 13:14](#) (AMP)

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