

Tech Talk  
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The term "computer virus" is fairly well-known today. If you use a personal computer, you probably run some form of anti-virus software on it. In the earlier days of personal computers, this software was optional; today it is nearly a necessity.

Knowing what a computer virus is helps us understand why we need anti-virus software. A computer virus is software that can copy itself and infect a computer without the knowledge or permission of the user. The term "malware", which means "**malicious software**", refers to computer viruses as well as other software such as worms, Trojan Horses, spyware and adware. Each type of malware operates differently. In all cases the computer operator did not intend to install or use it.

Malware's impact ranges from unsolicited email ("spam") to total destruction of a computer system. Thousands, if not millions, of lost dollars can be attributed to malware. This cost results from lost productivity due to slow response times of systems, lost sales because an order entry facility (such as an online catalog) was unresponsive, disclosure of private financial information and the time it takes to restore systems damaged by malware.

Anti-virus software covers many types of malware. In its basic form, anti-virus software acts on known patterns of activity. These patterns are maintained in periodically updated definition files. When a file containing a known pattern is opened, the anti-virus software stops the action. If the definitions are outdated or if new malware is introduced on a computer, the anti-virus software may not stop the action resulting in a computer being infected.

God gave us anti-virus software. We commonly refer to it as the Bible. His Word contains definitions of how we should live. It also contains descriptions of how our lives should not be lived. Only by prayerfully studying the Bible and responding to the Holy Spirit can we interpret those definitions and apply them to our life. Then we can block malware such as lust, lewdness, idolatry, jealousy and selfish ambitions in our life. (Refer to Galatians 5:19-21 for a list.)

What happens when we submit to the Holy Spirit and allow God to transform us? We live a fruitful life for the Lord; a life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23, NASB). Our "anti-virus software", God's Word and the Holy Spirit, protects us from sin and a destructive lifestyle. We also are blessed by the fruits listed above. Is the anti-virus software of your life current?