

**** JULY 2016 ****

THE SPIRITUAL MAN

Spirit, soul and body

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"
1Thess.5:23.

To become the mature spiritual sons of God that He has intended us to be, we need to understand the nature of our creation. This verse in **1 Thessalonians** presents the human person to be tripartite, that is, made up of three distinguishable parts: the **spirit**, the **soul** and the **body**. Most people are unaware of the nature of our creation and traditional Christian religion has taught that man is composed of body, that which is seen, and soul, the invisible part of man, which lives forever. A Christian funeral always acknowledges that we are burying the body and that the soul has departed.

The failure to distinguish between soul and spirit will inhibit our spiritual growth and we will fail to grow to maturity. We need to distinguish between spirit and soul in order to grow in Christ.

Dividing between soul and spirit

Man as a living soul is a complex being. As we learn from **1 Thessalonians**, man has a spirit and a soul, and lives in a body. However there needs to come a distinguishing between the soul and the spirit. **Hebrews 4:12** tells us that the only thing that can bring this division between soul and spirit is the word of God. *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* The word of God ministers to and affects every part of us, even bringing healing to the physical joints and marrow, meaning that the word of God can pierce our bodies, removing sickness and disease.

But more importantly, **the word of God brings a division between the soul and spirit**. When we understand that we have a spirit given to us by God at creation, that we have a soul, and that we live in a body, then we can begin to grow into the spiritual man that God has ordained. It is only the word of God that enables us to function as a spiritual man and escape from the snare of being a carnal man, that is, acting like a natural man only affected by the natural world.

The song of Mary

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour"
Lu.1:46-47. Out of her soul Mary praised the Lord, acclaiming and proclaiming what He had done. She magnified the Lord out of her soul. But Mary said that her spirit was rejoicing in God. Because Mary was able to respond to the angel messenger and received by faith the *rhema* word of God concerning the conception of Jesus, her spirit was quickened and she experienced spiritual rejoicing. This then overflowed into her soul, enabling her to magnify the Lord. There are two clear functions taking place: the quickening of the spirit by God, and the positive response in Mary's soul.

This demonstrates to us the acute need to hear God and respond to God in our spirit, and then for the soul to be submissive to the spirit and to also respond positively. When the

soul is feeling discouraged and sad, it is very difficult to hear God in your spirit. We need to learn to encourage ourselves in the Lord and two reliable ways are:

- **speaking in tongues in prayer** to God, because tongues is an operation of the human spirit and if we give ourselves to praying and singing in tongues, we will soon be communing with God again (**1Cor.14:2-4 & 14**).
- **reading the Bible in a focused way**. If you read a few verses or even a few chapters, sooner or later the word will break through in your spirit man and you will begin to feel differently in your soul.

We need to turn to God when our soul is troubled. When our soul is overcome in any way, we should turn to God, and practice the reliable Christian disciplines that God has given us, exercising faith as we do so.

THE CREATION OF MAN

Let us go back to creation to understand more fully the creation of man as a living being. **"And YAHWEH God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being [living soul]" Genesis 2:7.** God literally breathed life into the clay figure He had made of the dust of the earth. When the Spirit of the Eternal God interacted with the physical creation, something wonderful and amazing happened: a human person was created. This person was created from the dust of the earth, by the breath of God interacting with that dust. And this wonder continues to this day: when the Spirit of God interacts with a natural person, there is a new birth and the natural person becomes a child of God.

Fallen man must be born again

Before we are born again, the Scripture says, we **"were dead in trespasses and sins"** (**Eph.2:1**). Jesus said that to see the kingdom of God we must be **"born again"** (**Jn.3:3**). He went on to say, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"** **Jn.3:5-6**. Being born of the water refers to natural birth - Jesus interprets this for us: that which is born of water refers to the flesh birth. Being born of the Spirit is being born again of the Spirit of God, the second birth. To know God and His kingdom, one must be born of the spirit. Otherwise we only have religion, which is not of the spirit.

Spirit of God, spirit of man

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" **Romans 8:16**. This verse refers to the Spirit of God and it refers to the human spirit within us. The human spirit is the deepest part of us. We can only know the things of God through our spirit. When we are born again, our spirit, which is always part of us, is born again. It is not the soul that is born again, but it is the spirit of man that is born again. This can only happen when the soul accepts the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and chooses to receive Him. The living presence of God comes into the spirit part of us. From that time on we can adequately receive from the Spirit of God through our human spirit all that we need to grow, and develop in Christ, eventually becoming that mature spiritual man. God recaptures our spirit man so that we can submit our souls to our spirit man, who is connected with the Spirit of God.

THE SOUL

In the Scriptures, the soul refers to

- **the whole human person**, a living being, the unique person that each one is. Soul refers to the individual; it refers to the individual personality and we are all different.
- the soul refers to that **part of the human person which is separate to the spirit of man** and the body of man. Man altogether is composed of body, soul and spirit. We can say: 'I am a soul; I have a spirit; and I live in a body'.

The function of the soul as part of the whole human person is to draw from the spirit, which is the innermost part of the person. This is how God designed us: for the soul to receive spiritual direction from God. Then the person walks in this direction. The soul exercises the body to come into line with the spiritual direction. It is in the realm of the soul that we struggle, as the soul is tempted to follow the fleshly desires, rather than being led by the spirit.

World conscious - body

It is through our five physical senses that we become world conscious. Babies primarily function in the sense realm. If they are hungry they cry; if they are uncomfortable, they cry, and most of the rest of the time they sleep. Our body makes us world conscious, and we can only interpret that world through our five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

Paul says "*The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned*" **1Cor.2:14**. The natural man is only concerned about what his soul receives from the sense realm.

Self conscious - soul

It is through our intellect [thinking ability], and our emotions [feelings] that we become aware of ourselves. This is the realm of the soul that makes us self conscious. The soul also has the faculty of choice, making decisions. In summary we say that the soul is made up of the mind, the will and the emotions.

As we grow up in life, the soul is meant to govern the body, not remaining a baby and only reacting to the five senses. This cannot happen unless the person has been born again of the spirit. Even people who become highly educated and understand much about psychology and social sciences, can never really understand life, because the soul is not meant to be the source of life, but rather the spirit of man is the source of life. The soul is never meant to exist independently of God.

God conscious - spirit

It is through our spirit that we become God conscious. The human person before being born again, still of course has a spirit and can pick up some spiritual things. Furthermore all witchcraft and occult involvement is activated by the human spirit discerning things in the invisible spiritual realm. Please note that Paul lists witchcraft [sorcery] as a work of the flesh (**Gal.5:20**).

God Himself can only be known when the person comes to Christ and is born again. As we have already said, this is an operation of God's Spirit. This is how we become God conscious. The God conscious spirit is then meant to influence the soul, and the soul in turn exercises and governs the body. If we can come to this understanding and submit ourselves to

walking in the spirit, with God's Spirit inhabiting our spirit, then life will make sense and we will grow to maturity.

GROWING TO MATURITY

There is a growth process in becoming a spiritual man. In writing to the Hebrews the writer said, "*You have come to need milk and not solid food*" (**Heb.5:12**). The Hebrews had remained as babes; they were "*unskilled in the word of righteousness*" (v.13). They had not grown to "*full age [maturity]*"; they were unable to discern "*good and evil*"; they had not exercised their senses (v.14). What 'senses' are referred to here? Answer: the spiritual senses. Why had they been unable to exercise their spiritual senses? They had lacked the knowledge of the word of God. They had not become teachers! (v.12); they had remained as babes.

The natural body

"There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body" **1Cor.15:44b**. We are first a natural body, but we are to become a spiritual body (v.46). We were created like the first man, "*of the earth*" but we have been redeemed to grow into the spiritual man who "*is the Lord from heaven*" (v.47). Adam was created "*a living being [soul]. The last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit*" (v.45). We are not being restored to be like Adam, before he fell; we are to be "*conformed to the image of His Son*" (**Romans 8:29**); we are to "*bear the image of the heavenly Man*" (**1Cor.15:49**). This is the spiritual growth that God has ordained for each one of us: from the earthly to the heavenly; from the natural to the spiritual.

The will - volition

"If you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (**Heb.3:7-8; 3:15, 4:7**). We have to exercise our will to hear from God. **We choose** to hear from God and we choose to obey God.

The will is a very important part of the human soul. God gave man 'free will'. God made man with the ability to choose, to make decisions. Many in the modern world are overly concerned with how we think and how we feel. Sometimes judges and magistrates are soft on people who commit serious crime because they were suffering from depression or some other malady of the soul. The acute role of the will seems to have been forgotten. Every action is based on a choice. No matter how depressed or negative we may be feeling, God has given us the faculty of will, enabling us to make choices in our soul and of course the right choice is to turn to God.

In **Psalm 103:1-3**, David demonstrates for us the power of the will. He is commanding his soul to "*Bless the LORD*". David says that he is able to do this because he remembers all of God's benefits and God's forgiveness and healing. David is making a decision in his soul to bless the LORD.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

The spirit is the innermost part of a person. The Bible clearly teaches that we are made up of spirit, soul and body. Unfortunately most are not aware of this and are not taught concerning the reality and the ability of the human spirit. Paul says, "*For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man which is in him*" (**1Cor.2:11a**). This means that through my spirit I can watch over my soul; I can see everything that my soul is thinking, feeling and deciding, and as I become more mature, I can decide to exercise my spirit more and more and bring my soul into alignment with the spirit.

"The spirit of a man is the lamp of YAHWEH, searching all the inner depths of his heart" Prov.20:27. It is through the spirit of man that God works in us.

Through my spirit I can be aware of my soul dreaming. Sometimes God uses dreams to speak to us spiritually. It is only through the spirit that we can understand dreams that come from the Spirit of God.

Even before we are born again, we can discern things through the spirit. For example, a young child can know that something is evil because it is a spiritual discernment.

Paul said that he served *"with my spirit in the gospel of His Son"* (Rom.1:9). Jesus said that God is to be worshiped in spirit and in truth (Jn.4:23-24). Religious worship is a form of godliness without power (2Tim.3:5).

We can say that the spirit has three major faculties, even as the soul has three major faculties. In the soul is the mind, the will and the emotions. These three faculties of the soul correlate with the major faculties [functions] of the spirit. The faculties of the spirit are the conscience, intuition, and communion.

The conscience

Every human person is born with a conscience. It is part of the spirit nature of man. The person who is not born again can still hear the conscience within him, warning him concerning right and wrong. If we remain outside of Christ and habitually disobey our conscience, it will become seared and ineffective (1Timothy 4:2).

The conscience in the spirit correlates with the will in the soul. If we hear our conscience, then we will be able to make right decisions. This is very important: we need to practice discerning right and wrong and our conscience will guide us. Remember the mature spiritual man is able to discern good and evil (Heb.5:14). Paul says that the conscience bears witness in the hearts of those who do not have the law of God. He is talking about unsaved people (Romans 2:12-16).

Intuition

This is the ability of your spirit to know things of a spiritual nature. Intuition does not come through learning; it does not come through education. Intuition is a direct sensing, knowing in your spirit. It is the ability to hear from God. Intuition is the spiritual faculty that correlates with our intellect - the ability to know things. This is a very important faculty that God has given us and yet most Christians are not even aware of the nature of the spirit that God has put within them. Your spirit hears intuitively from God! Your spirit knows things. An illiterate man can know things through his spirit and confuse the wise of this world.

The food of the spirit in terms of intuition is the word of God. God reveals things through His Spirit to our spirit, even *"the deep things of God"* (1Cor.2:10).

Communion

This is the ability to abide in God; it is the ability to worship (Jn.4:23), experiencing His presence. This spiritual faculty correlates with the faculty of the soul that expresses emotions and feelings.

The spirit of God bears witness in our spirit (Rom.8:16). Jesus said that we are to abide in Him (Jn.15:4-5). There will be much fruit if we learn to abide in our spirits with the Lord.

We are the temple of God

The Bible says that we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in us (1Cor.3:16). In the Temple of God in the Old Testament, based on what God had previously

prescribed for the Tabernacle, there were three parts: the outer court, the Holy place and the Holy of Holies. If we are the temple of God and we can see that our body is represented by the Outer court, that the soul is represented by the Holy place, and that the spirit is represented by the Holy of Holies, then we can see that there is an order that has to be restored in our lives. As stated earlier, when we begin life as a natural baby we are really only world conscious. The body consciousness is as the Outer court.

The soul being represented by the Holy place is the next place of human development and we do our best to educate children and to help them be successful in life. However this has become more and more difficult in the modern world and depression and all sorts of psychiatric problems have multiplied greatly. We have not realised that the soul cannot exist without the proper division of soul from spirit and this can only happen through the word of God. We have not realised that the spirit in us is meant to be as the Holy of Holies, the place where God dwells. As we are restored we discover this awesome spiritual life within us. We can truly become spiritual men and women, the sons of the living God.

Paul Galligan