

Spirit, Soul, And Body

Knowledge is powerful!

I just returned from an overseas flight where Jamie and I were upgraded to business class. The seats made out into a flat bed. It was wonderful. It really reduces jet lag. As I was drifting off to sleep, I thought about John Wesley who traversed the Atlantic in the hold of a ship. It took him a couple of months one way, and the conditions were terrible. My flight from London to Denver took nine hours, and I had luxuries he couldn't have imagined.

All of this is possible because of knowledge. Man hasn't created anything new; he's just discovered the laws that the Lord established from the beginning. "Bird brains" have been flying from the start. The same is true with communications, electricity, computing, and a host of other modern breakthroughs. Man is just discovering the laws God created.

Although mankind has made huge discoveries that have totally changed the way we live, it seems like we know less about ourselves than previous generations. While our ancestors didn't have all the modern conveniences, they had a peace and strength that eludes most today. As our knowledge of our natural world has increased, our knowledge of spiritual things has decreased. In man's arrogance, he blindly believes all of life's problems can be solved by himself. But there can be no peace without if there isn't peace within.

There is a whole universe that man in all his wisdom is ignorant of. That is the world of the spirit. And I'm not just talking about the spiritual realm outside of us but also the spiritual being inside of every person. We aren't evolved animals; we were created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). We are spirit beings. The ultimate way to control bad behavior isn't by more laws, metal detectors, or social engineering; it's changing the hearts of people, one at a time. Only Jesus can do that.

Yet sadly, even many Christians have lost this spiritual point of view. Very few Christians know who they are in the spirit. In fact, they have been taught by religion that they are sinners by nature—just the opposite of what the Bible teaches.

It's true that we were all born sinners (Ps. 51:5) and had the nature of the devil working in us (Eph. 2:2-3). But when we came to Christ and received salvation, we became a new person in the spirit.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

This isn't talking about your body. If you were a man before you accepted Christ, you were still a man afterwards. Your body didn't change. And your soul, which is what the Bible calls the mental-emotional part of you, didn't automatically change either. It's subject to change, but you have to renew your mind to experience change in your mind and emotions.

But in the spirit, you became a brand-new species of being. Your spirit is totally new. There isn't an old sin nature left in you.

I know this comes as a complete shock to many of you who have been indoctrinated in the old-nature-versus-the-new-nature theology. Most Christians have been taught to believe that after salvation, they are still the same at their core, and they live the rest of their lives trying to restrain this old nature. They believe they have two natures. That's schizophrenic, and it produces Christians who are nothing like Christ.

Paul dealt with this issue in Romans 6. He had so powerfully proved in the preceding chapters that God deals with us by grace through faith that the logical question was, "*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*" (Rom. 6:1). Of course this is not what Paul was saying, and he gave two reasons in this chapter that Christians should live holy.

The first reason Paul gave simply says,

How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Romans 6:2

What a radical statement! This is not believed by the majority of Christians today. They believe that they are alive to sin and that it is with much effort, frustration, and failure that they battle this sin nature the rest of their lives. That's not what Paul believed.

Paul said that **once we are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3), we experience a death to our old sin nature. It's dead. It's gone. It doesn't exist anymore.**

I can just hear people saying, "What!? Are you crazy? I still struggle with many sins. I'm not dead to sin."

I will admit that Christians still sin. Paul made mention of this in this very chapter and dealt with it in more detail in Romans 7. But our nature has been changed. The only reason we still sin is because we don't know these truths (John 8:32).

Our minds are similar to computers in the sense that they can be programmed. And once programmed, they will continue to function as programmed until we reprogram them. We were all born in sin, and our old sin nature programmed our minds how to be selfish, bitter, angry, how to lust, etc. When we are born again (John 3:3), we become totally new in our spirits. This old nature has been completely changed (2 Cor. 5:17). It's not in the process of becoming new; it's already as pure and perfect as Jesus (1 John 4:17, 1 Cor. 6:17, and Eph. 4:24).

Paul called this resurrection life. In Romans 6:5, he said,

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

But in the very next verse, he said we have to know something in order to experience this. The first thing he mentioned is that "*our old man is crucified with [Christ]*" (Rom. 6:6,

brackets mine). This isn't something that has yet to happen or that has to happen over and over; it's a done deal. In our new, born-again spirits, we are dead to sin.

Then Paul said,

That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Romans 6:6

Our sin nature is dead and gone, but it left behind a body. That body is the carnal mind. It will still function as programmed until we reprogram it. That's what the Bible calls the renewing of the mind. Our lives are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2).

Therefore, victory in the Christian life is as simple as renewing our minds to who we are and what we have already received in Christ. It's not the struggle of two natures inside of us; we are the way we think (Prov. 23:7). If we see ourselves as old sinners, saved by grace, then we will continue to struggle with sin. But when we see the total change that took place in our nature, we will manifest that change in our actions.

When we see ourselves as being part devil, we act like it. But when we see who we are in Christ—i.e., in our born-again spirits—we become like Him (2 Cor. 3:18 and 1 John 3:2). The way we see ourselves becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This is the dominant revelation the Lord has used to change my life. I had a life-altering encounter with the Lord on March 23, 1968. The Lord used that to get my attention and show me there was so much more. But it's the revelation I received from the Word on who I have become in my spirit that has made the biggest impression and lasting change in my life. It has totally changed my identity.

I call this revelation *Spirit, Soul & Body*. That's not a catchy phrase, but it's descriptive of the way the Lord revealed these truths to me. I've come to know I'm a spirit being who has a soul and lives in a body. But the real me is my spiritual person. And it's in the spirit that I've been totally changed and made just like Jesus.

Since God is a Spirit and He deals with me on the basis of who I am in the spirit (John 4:24), this has changed everything. I now worship God based on who I am in the spirit and not on who I am in my flesh; i.e., how I act or feel. I now understand how our holy God can truly love me, because in my born-again spirit, I'm totally righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24). My spirit is His workmanship (Eph. 2:10).

I've discovered that I'm redeemed from the Law because the Law wasn't made for a righteous man (1 Tim. 1:9). The Law was given to show us our need for salvation, but it couldn't save us (Rom. 3:19-21). But what the Law couldn't do, Jesus did (Rom. 8:3-4), and I'm now the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

This entitles me to everything God is and has. I have His authority to use, and to the degree that I've done this, I've experienced miraculous results. I'm so excited about this that I'm trying to let the whole world know these truths.