

The Spirit, Soul and Body

I want to share with you one of the most profound lessons the Lord has ever given me. I use the term “profound” because this lesson helps me almost every day to make a choice to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh. Let me explain:

Perhaps you’ve heard this explanation:

You are a spirit, you have a soul, and you live in a body.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we see a similar reference: *“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.”*

And then in Hebrews 4:12 we learn this: *“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.”*

It was the scripture above that I was studying when the Lord led me into a simple little exercise that has blossomed into a great lesson for me.

I was looking at the verse and specifically concentrating on the “soul and spirit” reference. The scripture said that the Word of God is able to pierce even to the division of the soul and spirit . . .

That got me thinking! I recalled Paul’s teaching in Romans 8:5-6 – *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”*

I really wanted to understand more about what the Word of God had to say about our spirit and our soul. So I grabbed my trusty yellow pad to gain a visual picture of this concept.

On it, I wrote my name and then drew three little stick figures, similar to the ones below. I labeled them as “spirit,” “soul,” and “body.”



As I pondered these images, I thought about this being kind of like a self-portrait - and it included the three part of me that the Bible talks about. The **body** is simple to understand. It's that part we can actually touch. Some call it our “earth suit.” It's the physical part including our organs, the blood and veins, the arms and legs, and even the brain.

The **soul** is often called the “flesh.” It's where our emotions, intellect, personality and will reside. This is our “thinking.” Whereas the brain may be the physical place where the thinking takes place, they are from the soul. The soul is intangible and mystifying. The soul is our will, our “decision-maker” and our personality.

And then there's the **spirit** part of us. This is the part that was dead (because of Adam's sin), but is alive now in Christ. It is our spirit that was born-again when

we accepted Christ as our Lord. As soon as we submit ourselves to Jesus and ask Him into our heart (our spirit) then Life comes to live inside of us. The Life of Christ. Our spirit is what abides in Christ and is connected to Him as the Vine with us being the branch!

I considered the three figures, and contemplated that all three of them represented “me.” I am a spirit, I have a soul and I live in a body.

Then I went on this train of thought . . . (this may sound simplistic, but please look upon what the Bible teaches with a fresh approach).

In the beginning, when God first created humankind, all three parts of us were fully integrated and complete (or perfect). But then Adam and Eve sinned and the part of them that was connected to God (their spirit) died.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:15-17

Clearly, Adam and Eve didn’t die physically. They still lived hundreds of years and had children. Their minds didn’t die – they could still speak and think and carry on. But it was their spirit that died. They no longer had that intimate connection with God living inside of them!

For thousands of years, men were born into this incomplete condition without God inside of them. When one is without God then they are born into sin and darkness, with the ruler of both being Satan.

We can see how humankind faired on its own and without God by looking at the condition of the world at the time of Noah. God was so distraught over the condition of His creation that He was deeply troubled, *“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”* Genesis 6:5-6

We know that God didn’t destroy all of earthly life. Rather, He found a man that loved Him. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and God directed Noah in

building the Arc so that he, his family and a remnant of the creatures could be saved.

But still, people were without God inside of them . . . so God created a set of rules that would come from the outside to rule over their insides! For thousands of years, God's chosen people were under the Law to keep them within the bounds of God's way of living - a lifestyle that would bring them only good and victory.

But still, human beings were incomplete. That is until *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* John 3:16

Jesus made it possible for people to be renewed to what God had originally created. Because of Christ and His work on the cross, human beings can have life inside of them! Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

So what gets "born again?" The spirit of man. And because of this free gift of everlasting life and redemption we can be one with the Father as Jesus prayed about just before His death: *"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."* John 17:22-23

Again we see the word "perfect," which means complete. And in this prayer, the completeness would be so remarkable that the world would know that God sent Christ into the world to restore those who followed Him into the perfect fellowship with their Creator.

That's a quick overview of the creation, death and rebirth of the spirit. But there is still another aspect to consider.

The Spirit and the Soul

While we have the Spirit of God living inside of us through Christ, we are still impacted by our soul or our flesh. Now that we are new creatures in Christ, the Bible challenges us to change and take on a new nature. We are to become what God intended us to be all along.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

The passage above speaks to what our faith journey is all about: transformation.

We are to enter into a new way of living! We're not to take just a slight shift and remain like we were before we had Christ in us, but altered because of being born again. Instead we are to be transformed into a new Kingdom of God lifestyle that operates on His truth and in His ways.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Romans 8:5-8

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Galatians 5:16

We are called to walk in the Spirit so that we will no longer be under the bondage of the old thinking and the old way of life. We are to take on a new nature under the authority of the Spirit of God. This is the way to life! The glorious life God originally created for His children way back in the garden of Eden.

We are new creatures in Christ! We have a new identity. This is REAL! It's not just a theory or an attitude. Our new identity should be so profound that our BEFORE and AFTER are remarkable. People should look at us as "different" in a very positive and attractive way!

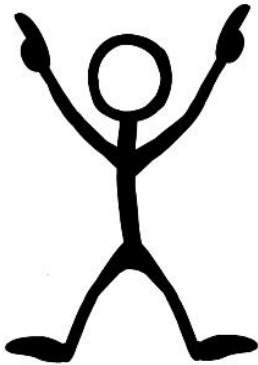
Here's the dilemma

Most of God's people have not entered into this New Life. Yes, they have accepted Christ . . . and yes they have the Spirit of God living inside of them. But they have not learned to walk in the Spirit and have not entered into the transformation necessary to have the amazing life God created for us and that Jesus died to restore to us!

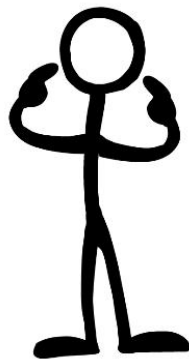
Let's again consider the spirit and soul parts of us. Please turn to the next page and complete the exercise so this powerful truth can seep into your thinking and challenge you to walk in the Spirit and the transformation toward a victorious and glorious life.

Write your first name on the line above.

Now adopt these little figures as you own self-portrait.



Spirit



Soul



Body

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Use the blanks to name some of the “characteristics” of the spirit and the soul (flesh) for example forgiveness and strife. List as many as come to mind. Also, list things that come upon the body (i.e. sickness, fatigue).

Look up Galatians 5:16-26 to learn what it has to say about the Spirit and the flesh? Use this information to add more to your notes on the previous page.

Read Ephesians 5:1-21 and again, add to your notes on the previous page.

The Choice is Ours

Every day, and even moments during our day, we can choose to walk in the Spirit or in the flesh. With the Holy Spirit living inside of us, we can either yield to Him and His ways or we can go back to our old way of living that is centered on self, ego and pride.

The Word is very specific about how we can cut ourselves off from God's grace and power by resorting to the ways of the flesh. For example, take into your understanding when Paul was teaching those who wanted to stay within the old ways of life as it had to do with the Law:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.” Galatians 5:1-8

You might be saying, “Oh, that would never be my problem. I don't try to follow the law.” But there are many other ways to cut ourselves off from the power and grace of God as we live a carnal life in the flesh rather than walking in submission to the Spirit.

With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. Ephesians 4:17-24 NLT

Pretty good, so far! But then the text goes on . . .

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. Ephesians 4:25-27 NLT

Oooo! That's not a good thing. Anger gives the devil a foothold? That's a big deal! How about unbelief and doubt?

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 11:24

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8

How many times have you had unanswered prayer and wondered why? Or felt as if you were drowning in troubles, lack and turmoil?

The truth is that we have access to all of heaven and earth when we learn to walk in the way of the Lord. Read Deuteronomy 28 and see what side of the equation your life most reflects today.

Write down your thoughts after reading that chapter: _____

You and I, along with every other believer in the world, have an opportunity to make a radical choice that guarantees a positive and glorious outcome. We can live a life that serves as a bright light and witness to the world so they will want what we have!

But the choice for that life is ours.

Okay, here's the "tough love." And believe me; I'm not saying to you anything I haven't already said to myself!

It's time to stop making excuses, to stop blaming others or our circumstances, and stop living a lowly carnal life! We have to claim, learn about and understand who are in Christ. We have an opportunity to step out of the old and into the new and begin a life of transformation, growth and abundant living.

But the choice for that life is ours!

This isn't a shallow decision. Shallow decisions harvest shallow results. That's why I encourage you to carefully consider what you want for your life. Turn to the next page and prayerfully answer the questions as you consider developing a faith-driven lifestyle.

Prayerfully consider these questions

	Yes	No
Do you want to live a full Christian life?	-----	-----
Are you willing to change your life?	-----	-----
Even though you may not know how to live a life of faith, is it the lifestyle you want?	-----	-----
Can you devote 1 hour a day for the next 21 days so you can start to develop a faith-driven life?	-----	-----

Write your thoughts about the decisions you just made: -----

How do you feel about your new decision? -----

I hope this is a journey you want to take. I am interested in your thoughts. Please send an email to Susan@Daniel-Fast.com. Be blessed as you continue to grow in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ.