

LIVING THROUGH THE SPIRIT

THE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

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1

INTRODUCTION

What is the Christian Lifestyle?

What makes true Christians so different from those who do not believe in God?

The real Christian lifestyle is that lifestyle which can clearly be seen by the world. It shines its light in the dark for all to see - it cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14-16). How does it stand out from the rest of the world?

As Christians we can think and operate through the spiritual nature.

The unbeliever does not have this spiritual nature. Neither do those who claim that they are Christians, but have never been spiritually reborn.

Jesus says that you have to be born again:

John 3:3 Amplified Bible (AMP):

³Jesus answered him, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless a person is born again [reborn from above — spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified], he cannot [ever] see and experience the kingdom of God."

If you are a true Christian, you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) and you have a deep personal relationship with God through the Spirit. If you don't have that fire in your soul for God, that desire to get closer to Him, then you have to take an honest look at your own "Christian lifestyle".

We live in an age where most Christians have spent years studying at primary school, then High school and some at college or university. They've read hundreds of books during this time to help them with this temporary physical world, but most of them have never even read the whole Bible from cover to cover. They have never read the most important book in the world. The only book that carries the truth of life itself; both that which is visible and invisible, the temporary and the eternal.

I've heard famous preachers, who claimed that they have never read the Bible from cover to cover. Is that not a scary thing? No wonder most churches today are lukewarm; because the Word of God is not being preached like in the older days. We have preachers today who just preach what people want to hear. They overemphasize one truth at the cost of another, and this is the first sign that a church is being deceived. Satan tried to deceive Jesus as well, in the wilderness, using Scripture. But Jesus knew the whole Word of God and answered the devil back through Scripture.

If you do not know what the Bible teaches as a whole, then how will you be able to know if a pastor preaches the true Word of God?

You have to test them, like the noble Bereans who tested Paul in Acts 17:11. A lot of churches today focus on motivational sermons, which is fine at certain times, if they stick to biblical guidelines. But that motivational message only lasts for a while. True and lasting change only comes when the true Word of God is preached through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. Such a message does not just influence you emotionally, but it penetrates into the inner man.

With the help of God's Spirit, we need to learn the deeper things of Scripture. If we don't grow spiritually, we will stay spiritual babies. Have you ever seen a grown man or woman in diapers? That is what your spiritual nature looks like if you stay an immature Christian. We need to grow spiritually and become mature Christians so that we can become more like Jesus.

The Bible talks about this spiritual immaturity in Hebrews:

Hebrews 5:12-14 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers [because of the time you have had to learn these truths], you actually need someone to teach you again the elementary principles of God's word [from the beginning], and you have come to be continually in need of milk, not solid food.

¹³For everyone who lives on milk is [doctrinally inexperienced and] unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a spiritual infant. ¹⁴But solid food is

for the [spiritually] mature, whose senses are trained by practice to distinguish between what is morally good and what is evil.



Let's look at what it says in the next chapter.

Hebrews 6:1-3 Amplified Bible (AMP):

THE PERIL OF FALLING AWAY

¹Therefore let us get past the elementary stage in the teachings about the Christ, advancing on to maturity and perfection and spiritual completeness, [doing this] without laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of teaching about washings (ritual purifications), the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. [These are all important matters in which you should have been proficient long ago.] ³And we will do this [that is, proceed to maturity], if God permits.



Once you have been justified by God (Romans 5) and become a true reborn Christian, your life actually starts. Justification happens only once, and then you become a child of God (John 1:12). That doesn't mean that you can just continue with your old, sinful lifestyle like you used to.

You have been changed and you still have a whole journey of sanctification in front of you. You have received the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) and have become a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). But you still have an old fleshly nature and now you need to learn how to crucify this old sinful nature and live through your new spiritual nature (Galatians 5:13-26).

How do you do that?

You need to focus on growing spiritually. You do this through studying God's Word, by prayer, fellowship with other believers and by sharing the gospel. This new journey is called 'sanctification' and this is where God molds you and changes you to become more like Jesus. This is where you start to discover your real identity in Christ and what your purpose is in life. You discover why God gave you certain physical and spiritual gifts, and how to use them. This new spiritual journey starts by putting God first in your life and by getting to know Him personally.

How do you do that?

By studying His Word, which He has already revealed to us through the Bible. If you grow in God's Word, then you will not easily be thrown by every new wind of false teaching (2 Peter 3:14-18), and you will learn how to overcome your own fleshly nature, as well as the attacks of evil.

One thing that boosted my spiritual growth was learning the huge difference between my old fleshly nature and my new spiritual nature. Sadly, this important teaching is one of the things that most churches have 'forgotten' to talk about. So let us take a close look at what God says about these two different natures.

”

...BE ON YOUR
GUARD SO THAT YOU
MAY NOT BE
CARRIED AWAY BY
THE ERROR OF THE
LAWLESS AND FALL
FROM YOUR SECURE
POSITION.

“

2 PETER 3:17

2

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT

The Bible clearly states that there's a difference between your body, soul, and spirit. Understanding this difference greatly affects our progress in the Christian life.

Let's look at two important verses:

Hebrews 4:12 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹²For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart.

and;

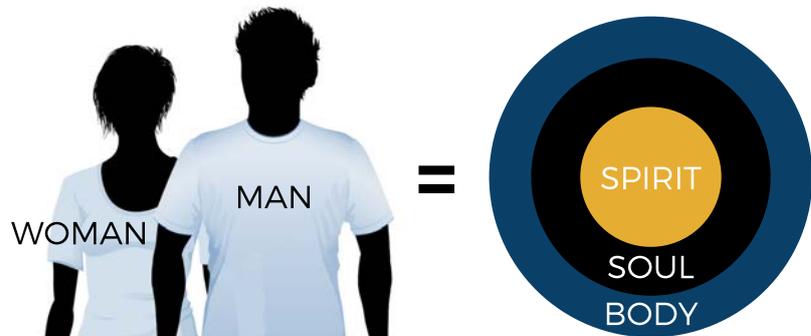
1 Thessalonians 5:23 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²³Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [that is, separate you from profane and vulgar things, make you pure and whole and undamaged—consecrated to Him—set apart for His purpose]; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete and [be found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

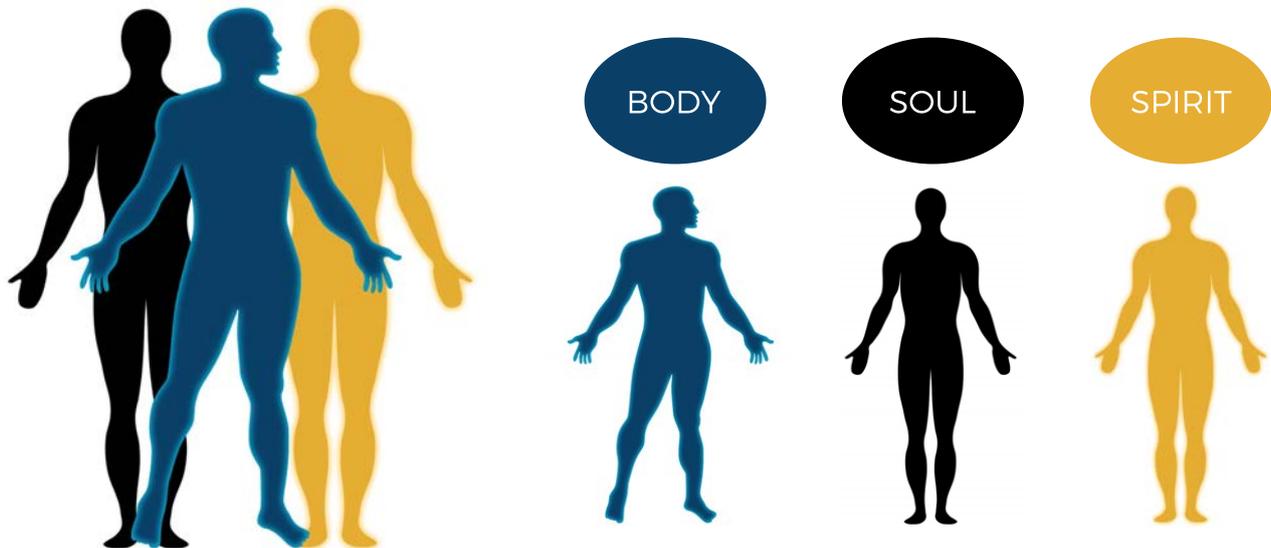
BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT

BODY (GREEK-SOMA),
SOUL (GREEK-PSYCHE),
SPIRIT (GREEK-PNEUMA)

These verses make it clear that we have a body, a soul and a spirit. It is important to know that your spirit, also sometimes referred to as the 'inner man', only comes alive once you have been reborn.



This means that you are spiritually dead until the day God opens your spiritual eyes and you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. More on this later. Humans are made in God's image. God is three in one; the Trinity. It is interesting that we are also three parts:



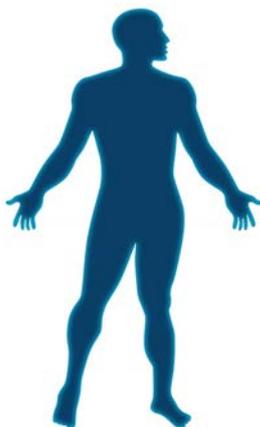
† **Spirit** = The spirit is called "pneuma" in Greek and it is also referred to as our 'inner man' in Scripture.

† **Soul** = The soul is called "psyche" in Greek and it is also referred to as our 'outer man' in Scripture.

† **Body** = The body is called "soma" in Greek and it is also referred to as our 'outermost' man in Scripture.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUR BODY (SOMA), YOUR SOUL (PSYCHE) AND YOUR SPIRIT (PNEUMA)

BODY



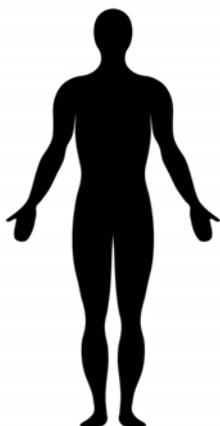
Your body (soma) is your physical body that your soul uses to operate in the physical world.

- Your body is a vessel (1 Thessalonians 4:4-7)
- A living sacrifice (Romans 12:1)
- The temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Your body is also simply:

- Your 5 senses: You can smell, taste, touch, hear and see.
- Interaction with people (communication, fellowship, etc.)
- Physical desires (food, sex, shelter, clothing, etc.)

SOUL



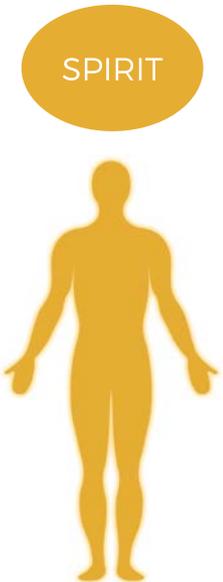
The soul (psyche) is basically you.

It is your:

- Self (your identity, personality, character)
- Emotions (feelings, passions)
- Intellect (mind and thoughts)
- Will (your own will and desires)
- Conscience (moral sense of right and wrong)
- Dwelling place for evil (sinful nature and also evil spirits)

If I punch you on your arm, you feel it on your physical body, but I can also punch you with words that you experience in your soul level where you might feel angry or sad. The body and the soul are the two areas in which we have, and always will, operate through. But our spirit is totally different.

Let us take a look at the spirit.



SPIRIT

The spirit (pneuma) is the part where we have

- spiritual discernment,
- peace,
- revelation,
- communion with God,
- ministry

and it is the home of the Holy Spirit.

The spirit is the inner man of humans.

It is the part that works with:

† **DISCERNMENT**

Discern between right and wrong

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁴But the natural [unbelieving] man does not accept the things [the teachings and revelations] of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness [absurd and illogical] to him; and he is incapable of understanding them, because they are spiritually discerned and appreciated, [and he is unqualified to judge spiritual matters]. ¹⁵But the spiritual man [the spiritually mature Christian] judges all things [questions, examines and applies what the Holy Spirit reveals], yet is himself judged by no one [the unbeliever cannot judge and understand the believer's spiritual nature]. ¹⁶For who has known the mind and purposes of the Lord, so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ [to be guided by His thoughts and purposes].

† **PEACE**

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding, even in difficult times.

Romans 8:6 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁶Now the mind of the flesh is death [both now and forever—because it pursues sin]; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace [the spiritual well-being that comes from walking with God—both now and forever];

† REVELATION

Receiving insight and understanding from the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 1:17 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁷[I always pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation [that gives you a deep and personal and intimate insight] into the true knowledge of Him [for we know the Father through the Son].

† COMMUNION

Having a true relationship with God.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁶Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My ordinances and do them.

† MINISTRY

Sharing the truth of God with other people.

Acts 1:8 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁸But you will receive power and ability when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses [to tell people about Me] both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth."

Joel 2:28-29 Amplified Bible (AMP):

***²⁸ "It shall come about after this
That I shall pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.
²⁹ "Even on the male and female servants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.***

† HOME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We receive the Holy Spirit at justification and He lives in our spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within you, whom you have [received as a gift] from God, and that you are not your own [property]?

Romans 8:16 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies and confirms together with our spirit [assuring us] that we [believers] are children of God.

The spirit is the part that communicates with God and that needs to guide our soul and body in walking within the will of God. Look at what John writes about how we should worship God.

John 4:24 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁴God is spirit [the Source of life, yet invisible to mankind], and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

So how does our new spirit guide our soul?



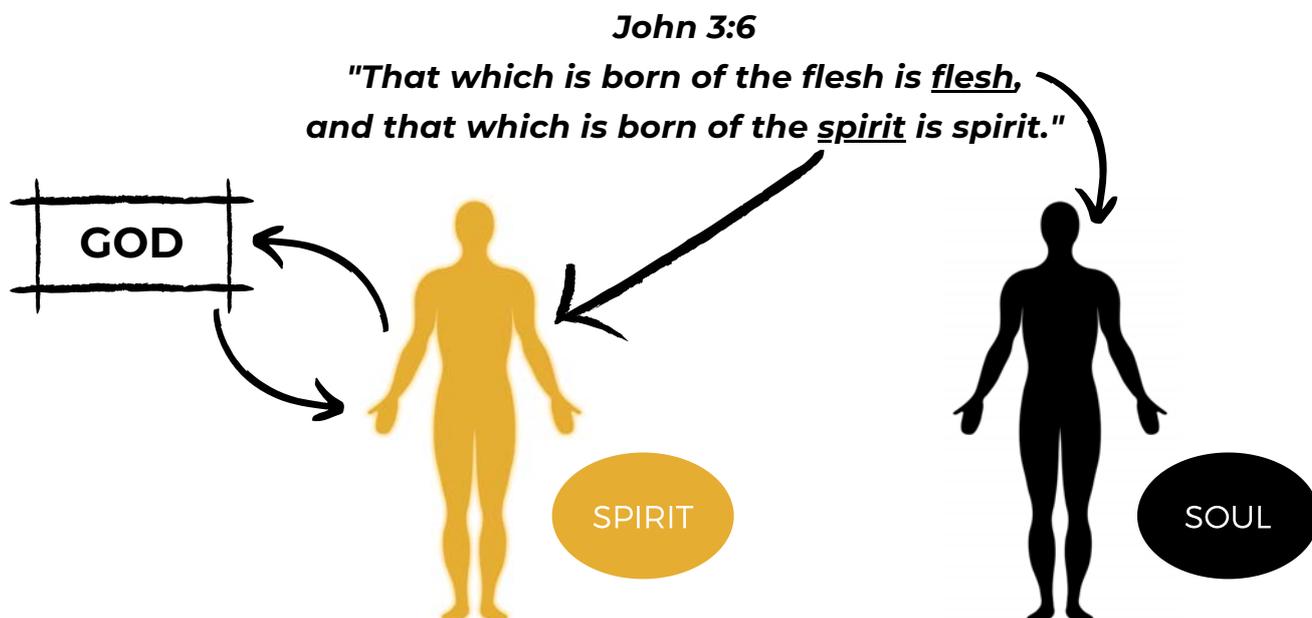
The soul (mainly your will, emotions, and intellect), which is self-conscious and focuses on its own desires, needs to be guided by your spirit. The spirit then, through the soul, tells your body what to do and how to act in the world by using your 5 senses. We need to read and study God's Word through the spirit to really understand God's will.

The Bible sometimes uses the Greek words "Rhema" and "Logos" when it says the "Word". "Logos" means 'the constant, written Word of God, which we have recorded in the Bible'. "Rhema" means 'the instant, personal voice of God that speaks to us'.

Why is this important to know?

When we study the Bible, we gain normal knowledge of God, the Logos. But sometimes the Holy Spirit reveals God's truth to us through the Rhema word - while we read the Logos word. This is why only true Christians, who have the Holy Spirit in them, can truly understand the deep and profound truths of the Bible.

When we read the Bible, we do not just gain knowledge, but actually understand the truth of God, our existence and the reality of the world. This is true faith; when we believe in God's truth. This changes the way we see everything around us. C.S Lewis rightly said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."



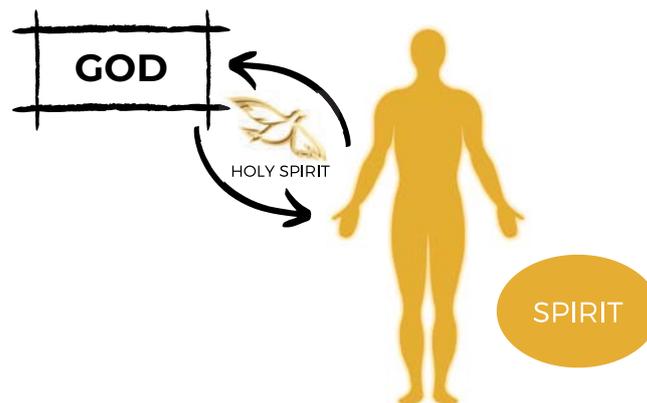
“That which is born of the flesh is flesh...”

But there is one very important thing that you need to understand, especially if you are a young Christian: You cannot “feel” your spirit in any natural way. Failure to understand this creates most of the problems Christians experience in everyday life. Your Spirit is something entirely different than what you're used to on your soul level. All you ever knew was to live through your soul and body. You were spiritually dead.

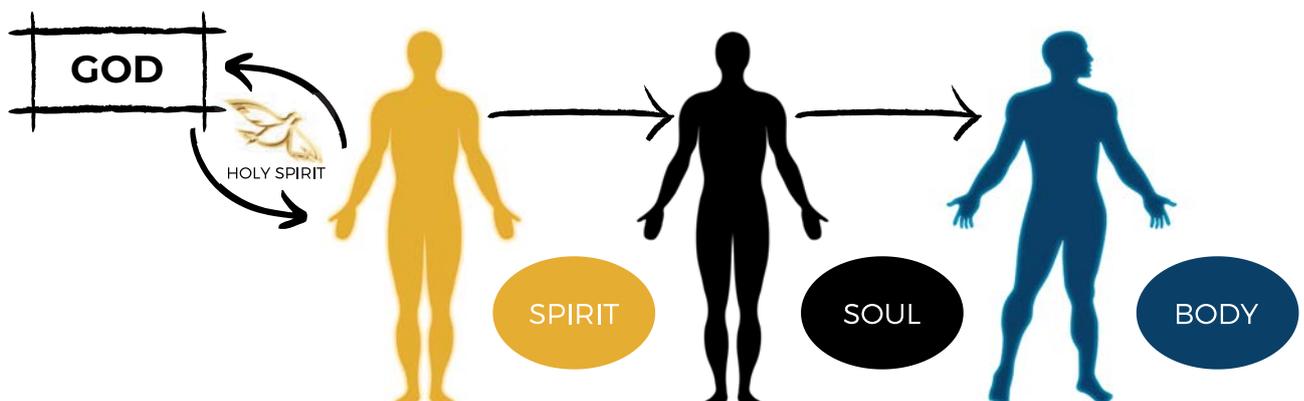
James 2:26 Amplified Bible (AMP)

²⁶For just as the [human] body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works [of obedience] is also dead.

The spirit is the part where God communicates with us, and we with Him.



The Holy Spirit gives true life to us. This means that God speaks to us in our spirit, and reveals to us what life is really about. Our spirit then leads our soul and body in that faith.



John 6:63 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh conveys no benefit [it is of no account]. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life [providing eternal life].

This is why many atheists don't believe in God, because they only believe in the physical world. But we live in a spiritual world as well. All around us are "invisible things" which we cannot see with our physical bodies. God created both a physical and spiritual world.

Colossians 1:16 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁶For by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, [things] visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [that is, by His activity] and for Him.

If you want to know and understand what your spirit is like, you cannot understand it from your soul level, because your soul is full of your own imperfect thoughts and fleshly emotions.

So how do you start and learn to understand your own spirit?

You need to study the truth of the Bible to understand your spirit. We discern what spiritual truth is by understanding God's Word; the Bible. It is just like looking into a mirror.

James 1:23-25 Amplified Bible (AMP)

²³For if anyone only listens to the word without obeying it, he is like a man who looks very carefully at his natural face in a mirror;²⁴ for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he immediately forgets what he looked like.²⁵ But he who looks carefully into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and faithfully abides by it, not having become a [careless] listener who forgets but an active doer [who obeys], he will be blessed and favored by God in what he does [in his life of obedience].

"What does my soul and spirit look like?"



Scripture is comparing the Bible to a mirror that you look into. This mirror, the Bible, is perfect. It reveals to you the true state of your soul and your spirit.

When you style your hair without a mirror, you might feel that your hair looks good, or you might feel that it looks bad. You cannot trust your feelings. You have to go and look in the mirror, and when you do, you will see the parts of your hair that you need to change.

So, you trust the mirror to reveal the truth to you. In the same way, you trust the Bible because it gives you a perfect picture of who you are in your spirit and soul.

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...NOT HAVING
BECOME A LISTENER
WHO FORGETS BUT
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WILL BE BLESSED
AND FAVORED BY
GOD IN WHAT HE
DOES.

“

JAMES 1:25

3

OUR TRANSFORMATION

We are spiritually dead until we are born again. Your spirit (inner man) only comes alive when you are spiritually reborn and you become a true Christian.

The Bible clearly says that we are spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1-2 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹And you [He made alive when you] were [spiritually] dead and separated from Him because of your transgressions and sins,²in which you once walked. You were following the ways of this world [influenced by this present age], in accordance with the prince of the power of the air (Satan), the spirit who is now at work in the disobedient [the unbelieving, who fight against the purposes of God].

Colossians 2:13 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹³When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (worldliness, manner of life), God made you alive together with Christ, having [freely] forgiven us all our sins.

Jesus makes it clear that if we want to have eternal life, we need to be born again.

John 3:5-8 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁵Jesus answered, “I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot [ever] enter the kingdom of God.⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh [the physical is merely physical], and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be surprised that I have told you, ‘You must be born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified].’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it is coming from and where it is going; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

So how does God make us alive? How do we obtain this transformation? It happens when we are reborn spiritually, when God makes our spirit alive and sends the Holy Spirit to come and live in our spirit. When does God do this? The moment we repent of our sins, accept (believe) that Jesus suffered and died for our sins, in our place, on the cross. We are then saved by the grace of God, through real faith.

Ephesians 2:8 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁸For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God;



This process is called justification and after you have been justified, you have been reborn and your spirit is alive in Christ. This happens only once because there is a total transformation in every born again child of God. You become a new creation and you cannot go back to your old sinful lifestyle.

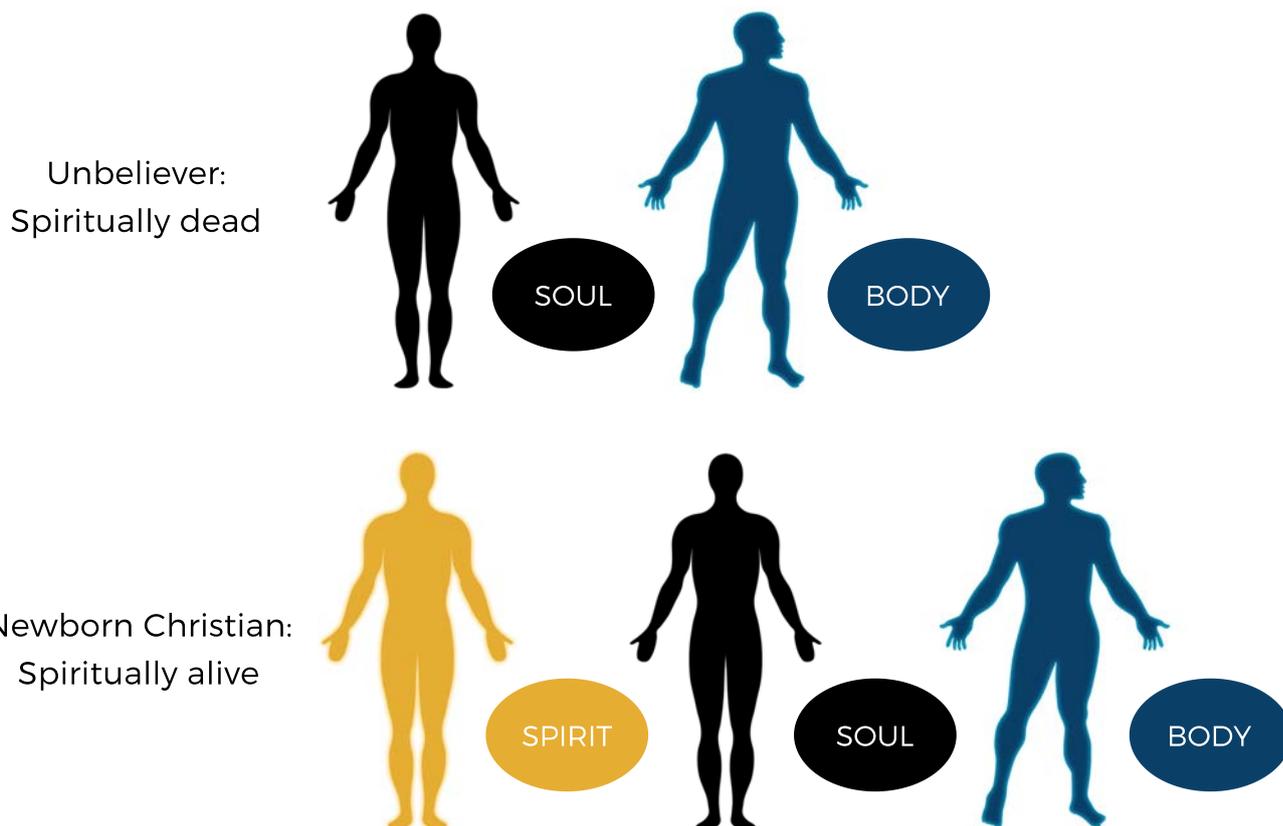


2 Corinthians 5:17-18 Amplified Bible (AMP)

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ [that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior], he is a new creature [reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit]; the old things [the previous moral and spiritual condition] have passed away. Behold, new things have come [because spiritual awakening brings a new life].¹⁸ But all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ [making us acceptable to Him] and gave us the ministry of reconciliation [so that by our example we might bring others to Him],

The bible says that all things are new. It is not talking about your physical body here. You will not immediately change from being overweight to being fit, or suddenly be a perfect human. It is not talking about your soul, because you will not instantly improve your IQ or be perfect in all your thoughts and actions.

It is talking about your spirit; your spiritual awakening. It is talking about regeneration. Your body and soul are still the same but will change over time through your new spirit.



Do you have that deep desire to know God better? To grow closer to Him? If not, then there is a problem in your spiritual life.

Galatians 4:6 Amplified Bible (AMP):

‘And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba! Father!”

If you are a traditional religious “Christian” but have not been reborn, then you do not have the Spirit of God in you. It does not matter if you go to church every Sunday or even if you are a pastor. If you have not been spiritually reborn and received God’s spirit then you are not a true Christian. Remember what I explained earlier. Jesus himself says that you have to be born again.

John 3:3 Amplified Bible (AMP):

³Jesus answered him, “I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless a person is born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified], he cannot [ever] see and experience the kingdom of God.”

Paul also says the following:

Romans 8:9 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁹However, you are not [living] in the flesh [controlled by the sinful nature] but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God lives in you [directing and guiding you]. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him [and is not a child of God].

You have to be born again spiritually. It is impossible to serve God only from our soul level, we can only do this from the new spirit that we receive from Christ.

John 4:24 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁴God is spirit [the Source of life, yet invisible to mankind], and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

God cannot have a relationship with an unholy human, so He cannot have a relationship with only your sinful soul. We fall short of God’s high, holy and perfect standard. But when we are reborn, we receive the new spirit from God, which is righteous, holy and pure.

Why?

Because it is His righteousness that we were given by grace and through faith alone . . . Jesus has become our righteousness.

1 Corinthians 1:30 Amplified Bible (AMP):

³⁰But it is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God [revealing His plan of salvation], and righteousness [making us acceptable to God], and sanctification [making us holy and setting us apart for God], and redemption [providing our ransom from the penalty for sin],”

”

GOD IS SPIRIT, AND
THOSE WHO
WORSHIP HIM MUST
WORSHIP IN SPIRIT
AND TRUTH.”

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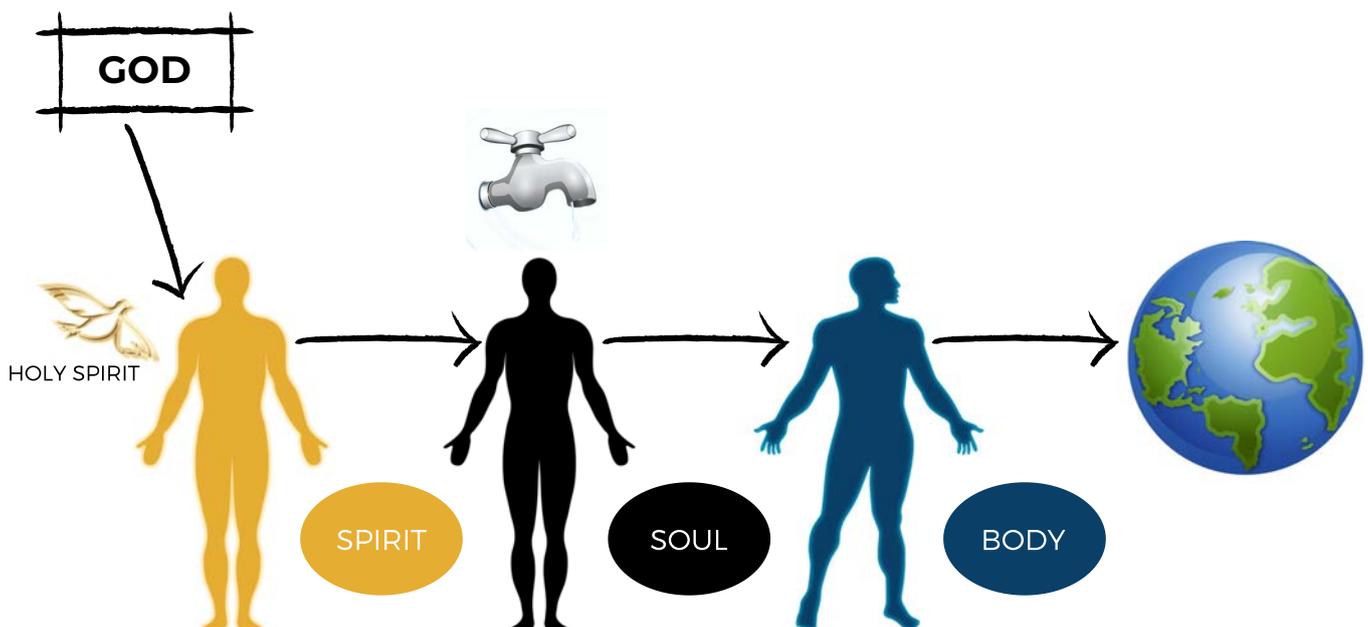
JOHN 4:24

4

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS NEW LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST?

How do we live this new life in Jesus Christ?

We have to get our soul in agreement with the spirit and accept its authority. We sacrifice our own sinful self, our will, our thoughts, and even our emotions. It all has to be led and guided by the spirit. In other words, our spirit needs to flow through and guide our soul into our body and into the physical world.



It is like your soul has a “valve” on it, this is the function of your mind on the soul level. When you submit to the authority of the Holy Spirit, that lives in your spirit, your valve is open. When you do this you are submitting to God’s authority over your life. You trust God who is all-knowing and all-wise, to know and do, what is best for you.

God gives you free choice on your soul level, but His will is that you choose to live through the spirit. So you have to keep the valve open at all times. This will not always be easy, especially if you are a young Christian. Our normal soul has a sinful nature that is, and always will be, in constant conflict with God.

We need to sacrifice this selfish fleshly nature, time and time again, by choosing to act from our spirit.



† WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

How do you keep on living through the new spiritual nature? Let’s turn to Scripture again.

Galatians 5:16-18 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁶But 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].¹⁷For 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.¹⁸ But if you are guided and led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the Law.

You need to make an active decision to let the Holy Spirit guide and lead your soul to become more like Jesus. If you do not do this, then it is possible for this new life in your spirit to be shut off. Sometimes you do this without even noticing, like when you focus more on things in the world, and let it dominate your mind.

This happens when you start to shift your focus from God, towards things like your work, relationships, money, etc. If you choose to let these things dominate you, and worry about them, without trusting God, His word and His promises, then you are operating from the soul level.

What happens when you choose to act through the soul level?

Acting from your soul will just cause the fruit of the sinful nature, which are things like anger, bitterness, depression, etc. But acting through the spirit will also give you the fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and, very importantly, self-control.

You just need to open the valve and act from your spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²²But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is love [unselfish concern for others], joy, [inner] peace, patience [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

You need to believe God's Word and let the Spirit guide your mind and actions with every type of situation. If you move in God's will, you will experience the peace of God that will go above all understanding.

You need to renew your soulish mind by studying Scripture and by letting the spirit lead you, and then your soul will change and follow the perfect way of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:2 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].



For the rest of your life here, on this temporary earth, after you have been spiritually reborn, your focus should be to renew your mind. Our aim is to become more and more like Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:6 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁶whoever says he lives in Christ [that is, whoever says he has accepted Him as God and Savior] ought [as a moral obligation] to walk and conduct himself just as He walked and conducted Himself."

The type of preaching that only focuses on one truth at the cost of others has led many to be deceived. It has misled many to believe it is okay to continue to live in sin, because God is a God of love.

Some people only want to be a Christian because they want prosperity. It is true that God is love and that He wants the best for us, but He is also holy and righteous.

We are called to live holy, and if we sin, we should confess it to God. We became Christians because we realized that we are sinners in need of a Savior, and not because we wanted to be blessed with riches in this temporary world.

God does promise us that He will provide for our needs if He is our priority (Matthew 6:25-33).

Are you content with what God provides for you?

God may bless people financially, but it is not His will that everyone should be wealthy. We have different gifts from God and different purposes here on earth. What you think you need and what God knows you need, are two different things.

I will ask you again...

Are you content with what God gives you?

1 Timothy 6:8-10 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.⁹But those who [are not financially ethical and] crave to get rich [with a compulsive, greedy longing for wealth] fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction [leading to personal misery].¹⁰For the love of money [that is, the greedy desire for it and the willingness to gain it unethically] is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves [through and through] with many sorrows.

Our focus should not be on earthly things that are temporary and will rot away, but on the eternal things of God. We need to turn away from our old lifestyles, towards a whole new life with God. We cannot live for both the sinful pleasures of the world and for God.



Look at what John writes to the believers...

1 John 1:5-9 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁵This is the message [of God's promised revelation] which we have heard from Him and now announce to you, that God is Light [He is holy, His message is truthful, He is perfect in righteousness], and in Him there is no darkness at all [no sin, no wickedness, no imperfection].⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness [of sin], we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but if we [really] walk in the Light [that is, live each and every day in conformity with the precepts of God], as He Himself is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another [He with us, and we with Him], and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin [by erasing the stain of sin, keeping us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations].⁸If we say we have no sin [refusing to admit that we are sinners], we delude ourselves and the truth is not in us. [His word does not live in our hearts.]⁹If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose].

So if we really study the bible, it becomes crystal clear that we cannot continue to live in sin and think that it is okay. The Holy Spirit will convict you of sin and if you really have been changed, you would not want to sin against God. The new spirit in you wants to please God, its desire is to live fully for God and walk in His will.

1 Peter 1:14-16 Amplified Bible (AMP)

¹⁴[Live] as obedient children [of God]; do not be conformed to the evil desires which governed you in your ignorance [before you knew the requirements and transforming power of the good news regarding salvation].¹⁵But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct [be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage];¹⁶ because it is written, "You shall be holy (set apart), for I am holy."

So how do you renew your mind? How do you walk or live like Jesus?

† RENEW YOUR MIND

Romans 12:1-2 Amplified Bible (AMP):

'Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].

In verse 2 it says, "...do not be conformed to this world...". It shows that you will experience pressure from this world to conform. Most people feel that they need to "fit in" to be accepted by the world. As long as you live in this temporary world, you most certainly will experience pressure from people, the devil or difficult circumstances.

How can you then be transformed by the renewing of your mind?

You do it through the Word of God, the Bible.

You obtain the knowledge and understanding of the Bible, which explains to you what is spiritually true. The Word of God transforms you by giving you a new set of values and a new attitude. You have to conform to what God says about you, instead of listening to the world out there and/or even your own emotions.

You need to have the knowledge of God's Word within you. Then you will need to apply it. You need to stop thinking carnally and start thinking spiritually.

Romans 8:6 Amplified Bible (AMP):

'Now the mind of the flesh is death [both now and forever—because it pursues sin]; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace [the spiritual well-being that comes from walking with God—both now and forever];'

Do not be dominated by carnal thinking, do not be dominated by thinking just about what you can feel, smell, hear, see and touch. Your soul can now through faith believe the Word of God and through it believe and understand the unseen.

Ephesians 4:17-18 Amplified Bible (AMP)

¹⁷So this I say, and solemnly affirm together with the Lord [as in His presence], that you must no longer live as the [unbelieving] Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds [and in the foolishness and emptiness of their souls],¹⁸ for their [moral] understanding is darkened and their reasoning is clouded; [they are] alienated and self-banished from the life of God [with no share in it; this is] because of the [willful] ignorance and spiritual blindness that is [deep-seated] within them, because of the hardness and insensitivity of their heart.



This is why many people cannot understand Jesus and His good news because they are spiritually blinded, they cannot see these spiritual truths with their soul until God opens their spiritual eyes.

Philemon 1:6 Amplified Bible (AMP):

6I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective and powerful because of your accurate knowledge of every good thing which is ours in Christ.

This verse is very important for new Christians who try to be more spiritual. Some young Christians try to get “more anointing” from God or to have “more faith” in some strange way because they think that they will be more spiritual and more effective. Others focus too much on trying to get spiritual gifts, like prophecies or speaking in tongues. The truth is that there is a process of renewing your mind.

The Bible clearly says we become effective by accurate knowledge of every good thing which is ours in Christ. It is already ours, we do not need to go and look for it, we already have it in Christ. We just need to understand it through Christ, acknowledge it, and live it.

How do we understand it?

Sometimes it can be difficult to understand certain spiritual truths because some of us are still new “spiritual babies” (we are still young in the process of our spiritual growth). But that is where God comes in because He chooses to let us understand His truth at the right time. Sometimes it is our own fault, by being “lazy Christians” and not studying the Word of God.

On the opposite end, you can study the Bible every single day, but it is the Holy Spirit, in our spirit, who reveals the truth to us while we read the Bible.

We have to be patient and wait for His timing.

THE PROCESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

1 Justification

2 Reborn

3 Renew your mind

4 Knowledge & understanding of God's word

5 Think spiritually, not carnally

6 Acknowledge every good thing which is already ours in Christ

7 Then you live it through faith and obedience

You go through this process by choosing to do so, on your soul level, and you do it with patience and understanding. Then you will start growing and maturing spiritually by taking God at His Word, believing it and living by it. This will then move through you and start to impact the people around you, the way Jesus did.

This gives you a whole new life, a new attitude, new confidence, security and you will be able to confront problems which you could not face before. This is the power of living through the new spiritual nature.

Now that you know the difference between the body, the soul and the spirit, it is time to go even deeper.

”

NOW THE MIND OF
THE FLESH IS DEATH;
BUT THE MIND OF
THE SPIRIT IS LIFE
AND PEACE

“

ROMANS 8:6

5

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE

You have the Spirit of God within you! The Holy Spirit is perfect, mature, and complete, as Jesus is. Now you need to learn to battle with the sinful nature within you!

With the clear knowledge of the differences between the spirit, soul, and body, it will be easier to know how to walk in the Spirit and follow the will of God. When you act through the spirit you will not fall in sin, but if you act through the sinful nature you will sin, and in so doing, you create a wall between you and God.

“What? How do I create this wall?”

This wall is created by sin, you will also feel it immediately after you have sinned against God. It will feel as if God is far away from you.

Isaiah 59:2 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²But your wickedness has separated you from your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. You know that “feeling” when you pray, and it feels like you cannot get through to God or it feels like He is not listening?

Look at the following verse:

1 Peter 3:7 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁷In the same way, you husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way [with great gentleness and tact, and with an intelligent regard for the marriage relationship], as with someone physically weaker, since she is a woman. Show her honor and respect as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered or ineffective.

It is interesting that your prayers might be hindered or be ineffective if you disobey God. Yes, your sin creates a wall between you and God, even when you pray.

There is also a huge difference between praying through the spirit and praying through the fleshly nature. If you pray through the fleshly nature you are mostly focused on your own selfish desires and you pray with the wrong motives. Your soul needs to be aligned with the spirit to pray effectively to God.



James 4:3 Amplified Bible (AMP):

³You ask [God for something] and do not receive it, because you ask with wrong motives [out of selfishness or with an unrighteous agenda], so that [when you get what you want] you may spend it on your [hedonistic] desires.

So how do we break the wall?

You have to break this wall every single time when you sin. If you go and sincerely ask God for forgiveness, then He cleanses you from all sin and breaks the wall.

Look again at how John explains this:

1 John 1:8-9 Amplified Bible (AMP):

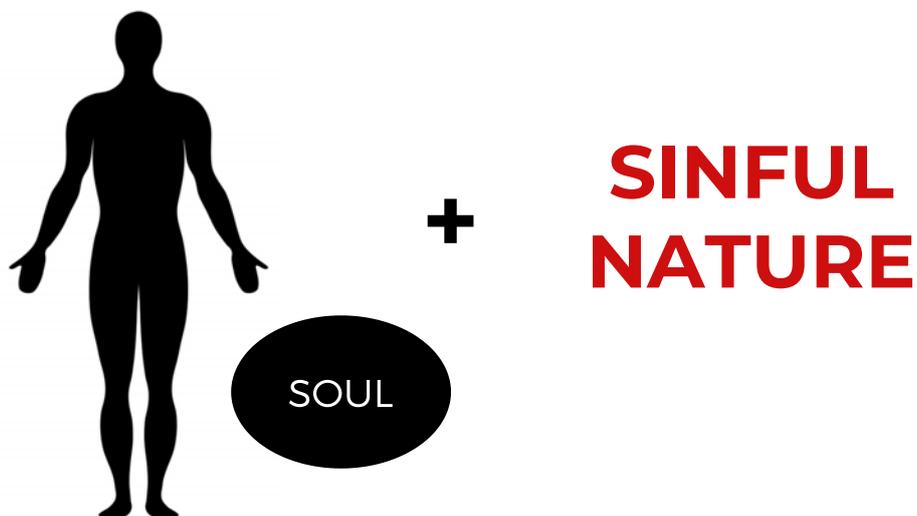
⁸If we say we have no sin [refusing to admit that we are sinners], we delude ourselves and the truth is not in us. [His word does not live in our hearts.]⁹If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose].

John clearly says that they need to ask God for forgiveness and he was not writing to unbelievers, but to Christians.

The fleshly nature will always battle against the spirit.

Let us take a closer look at the sinful nature of the soul:

1. WE ARE BORN SPIRITUALLY DEAD WITH A SINFUL NATURE IN OUR SOULS.



The soul which consists of our will, emotions, and intellect, contains a sinful nature from birth because we were born into a fallen world. If we look at Galatians 5:16-26 the expression “the sinful nature” occurs in verse 16, twice in verse 17 and in verses 19 and 24, and it is the Bible’s description for the unregenerate human nature. The “sinful nature” is also called “our old man” Romans 6:6; “your old self”, Ephesians 4:22; & Colossians 3:9.

Now it is very important to know that the “sinful nature” is wholly evil and is incapable of improvement by itself - Romans 7:18, Genesis 6:5, 11-12, Isaiah 1:5-6, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 1:26-32 and 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

This is why it is impossible to serve God with our own nature. We need God to touch and change our innermost being, our spirit. It is important to understand that this is the sinful part of us that we need to take off like dirty clothes. Then we need to put on the new man, which is the new spiritual nature of God.

2. WHEN WE ARE BORN AGAIN WE RECEIVE A NEW NATURE, A SPIRITUAL NATURE.



This is given by God and it is described as “the new self”

Ephesians 4:24 Amplified Bible (AMP):

24and put on the new self [the regenerated and renewed nature], created in God's image, [godlike] in the righteousness and holiness of the truth [living in a way that expresses to God your gratitude for your salvation]."

Colossians 3:10 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁰and have put on the new [spiritual] self who is being continually renewed in true knowledge in the image of Him who created the new self—"

This is a miracle of God, it is not something that we can do ourselves. Our task is to take the step forward in truly repenting of our sins and accepting Christ as our savior, based on the fact that He died in our place on the cross for the punishment of our sins.

We are saved only by grace through faith. Then God gives us a new spirit and 2 Peter 1:4 explains that we become sharers of the divine nature.

2 Peter 1:3-4 Amplified Bible (AMP):

³For His divine power has bestowed on us [absolutely] everything necessary for [a dynamic spiritual] life and godliness, through true and personal knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.⁴For by these He has bestowed on us His precious and magnificent promises [of inexpressible value], so that by them you may escape from the immoral freedom that is in the world because of disreputable desire, and become sharers of the divine nature.

Galatians 2:20 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ [that is, in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body I live by faith [by adhering to, relying on, and completely trusting] in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

What a miracle! It is God Himself who opens our Spiritual eyes to see the truth about Him, the world we live in and our lost reality...



3. EVERY CHRISTIAN POSSESSES THESE TWO NATURES - THE OLD AND THE NEW.

All who have been born again, still possess the sinful nature, which they inherited from Adam, and the divine nature, which they received when they were born again.

John 3:6 Amplified Bible (AMP):

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh [the physical is merely physical], and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

These two natures are co-resident within every Christian, and it is very important to understand that when we are born again and receive the new nature we do not lose the old nature, nor shall we lose the old nature in this temporary world. Not until we see the Lord and are transformed into His likeness.

The old sinful nature is incapable of any change or improvement, and it is quite impossible to get rid of it, though we may have victory over it. Every Christian has within him the old, evil, corrupt nature, and the new divine nature. Remember not all our emotions, will and intellect is full of evil.

When the Spirit leads our soul and our soul follows, then it cannot be sinful, but it will bring forth the goodness of the spirit. Then you will have the right kind of thoughts, emotions and your soul will be in line with God’s will. But the soul does have a nature within it that is evil.

Humans have been fighting wars since we can remember, to try and obtain peace in the world, but after thousands of years, we cannot achieve it.

Why not?

The reason is that we all have a sinful nature that will disrupt peace.

4. THESE TWO NATURES, WHICH COEXIST WITHIN EVERY CHRISTIAN, ARE EXACT OPPOSITES AND ARE IN CONSTANT CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER.



One is evil, the other is good; one is corrupt, the other is pure; one is inherited from the first Adam, the other is inherited from the “last Adam” (Jesus) and these two natures are in constant conflict.

Galatians 5:17 Amplified Bible (AMP):

17For 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.

This describes the experience of every Christian and Paul also talks about this in the book of Romans. It is of crucial importance that you understand it, so let us take a look at what Paul says:

Romans 7:14-25 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁴We know that the Law is spiritual, but I am a creature of the flesh [worldly, self-reliant—carnal and unspiritual], sold into slavery to sin [and serving under its control].

¹⁵For I do not understand my own actions [I am baffled and bewildered by them]. I do not practice what I want to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate [and yielding to my human nature, my worldliness—my sinful capacity].¹⁶Now if I habitually do what I do not want to do, [that means] I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good (morally excellent).¹⁷So now [if that is the case, then] it is no longer I who do it [the disobedient thing which I despise], but the sin [nature] which lives in me.

¹⁸For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh [my human nature, my worldliness—my sinful capacity]. For the willingness [to do good] is present in me, but the doing of good is not.¹⁹For the good that I want to do, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.²⁰But if I am doing the very thing I do not want to do, I am no longer the one doing it [that is, it is not me that acts], but the sin [nature] which lives in me.

²¹So I find it to be the law [of my inner self], that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.²²For I joyfully delight in the law of God in my inner self [with my new nature],²³but I see a different law and rule of action in the members of my body [in its appetites and desires], waging war against the law of my mind and subduing me and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is within my members.²⁴Wretched and miserable man that I am! Who will [rescue me and] set me free from this body of death [this corrupt, mortal existence]?

²⁵Thanks be to God [for my deliverance] through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind serve the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh [my human nature, my worldliness, my sinful capacity—I serve] the law of sin.

5. THE OLD SINFUL NATURE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN “ACTS” WHICH ARE EVIL AND DO NOT COME FROM GOD.

Paul lists some of the acts of the sinful nature:

Galatians 5:19-21 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁹Now the practices of the sinful nature are clearly evident: they are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality (total irresponsibility, lack of self-control),²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hostility, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions [that promote heresies],²¹envy, drunkenness, riotous behavior, and other things like these. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In verse 19 Paul tells us that the works of the sinful nature are evident, we only have to look in our own hearts to see them! The list that the apostle gives us of the works of sinful nature is not complete, because Paul adds the words “and other things like these” In verse 21.

What Paul is saying is that because we all possess the old nature we are capable of any or all of these “works” because they are the works of the sinful nature and we all have the sinful nature within us. God condemns the old nature and He is very direct by saying in verse 21 “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

If you keep on living in this sin and it does not bother you, then that is your decision, but God is clear on the consequences of your decision. There is a huge difference between living in sin and sometimes sinning in the spiritual struggle, but then feeling so bad about it and asking God to forgive you. Remember we are not perfect, but we strive to be. We can overcome temptation by choosing to act through the spirit.

God also says He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to handle.

1 Corinthians 10:13 Amplified Bible (AMP)

¹³No temptation [regardless of its source] has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful [to His word—He is compassionate and trustworthy], and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation He [has in the past and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well, so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy]."

Now it is time to go even deeper. We have talked about the “outer”, “obvious” sins, but what about those “inner” sins and struggles?

The inner and outer sins of the “soulish” nature:

Right after you become a new Christian, God works with you to deal with and stop with those “outwardly” sins. Sins like getting drunk or looking at a woman with sexual desire, or always wanting to deal with a problem by using violence.

These are the clear, physical sins that God wants us to stop doing. But then there comes a time, after you have been growing spiritually for a while, where God starts to work within your soulish sins, in your personality.

What exactly is this?

This is part of your personality, which is why it is difficult to see and discern. But God will reveal these sins to you through the spirit, which will bring you closer to “Christ-likeness”, which is our goal.

I am going to name a few of these sins and then you pray and ask the spirit if some of these sins might be within you.

- **Superiority**
- **Inferiority**
- **Dominance** in relationships
- **Manipulating** people
- **Demean** (or degrading others to feel better about yourself)
- To **over-criticize** others (if they do not fit into your own sinful perception)
- **Stubbornness**
- **Isolating** (by building your own wall around you)
- **Aloof** (cold, distant, not friendly)
- **Uncompromising** (not willing to humble yourself and submit)
- **Blustering** or **bossy** over others
- To be **over-hasty** or **precipitous**
- Too **individualistic** (you focus just on your life and want other people to fall in line with your life)
- **Aggressive**
- **Not being yourself** (changing your own personality to fit in with others)
- **People-pleasing** (to such an extent where you start to lose your real self)
- **Prideful** (unwilling to humble yourself or submit to God)
- **Unwilling** to **accept or adapt** to your situation (What God allowed to happen)
- **Extreme introvert** (why is it wrong?) You have to become like Jesus, He was balanced
- **Over-extrovert** (you have to calm down your soul level and let the spirit control you more)
- **Untrustworthy**
- **Irresponsible**

Yeah...there is some work to be done.

But how?

By letting the new nature of the spirit within you, guide your soul with the truth of God's Word.

So we have just gone through the nature and fruit of the sinful nature, let us look at the fruit of the new spiritual nature.

6. OUR NEW NATURE PRODUCES THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

First, you need to stop focusing on just yourself. God, who gives the new nature to the Christian produces, through our new nature, the “fruit of the Spirit”.

Galatians 5:22 Amplified Bible (AMP):

“But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is love [unselfish concern for others], joy, [inner] peace, patience [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”

Did you notice that the word “fruit” is singular, and not “fruits”? What does that mean?

The Holy Spirit alone produces in you the fruit of the Spirit which is Christ-likeness. Every real Christian has a desire to be more like the Lord Jesus. How can this be? How do we do it? We can become more like Jesus, only when the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in us and through us.

The Holy Spirit makes us loving (Romans 5:5), joyful (Acts 13:52, John 15:11), calm and peaceful (Philippians 4:6-7), patient (1 Peter 2:20-23), kind and gentle (Ephesians 4:30-32), good (Acts 11:24), faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2), humble (Matthew 11:29) and masters of ourselves (Romans 8:2). So God creates the change within you, and through you. You cannot do it by yourself.

We can never produce this beautiful fruit by ourselves, we cannot achieve this Christ-likeness, this Christian character through our own strength or by our own effort through the soul level. Just like we cannot through our own strength or by our own effort overcome or suppress the works of the sinful nature. What, then, is the key of victory? The answer stays the same. You do it by letting the new nature of the spirit within you, guide your soul with the truth of God’s Word.



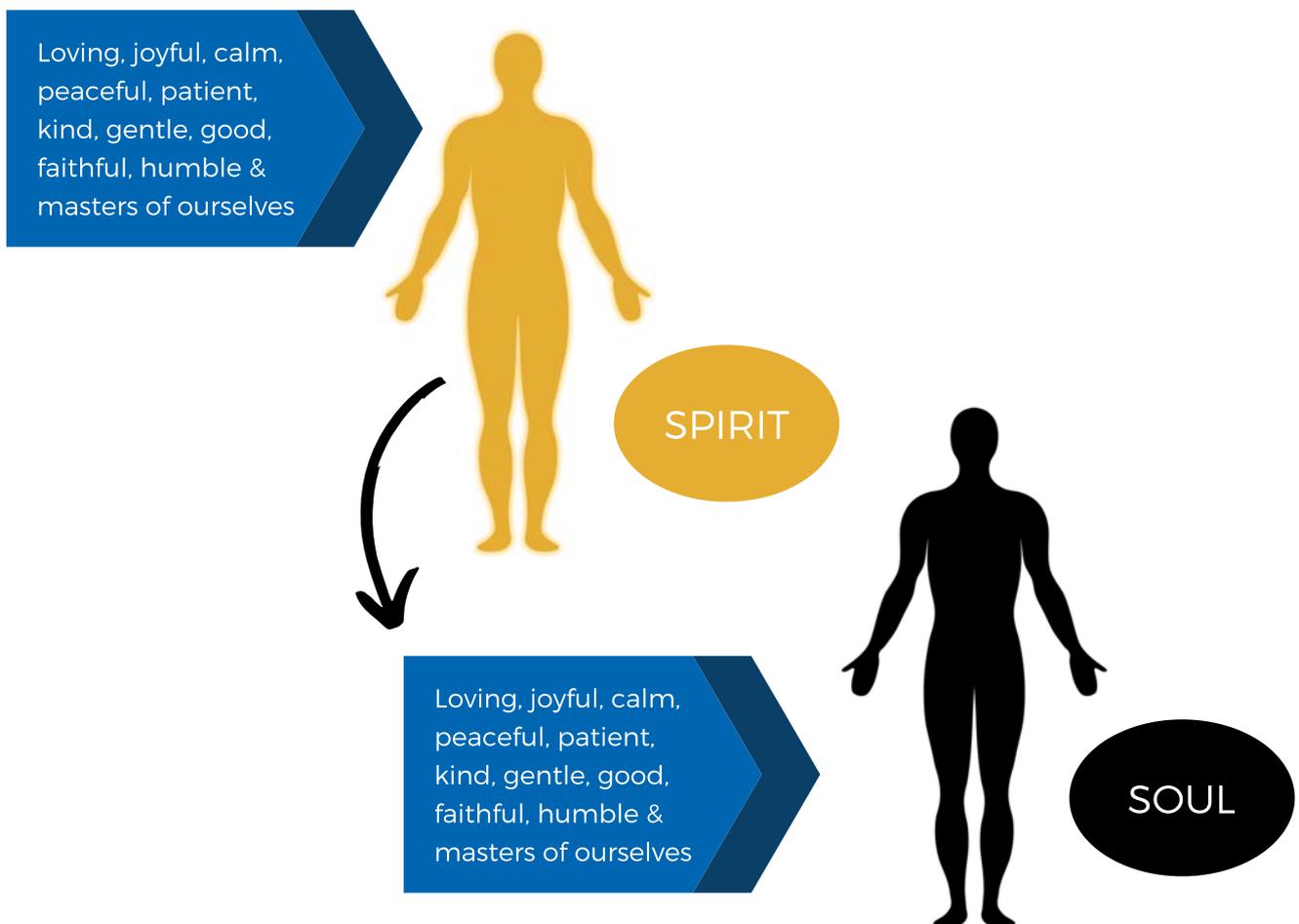
6. WE NEED TO ACT THROUGH THE SPIRIT AND THEN WE WILL NOT GIVE IN TO THE SINFUL NATURE

Galatians 5:16 Amplified Bible (AMP):

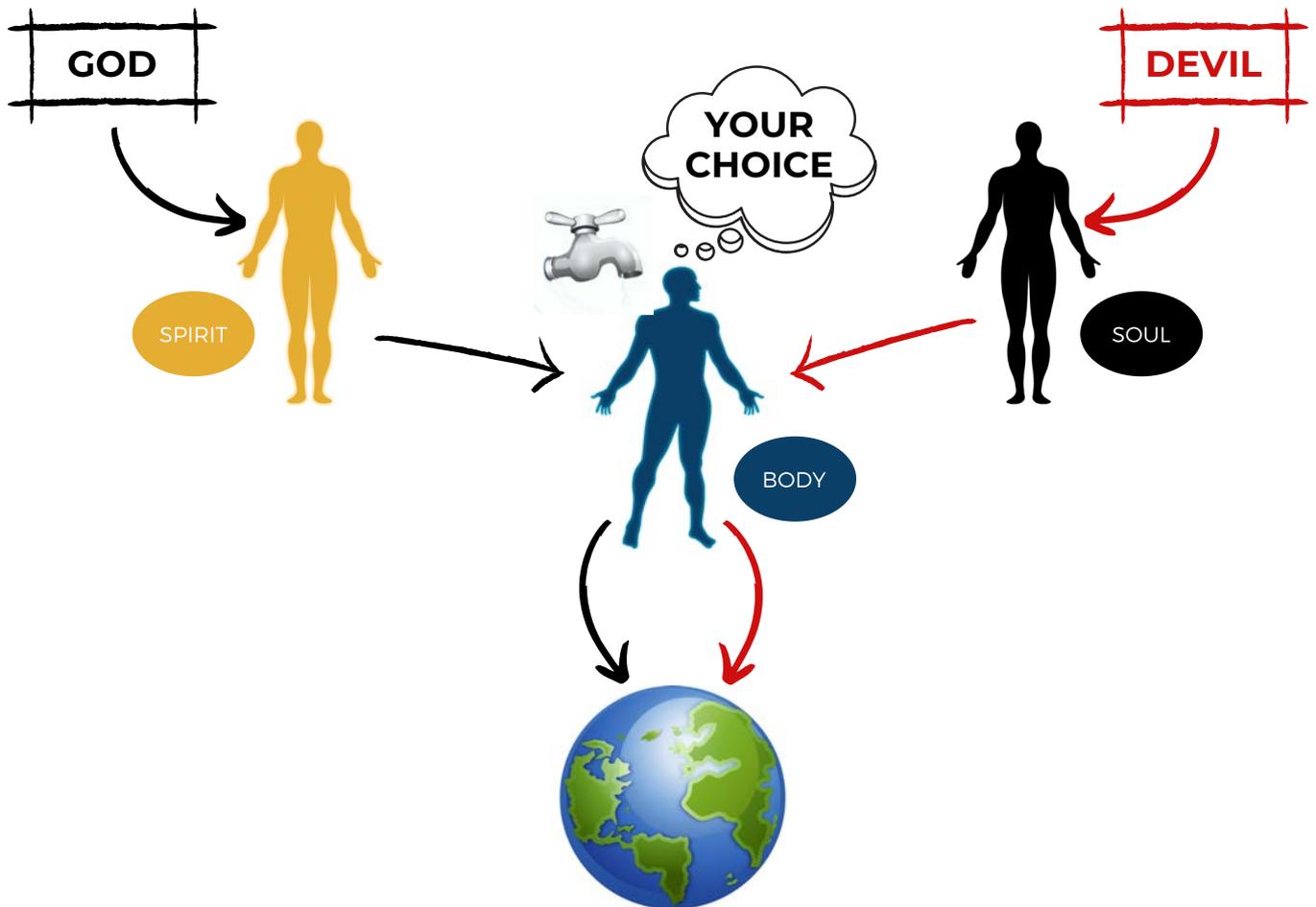
16But I say, walk habitually in the [Holy] Spirit [seek Him and be responsive to His guidance], and then you will certainly not carry out the desire of the sinful nature [which responds impulsively without regard for God and His precepts].

God gives us freedom of choice. Because of His perfect love, He will not control us like robots. Within us, we have a nature that strives to do evil, and we have the new nature through which the Holy Spirit seeks to produce the fruit of Christ-likeness.

God's perfect truth speaks to our spirit and we need to let its fruit guide the soul:



The choice to listen to the spirit is yours...



This is how you do it:

† **CHOOSE TO RECKON YOUR SINFUL NATURE AS DEAD, MEANING INACTIVE**

Galatians 5:24 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature together with its passions and appetites.

Romans 6:11 Amplified Bible (AMP):

"Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus.

And then believe and say by faith the following:

Galatians 2:20 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ [that is, in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body I live by faith [by adhering to, relying on, and completely trusting] in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

When you start to live like this your soul will also change and slowly become stronger through the spirit.

† **KEEP ON RELYING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NOT YOUR SOUL**

Galatians 5:18 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁸But if you are guided and led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the Law."

You need to understand that you are not under the Law if you act through the spirit. That victory over the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit can never be affected by works or by striving from your own self (soul), but only by the power of the Holy Spirit in us. Therefore, rely fully on Him to lead you into victory.

† **WALK IN THE SPIRIT ALWAYS**

Galatians 5:16 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁶But 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].

To live by the Spirit indicates fellowship, a continuous relationship between you and God, where the Holy Spirit continually leads you. Some people put church life and work life separate, but you cannot do that. When you become a real reborn Christian, you need to live through the new spirit and let it guide your soul.

This means every single thing you do is actually spiritual. Your whole life has been changed, you have changed, so how can you live two or three different lives? You can't. Now that you understand this better, let us go even deeper by looking at how you can fight the good fight with the armor of God.

”

...IF YOU ARE GUIDED
AND LED BY THE
SPIRIT, YOU ARE NOT
SUBJECT TO THE
LAW.

“

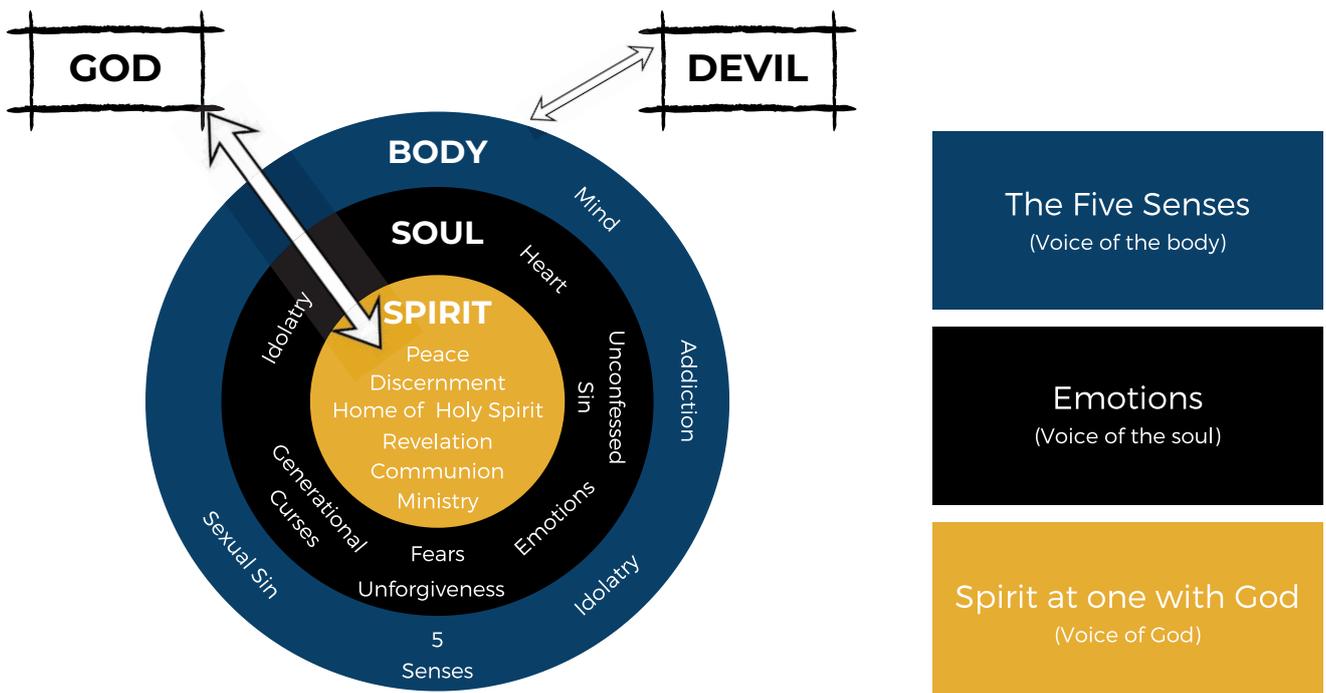
GALATIANS 5:18

6

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Put on the Armor of God to fight spiritually against hard times, temptation and the devil.

If you understand everything in the book you have read so far, then you will be able to understand the picture below without me needing to explain it:



Ephesians 6:14-18 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁴So stand firm and hold your ground, having tightened the wide band of truth (personal integrity, moral courage) around your waist and having put on the breastplate of righteousness (an upright heart),¹⁵ and having strapped on your feet the gospel of peace in preparation [to face the enemy with firm-footed stability and the readiness produced by the good news].¹⁶ Above all, lift up the [protective] shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray [with specific requests] at all times [on every occasion and in every season] in the Spirit, and with this in view, stay alert with all perseverance and petition [interceding in prayer] for all God's people.

† **HAVING TIGHTENED THE WIDE BAND OF TRUTH**

Some translations say "the belt of truth". By studying the Bible we start to learn the truth and we view the world, the devil, people and even ourselves through the glasses of the Bible, not by our imperfect thoughts or feelings! Knowing and living by this truth will give us security and protection from all the lies around us.

† **BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

We know that once we have been reborn and truly justified by God, then nothing, not even the devil can take it away from us. Because we have become children of God. God promises in:

1 Philippians 1:6:

⁶He who has begun a good work in you will [continue to] perfect and complete it until the day of Christ Jesus [the time of His return].

Titus 3:5:

⁵He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we have done, but because of His own compassion and mercy, by the cleansing of the new birth (spiritual transformation, regeneration) and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

† **HAVING STRAPPED ON YOUR FEET THE GOSPEL OF PEACE IN PREPARATION**

We cannot keep God to ourselves, this life is not all about you! It is about loving God and loving those around us. If you truly love your neighbor as yourself, then you will have a burning desire to bring Jesus to them! If you see someone walking towards a cliff in a heavy fog, won't you scream out to them and warn them?

” Then how much more should you warn those who can end up in hell for all eternity? “

We need to let the Holy Spirit share the gospel through us so that other people can be saved. We are all called to witness, to be the light of this dark world.

Matthew 5:14-16 Amplified Bible (AMP):

14“You are the light of [Christ to] the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds and moral excellence, and [recognize and honor and] glorify your Father who is in heaven.



Romans 10:14 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁴But how will people call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher (messenger)?

† **SHIELD OF FAITH**

Romans 10:15 says “with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”.

Faith in God, His word, His truth. Faith in who God is, lets you conquer every obstacle. True faith that is built on the Rock will block the attacks of the devil because your eyes are not on your problems, the devil or this world, but it is fixed on God through faith!

† **HELMET OF SALVATION**

You know that God saved you and gave you eternal life, which has already started at justification. This temporary world will pass away, but you will live forever with God. With this assurance, you can look at this life very differently.

When you look at it through spiritual eyes the things of this temporary world will seem to get smaller and smaller.

Colossians 3:2:

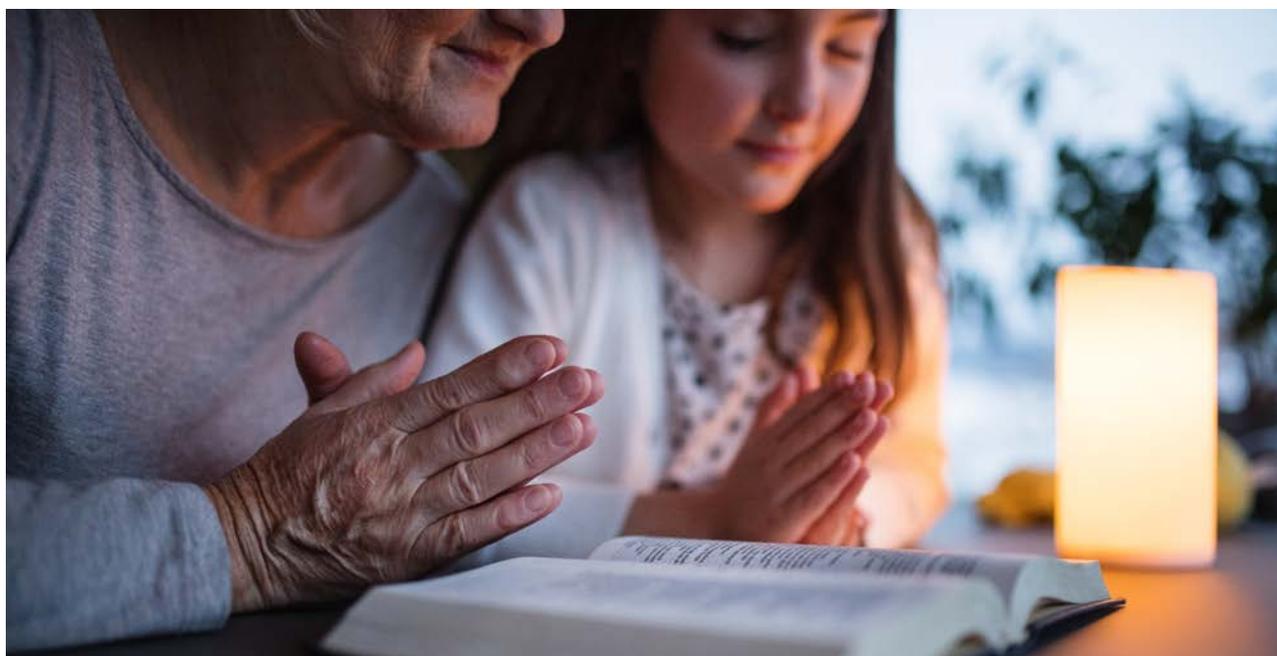
²Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value].

† **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**

Prayer is the key to a close relationship with God, where you continually speak to Him and He to you.

Ephesians 6:18 says “With all prayer and petition pray [with specific requests] at all times [on every occasion and in every season] in the Spirit, and with this in view, stay alert with all perseverance and petition [interceding in prayer] for all God’s people.”

This shows us how serious our prayer lives should be, because it is the action of begging to God earnestly and humbly.



BATTLE AGAINST HARD TIMES, THE DEVIL AND THE SINFUL NATURE:

God does not promise us a perfect life here on this earth without pain or suffering. We will experience a perfect life in heaven and on the new earth. But while on this temporary earth we need to know how to fight any kind of hardship that comes our way.

We need to fight against the devil and our own sinful nature. We need to be ready to fight the good fight to the end.

1 Timothy 6:12 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹²Fight the good fight of the faith [in the conflict with evil]; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and [for which] you made the good confession [of faith] in the presence of many witnesses.

1 FIGHT AGAINST HARD TIMES

There are far too many Christians out in the world who carry with them unnecessary emotional burdens because they do not know how to live through their spirit. These burdens which come from experiencing “hardship” are like heavy emotional baggage which they carry with them everywhere.

Some are in such a state that their focus has shifted from the truth of God to the problems that they face. In this sense, they have turned off the “valve” of the Spirit within them, who wants to bring them the joy, peace, love, and confidence of God. You need to turn to God’s Word, trust His promises and act in His revealing truth.

The moment you start stressing and worrying about things is the moment you do not truly believe in God’s promises. When that happens, you move outside of the peace and rest that the Holy Spirit gives you. God promised you that He will take care of you if you make Him your priority.

He never changes!

PROMISE:

Matthew 6:25-34 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, stop being worried or anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted) about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, as to what you will wear. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow [seed] nor reap [the harvest] nor gather [the crops] into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they?²⁷ And who of you by worrying can add one hour to [the length of] his life? ²⁸ And why are you worried about clothes? See how the lilies and wildflowers of the field grow; they do not labor nor do they spin [wool to make clothing],²⁹ yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory and splendor dressed himself like one of these.

³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive and green today and tomorrow is [cut and] thrown [as fuel] into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! ³¹Therefore do not worry or be anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted), saying, ‘What are we going to eat?’ or ‘What are we going to drink?’ or ‘What are we going to wear?’ ³²For the [pagan] Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; [but do not worry,] for your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right—the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also.

³⁴“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

So here God gives us a promise with a condition.

Condition for the promise:

We have to make God and his righteousness our first priority.

Promise:

God will then take care of us.

*Is God first in your life?
Is He more important than your money, career or even your
family?*

The time that you waste worrying about things, you can rather use to go on your knees and talk to God about your problems. Then you will experience peace through the spirit which will even surpass your own understanding. You will get an inner peace that is present even in difficult times.

You will experience this peace, because your confidence is in God and you have fully surrendered your life to Him:

PROMISE:

Philippians 4:6-7 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁶Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything [every circumstance and situation] by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, continue to make your [specific] requests known to God. ⁷And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].



Remember that when you look at a situation with only your soul level, you might think that this is a problem, while in reality God is only redirecting your path in this world or trying to teach you something.

A door that closes, might make a way for a better door that God has in store for you. Or He might just close it, without letting you understand why, and you still need to be able to accept it. Because that is His will and you need to accept His authority as God because He is all-knowing.

PROMISE:

Romans 8:28 Amplified Bible (AMP):

²⁸And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose.

The key here is “causes all things to work together for good”. This does not mean only “good” experiences according to your own soulish view. It means all experiences bad and good you might encounter. But God will make all these things work together for good.

When you bake a cake, all the ingredients by itself are not tasty. For example, salt tastes terrible on its own, so does flour and so forth. But if you add them all together it is a good cake. Here God is the Baker, creating the cake (your life) if you trust Him.

2 FIGHT AGAINST THE ATTACKS OF THE DEVIL

Satan will come and attack you with different tricks, so you need to be able to discern from your spirit when he is attacking you and you need to know how to fight back. You need to be awake and ready for it.

1 Peter 5:8 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁸ Be sober [well balanced and self-disciplined], be alert and cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour.

Here it clearly tells us to be sober and to be vigilant and that the devil will attack us. It is our responsibility to be sober and vigilant! How does the devil attack? He uses the same tricks over and over, just in different ways. But the devil will always attack you on your soul level. He will attack your emotions, your thoughts and your will. He is the father of lies. He will put doubts or false ideas into your thoughts and you have to make a decision.

*Do I believe this thought or idea?
Or do I reject it as a lie?*

You have to make a decision. How do you know the truth? You test it with the only absolute truth that we have in the world, the Bible. Remember the devil usually mixes the truth with a lie, which is his strongest weapon . . . He can mislead the most educated and mature Christians by mixing 1% untruth with 99% truth or let them focus on one big truth at the cost of others.

Example

Attack of the devil mixing truth with a lie:

The devil might attack your thoughts and say: "Do you remember this big sin you did? You are not a good person, you are not really a Christian and you do not deserve good things in your life".

You have mainly two options to handle this situation:

OPTION 1:

Acting from the soul: You can't see Satan's lie clearly because you act through your soul level and choose to go along and listen to these thoughts. What are the consequences then?

It will affect your emotions and you will start to feel unworthy, sad and maybe even depressed. You will think a lot about the sinful things that you have done and feel ashamed, even though you have already asked God for forgiveness.

OPTION 2:

Acting from the spirit: You can clearly see through the lie of Satan because you act from the spirit which reveals to you the truth. You choose to say: "Hold on devil! Yes, I have sinned, but I have already asked God to forgive me for my sins and God has already forgiven me.

1 John 1:9 says *"If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose]."*

So!!!! Yes, I have sinned because no one is without sin, but that is exactly why Jesus came and died on the cross for us!

I am not good enough on my own, but I have been declared righteous through Jesus. He has already forgiven me and cleansed me from all unrighteousness so I am free! Also devil, you have no power over me, go away in the name of Jesus Christ!

This will allow you to move on, unaffected by the failed attempt of the devil.

Do you see why it is important to study and know the Bible? Because in it you see the truth of God, the devil, and your own life. It is the mirror that reveals your true spiritual and soulish nature. The devil might come with stronger attacks. But we do not have to fear the devil, because once we know how and when he is trying to attack, we are already prepared.

We are prepared by continually wearing the armor of God, by taking the promises God made to us in the Bible and using it as a sword to fight back.

Let's look at the Bible and see what God says about this fight with the devil:

James 4:7 Amplified Bible (AMP):

'So submit to [the authority of] God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you.'

God promises us that if we resist the devil, he will surely flee, but the condition here is that we have to submit to God. We cannot fight the devil from our soul (fleshly nature), but we can through the Holy Spirit that dwells in our spirit if we have a true relationship with Christ.

So this is what you would say: "I rebuke you in the name of Jesus!" and he will flee.

1 John 4:4 Amplified Bible (AMP):

'Little children (believers, dear ones), you are of God and you belong to Him and have [already] overcome them [the agents of the antichrist]; because He who is in you is greater than he (Satan) who is in the world [of sinful mankind].'

Sometimes new Christians are afraid to talk about or fight the devil, but the truth is, Jesus has already won the battle 2000 years ago on the cross and when He rose from the grave. We have overcome the devil already through Jesus Christ.

God already gave us the victory through Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:57 Amplified Bible (AMP):

⁵⁷but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory [as conquerors] through our Lord Jesus Christ."

God also promised us that He will protect us from the devil. We have to take the promises of God into our hearts, believe it and act from it. God will protect us from the devil, so we can trust Him.

PROMISE:

2 Thessalonians 3:3 Amplified Bible (AMP):

³But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you [setting you on a firm foundation] and will protect and guard you from the evil one."

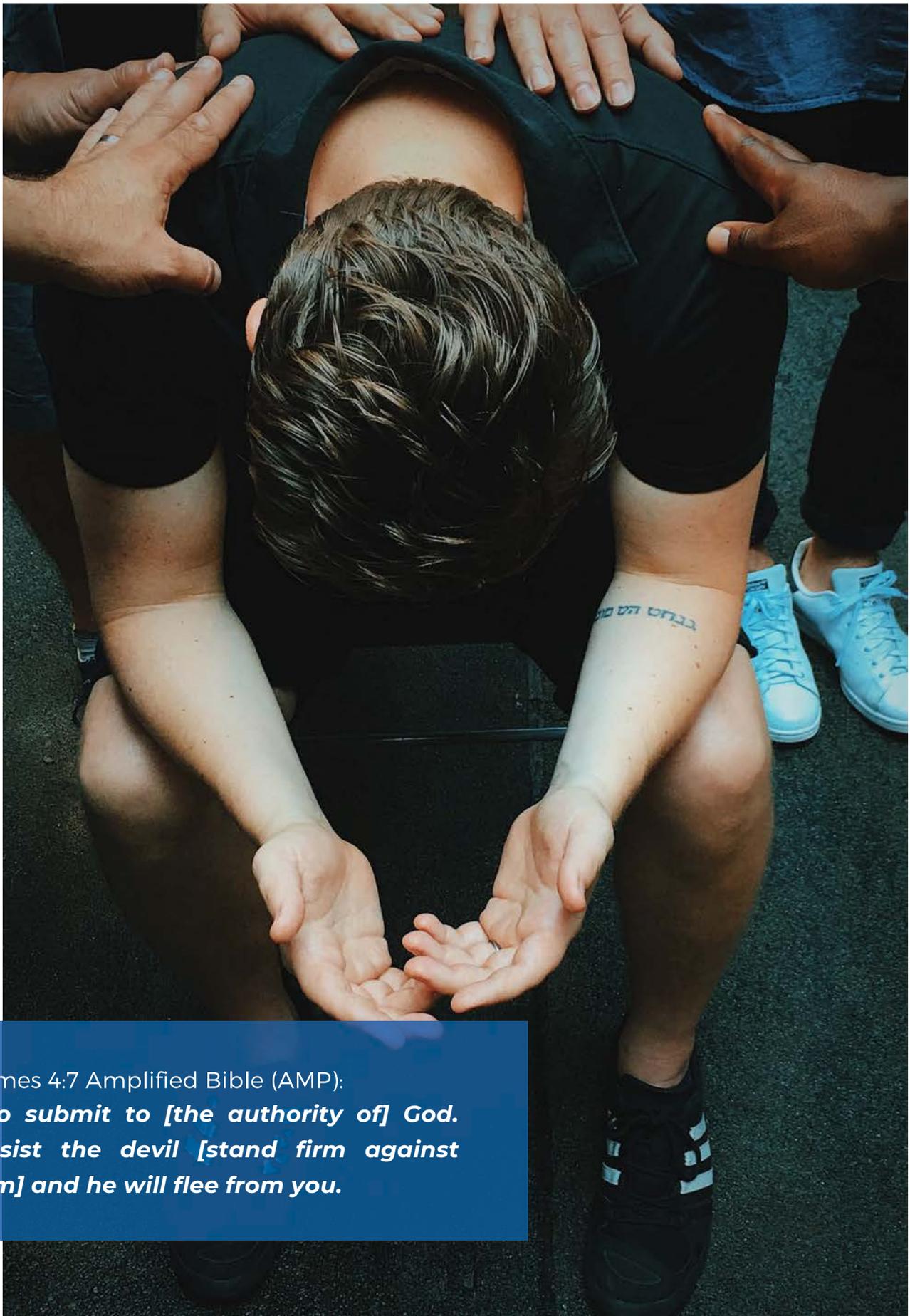
God gave us the authority to fight against the devil if we need to. Some Christians believe that only pastors or "very spiritual people" can fight the devil, or they think that their prayers have more power. The Bible does not teach it.

The truth is that all the children of God have received the Spirit of God through coming to Christ and being reborn (justification). Yes, some Christians might be called to this more than others. But all of us have the authority through Christ to fight against the devil. In fact, God tells us to be ready for the fight and to do it.

Luke 10:19 Amplified Bible (AMP):

¹⁹Listen carefully: I have given you authority [that you now possess] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and [the ability to exercise authority] over all the power of the enemy (Satan); and nothing will [in any way] harm you."





James 4:7 Amplified Bible (AMP):
So submit to [the authority of] God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you.

3 YOUR SINFUL NATURE WILL ALWAYS BE THERE

It is not always the devil that attacks, sometimes it is just your own selfish nature that gives in to temptation in certain situations. You need to learn how to control your soul (mind, will, and emotions) with your spirit. Your soul will grow stronger over time, while led by the spirit. So just focus on growing spiritually stronger and it will get a lot easier over time.

But you should always remember that when you encounter a bad situation you can always choose how to handle it. Example: Your closest friend misunderstands you and suddenly attacks you with hurtful words.

You cannot change what just happened in any way. So you need to decide on how to respond. Sometimes we can never change the situation, but we can change how we think and act in response and that will then change the situation.

OPTION 1:

Sinful nature: You feel hurt and decide to act from your own sinful nature even though your spirit does not want you to.

You defend yourself by explaining yourself and screaming back with adding some extra hurtful words back at your friend. Which then just makes the situation worse, because your friend feels more hurt and attacks back.

The way you fought back by screaming and also what you said (hurtful words) are both wrong. Sin always makes things worse. That is why Scripture says "overcome evil with good".

Romans 12:21 Amplified Bible (AMP):

”

***²¹Do not be overcome and conquered by evil,
but overcome evil with good."***

“

OPTION 2:

Spiritual nature: You feel hurt but choose to act through your spiritual nature even though your fleshly nature does not want you to. You understand (because of the revelation of truth through the spirit) that your friend is acting from his sinful nature and decide to overcome evil with good by relaxing your friend and answering him back in a loving way.

The more you act from your spiritual nature, the stronger your soul also becomes and the easier it becomes to act through the Spirit. The spiritual nature and sinful nature are like two dogs that are always fighting. The one you feed the most will win more easily at the end.

This is the road of sanctification, where our goal is to grow more spiritually and become more and more like Jesus.

Here are some extra verses about the spirit to think about:

Spirit (Inner man):

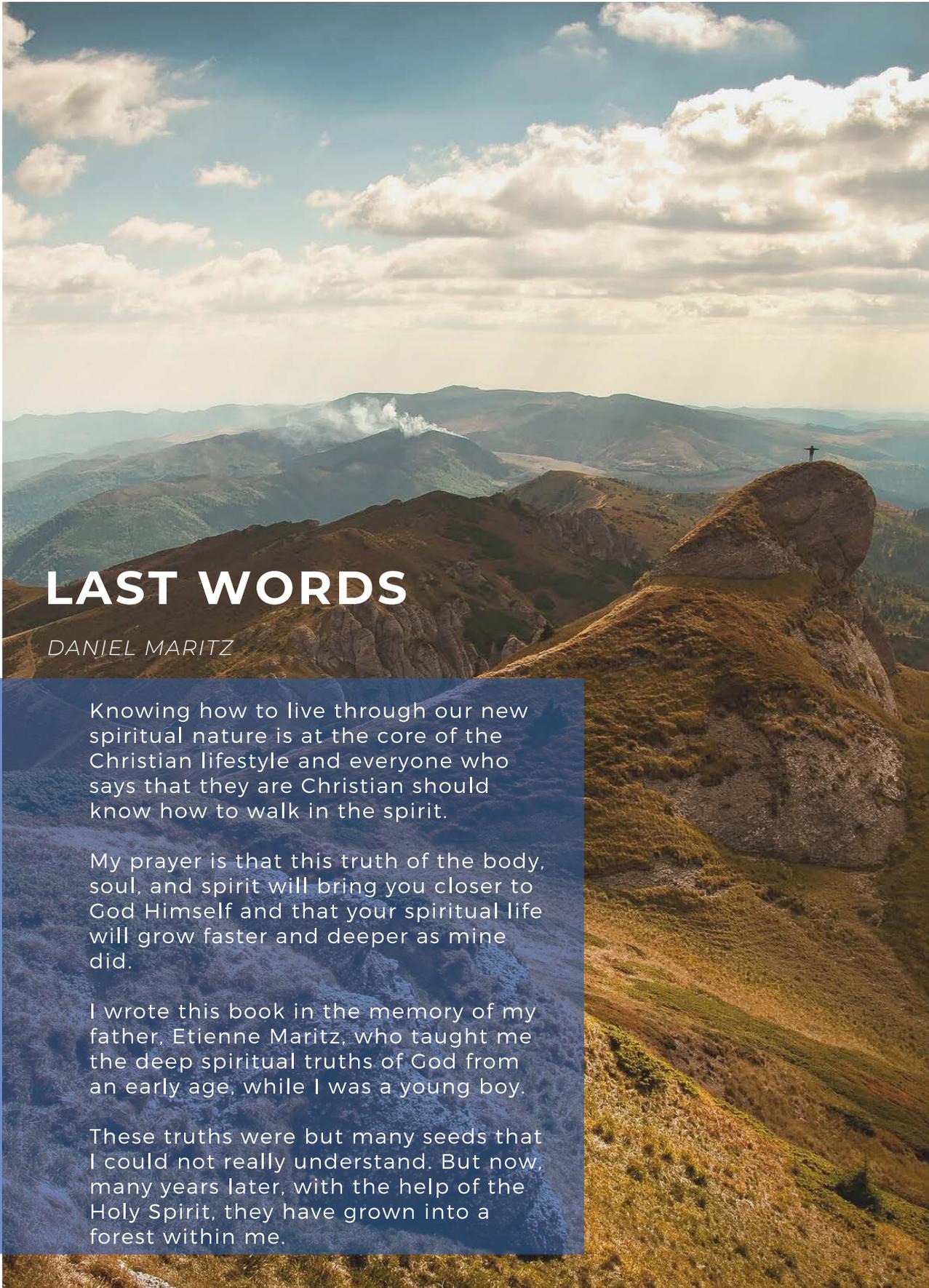
Job 32:8 “ . . . **but there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.**”

2 Timothy 4:22 “**The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you.**”

Ephesians 3:16 “ . . . **that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.**”

Psalms 51:6 “**Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part you will make me know wisdom.**”

Proverbs 20:27 “**The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the innermost parts of his being.**”



LAST WORDS

DANIEL MARITZ

Knowing how to live through our new spiritual nature is at the core of the Christian lifestyle and everyone who says that they are Christian should know how to walk in the spirit.

My prayer is that this truth of the body, soul, and spirit will bring you closer to God Himself and that your spiritual life will grow faster and deeper as mine did.

I wrote this book in the memory of my father, Etienne Maritz, who taught me the deep spiritual truths of God from an early age, while I was a young boy.

These truths were but many seeds that I could not really understand. But now, many years later, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they have grown into a forest within me.

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