

The Human Spirit as a Distinct Organism and Its Function

We have spent time developing the concept of the human spirit's rightful position as being in control of the soul and body rather than any other way. That assumes the human spirit is a distinct organism. We have been speaking of the human spirit in those terms. Perhaps it is time to back that up.

The human spirit is a distinct organism separate from the soul and the body, and there are many verses that support this. First Corinthians 2:11 speaks of man and the spirit of man within him. First Corinthians 14:14 speaks of the spirit praying. Romans 8:16 speaks of the Holy Spirit bearing witness to the human spirit. Paul speaks of relief "in my spirit" in 2 Corinthians 2:13. There is also this call for the separation of the soul and the spirit, which we saw in Hebrews 4:12. In Romans 1:9 Paul speaks of serving God through his spirit. In 1 Corinthians 6:20 Paul tells us we were bought with a price and we are to glorify God in our body and our spirit, which Paul says belongs to God now. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 23, he speaks of the body, soul, and spirit as distinct organisms. Clearly the Bible views the spirit as a distinct and separate organism from the soul and the body.

As we have previously shown, the body and the soul are products of human generation. As John 3:6 says what is born of the flesh is flesh. That is it is a product of human generation. That same passage says what is born of the Spirit is spirit, which establishes the human spirit as a product of divine generation, specifically as this passage states, of the Holy Spirit. And as verse 7 says such a person must be born again. We call that "regeneration" or sometimes a "conversion experience" in that the person experiences a significant change in the process. As 1 Corinthians 2:14 points out, the "natural man," the unsaved, does not "receive" the things of the Spirit of God. They for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

We have already established the fact that the human spirit is that part of regenerate man that has communion with God. It can be argued that man is born dichotomous with only a body and a soul and at salvation God generates a human spirit, making the regenerate man trichotomous, or that man is born trichotomous and the human spirit is spiritually dead to God to be regenerated at salvation. I personally lean to the former definition, but either way, the effects are the same. After regeneration the believer is identified with Christ FOREVER! That is called "positional sanctification" and you see references to this in Scripture in the term "in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1; 4:10; 15:18; 2 Cor. 1:21; 2:17; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 1:1; 2:13; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; and many others). But one passage that really makes my point is this one:

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man *be in Christ*, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The new believer “in Christ” is a new creature. This refers to the conversion experience and regeneration, the creation of the human spirit in the new believer. With the spirit of man “quicken[ed],” he is once more, potentially, at least, in communion with God.

The human spirit experiences communion with God through a process called “experiential sanctification,” which is the believer’s spiritual walk, his intake of doctrine, and spiritual growth, But this only occurs on a temporary basis only when he is “walking by means of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). Sin can break this union with God, but confession of sin can restore it (1 John 1:9).

God’s goal is what is called “ultimate sanctification”. This is when the believer is finally resurrected from the dead (or is raptured) and stands before the Bema judgment to have his spiritual life evaluated. At this point the believer is in eternity with God, and all that Adam lost is finally and fully restored.

1 Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 3 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual

In order to have a spiritual walk we must be able to understand the things of the Spirit of God, exercising, as this passage calls for, spiritual discernment to understand the mind of God. The trouble is believers often ignore the Holy Spirit, and there are primarily two ways to ignore the Holy Spirit.

- Many believers are not aware they even have a human spirit
- Or they imagine that every experience which takes place in the realm of their physical senses is spirit or spiritual. That means they believe that everything that takes place in their lives is the working of God, but that may not be the case at all. The working in Job’s life, for example, was Satan!

Do you realize that in both examples man’s spirit is left out? It has no role!

In the case of the believer unaware he even has a human spirit, his spiritual walk is really only a mental exercise. He “thinks” his way through spiritual matters.

In the second case the believer is a slave to experience, but in reality he is still a slave to his body and its senses. He has not had the Word of God “pierce even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit”. The soul, which is fleshly by nature, is still running the show. In both cases they are highly susceptible to deception.

“Walking after the spirit” and “minding the spirit” not only means the soul and body are subservient to the spirit, but that man’s spirit is co-working in harmony with the Holy Spirit. To do this the believer needs to know the “laws of the spirit,” not only the conditions for the Holy Spirit’s working, but the laws governing his own spirit, so it may be kept open to the HS. When the HS takes as His sanctuary the spirit of a believer, you

can count on evil spirits to attack in an attempt to prevent this co-working from ever taking place. The poor new believer comes under extreme attack immediately and never even knows it. It is critically important to disciple new believers and get them on stable doctrinal ground as soon as possible.

When the believer is spiritual and his mind and body are subservient to his spirit, the forces of Satan can come into **direct contact** with the human spirit. This is when the “wrestling” referred to by Paul in Ephesians 6:12 takes place. If the believer is ignorant of the laws of the spirit, then he is liable to yield to the onslaught of deceiving spirits by which they force his spirit into strained ecstasy or elation. Here he is given “visions” and “revelations” which appear to be divine and are not, or they press his spirit down as in a vice. Here he sinks into darkness as if he has lost any knowledge of God. In both cases the objective is to keep the human spirit in subservience to the soul and keep it from breaking free into the freedom of a real and vital spiritual walk with Christ. When the believer understands these direct attacks, he becomes able to discern the condition of his spirit and regain control over it.

Laws Governing the True Spiritual Life

There are laws or principles that govern the true spiritual life of a person, and thus there are ways the believer can tell if there is a problem in his spiritual walk with God or not. In this lesson we will attempt to clarify that for you and give you some idea what to look for.

The believer must know what a true spiritual life looks and feels like and how to respond to the demands of the Holy Spirit and not quench it. Suppose a burden comes upon a believer for some purpose. The Spirit of God is moving through the human spirit to motivate the believer to some divinely inspired action. But if the believer ignores the burden and goes on his merry way, he is rejecting a divine directive and entering into disobedience, which is a sin. We need to listen to our spirit and understand what it is telling us.

Perhaps a burden comes upon the believer that is at first ignored and then becomes a point of worry until it cannot be ignored? What is he to make of that? How should he act? Are we ever commanded to worry? The believer should be able to read his spirit and know at once when he is not in co-operation with the Holy Spirit. He should refuse all attacks drawing him out of fellowship. Most importantly he should know when his spirit is touched by the fiery darts of the devil (Eph 6:16). Sure signs are sadness, worry, anxiety, bitterness, hurt feelings, anger, fault-finding, grumbling, jealousy, vindictiveness, etc. This is NOT the fruit of the Spirit is it? This is the fruit of Satan (Gal. 5:19-21). Therefore the moment you begin to harbor these feelings the antennae should go up along with the warning lights on the old brain panel—“Danger!” You are under successful attack by Satan! The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22-23). An uneasy spirit, which is deceived by Satan and out of fellowship with God, does not exhibit the fruit of

the Spirit. If you have lost your patience (long-suffering), you have also lost your love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance because those nine things are a package. And fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit is broken.

This is understanding what your true spiritual walk looks and feels like. You should know when your spirit is in the right position of dominance over the body and soul. If the spirit is depressed, crushed or otherwise down, that indicates a loss of fellowship. The soulish nature is in the driver's seat. Satan has deceived you.

To be fair, there are conditions by which depression has physiological sources, which are unrelated to sin. That is a medical condition that may need the help of prescription drugs to manage. But not all mental illness is physiological in origin; it is often the result of a compressed soul under attack, and the believer has given into the attack.

If the spirit has no poise or is strained and tense, the soul is in control again and the believer is in a hypersensitive state. In this condition, he tends to react in a negative way to anything and everything. This is indicative of a spiritual issue. Weariness can contribute to this, and it is understandable that making the right decisions under these conditions can be difficult, but the believer must realize that times of weariness or high stress are times when he may be very vulnerable to attack. These conditions give the devil an opportunity he may not otherwise have.

The spirit should be poised and in calm control; then it is in right relationship with the body and soul. Proverbs 17:27 says, "a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit". "Understanding" is tabuwn *taw-boon'* in the Hebrew and refers to discretion or wisdom. A man of understanding is one who has matured spiritually and understands how to manage himself through his human spirit working in union with God. Such a man has an "excellent spirit". "Excellent" is yaqar *yaw-kawr'* in the Hebrew and carries the meaning of being honorable and precious, and by implication something rare and to be valued. The root word from which it comes speaks of coolness and calmness. In the modern vernacular, we might say this person is "cool under fire." That is trials and tribulations do not knock him off stride, and he remains in right relationship with God, even when he is under extreme pressure.

Should the believer "lose his cool," give in to the attack and find his spirit troubled in some way, the solution is to do an immediate evaluation of your spiritual state and rebound if necessary.

To the issue of divine guidance, the believer should understand that when there is no action in his spirit, he should use his mind. If you expect the Spirit to say "amen" to everything you do, then you don't need a mind. The Spirit does not always speak, or more appropriately, God may remain silent on issues, thus the human spirit does not lead.

In coming to a decision, the deciding is in one of two forms or processes. It may be by an act of the mind and will based on the mental processes of reasoning, or from a leading of the spirit, or both.

When always seeking leading from the spirit there is a danger of slipping into a state of passivity. The believer may not always be led by the Spirit and may be called upon to make decisions using only his mental capacities. In these cases, he should ALWAYS measure his decision against biblical truths. Even though a decision seems “logical,” if it is in conflict with biblical principles then it is a wrong decision no matter how much “sense” it makes.

The believer must be prepared to make an intelligent decision based on cognitive reasoning. Do we have an example of this in Scripture? Yes we do. In 1 Corinthians 7:25 Paul said he “had no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment.” Paul was responding to the Church at Corinth about various issues such as eating meat, being circumcised, and marriage, but when it came to the issue of virginity (was celibacy an issue in piety), he had no guidance from the spirit but rather gave his own judgment. You will have to use your brain from time to time and think for yourself just like Paul did in this situation, but think using well established and solid norms and standards—Bible doctrine.

The chief method of attack on the believer is to cause him to cease his spiritual walk by drawing him into the realm of the soul and body. Then the human spirit, which is an organ of the Holy Spirit, drops into obedience to the soul and body and is ignored. Because the believer is occupied with sensory experiences, the human spirit is out of action for guidance, power in service, or conflict against the wiles of the devil.

The feelings of the spirit are neither emotional nor physical. Such experiences should be a warning sign. Anytime you are motivated by purely physical or emotional needs or gratification, this is a danger sign.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD

The spirit of man in co-operation with the Spirit of God is God’s light unto a darkened world. Pay attention to your spirit and be sure it is in harmony and working with the Spirit of God. Be wary of physical and emotional experiences, as this is the avenue of attack most used by Satan. Understand how to read your spirit and thus your spiritual status. You must understand what “right” feels like.

Can Scripture be used in an evil way?

I believe most of you would answer “yes.” Satan can and does twist the truth and convince gullible humans to buy into it. Happens all the time! Okay, but how is Scripture

used in an evil way? You probably have a few ideas of your own, but let me suggest a few, some perhaps you have not considered.

I'm sure many of you would point to some televangelist and say, "That's how!" Maybe. I agree that many do misuse Scripture, but a blanket condemnation of all televangelists would be wrong, as many do not use Scripture in an evil way but present the Word of God accurately, not always perfectly but accurately. You may not think so simply because you may assume your traditions and beliefs are correct and his are wrong. That may be passivity of judgment or reason if that is your position. The believer should always be open to arguments from Scripture, even those that challenge his own beliefs, and more importantly, be knowledgeable enough about Scripture to detect deception and error when it is presented. But few are, and as a result many are sucked into the lie.

I am not suggesting that anytime something is presented that differs from what you believe it automatically makes you wrong. I am suggesting that you should be open and examine anything that is presented and test it with the Word of God.

You will hear the argument that Scripture cannot be trusted because it was written by men and men are not infallible, it has been translated from one language to another, and how do you know the one interpreting the passage has it right? The first thing you need to remind yourself is that if God left this here for you, He left it in a form that can be understood and is accurate. Otherwise, why would He bother?

To the argument that man is not infallible, we all know that is true, but that does not mean that we must discount every utterance man ever makes as not true and everything he does as fatally flawed. While man cannot be perfect, he can be accurate with the help of the Holy Spirit. God left the Bible for us to use, therefore we must assume it is in a usable form and man is capable of deciphering what is contained therein.

First Corinthians 2:14 tells us that the "natural man" does not understand spiritual things but they are "spiritually discerned". The word translated "discerned" is *anakrino an-ak-ree'-no* and means a sifting process to get at the truth by investigation as of a judge. The "natural man," which is taken to mean the unregenerate, cannot comprehend spiritual matters. Clearly, this passage tells us the Scripture CAN be understood, at least by the regenerate. First Corinthians 14:33 tells us God is not the author of confusion. Okay, so where did all this confusion come from?

We need look no further than John 8:44 for the answer.

Joh 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

The father of lies and confusion is Satan. The multitude of religions, traditions, apostasy, and false teachings that produces this confusion are products of Satan! However, buried somewhere in all these lies is often found some truth. Satan is trying to hide it from you, and if he is doing that, then the truth must be very detrimental to him and his cause. John 8:32 says the truth can set us free. Then it is indeed possible to know the truth, if it can set us free. But how do we know what to trust?

First you must trust in the fact that there is Scripture that is correct. We have more manuscripts of the Bible than any other ancient writing, well over 5,000. Amazingly, all these copies and fragments are in agreement with each other, and what we would call variations are so small as to be of little consequence, a few words or phrases here and there. What I am saying is that all these 5,000+ ancient manuscripts pretty much agree with each other, usually word-for-word! That is an absolutely astounding fact, considering many are copies of copies and of copies and were recorded in some cases centuries apart. Sounds like to me that God has taken great pains to preserve His recorded Word and keep it intact and consistent in spite of fallible man being custodian of it. Pretty impressive, if you ask me! And that is exactly what one would expect Him to do if it is important.

If we accept the fact that we do have God's Word recorded in a form that we can consider accurate, how can we be sure it is translated correctly from the original languages? Here is where the process can break down. There are some pretty lame translations out there. Some are literal translations and remain true to the construction and syntax of the original, and others attempt to put the translation in modern language and syntax. Neither is a perfect solution and both have their pros and cons. This is why most expositors of God's Word go back to the original languages to better understand the translation. Looking at important words in the translation in their original language and usage can add nuances and color to the translation that we might not otherwise get from a literal translation. Thus I am always leery of any pastor or teacher that does not consult the original languages and use the beautiful word pictures found there.

Scripture needs to be interpreted in its historical context. The interpreter must consider the events, customs and culture of the time when the passage under study was written. Often to take a passage out of historical and cultural context and attempt to apply it directly to our time can lead to error.

Any good expositor must always take into consideration who the recipient of the message was (or is). Jesus, for example, was mostly speaking to a Jewish audience about subjects of immediate concern to His audience. Much of what he said in those instances does not have direct application to Christians, and some has zero application to us today. They may have indirect application, but to make correct modern application they must be filtered through their Jewish/Mosaic Covenant and dispensational context. This is the chief cause behind the failure of many denominations to differentiate between Israel and the Church, which leads to a tremendous amount of doctrinal confusion even among the major mainline religions.

Closely related to this is that many expositors of the Word do not correctly categorize a passage under study. They assume the passage is speaking about one subject, when in fact the doctrine being taught is something entirely different. This will lead to a false interpretation, which will appear to be in conflict with a previously established and true doctrine. This immediately casts doubt on the true. To compound the problem, weak expositors will take this one passage they have incorrectly interpreted, and in comparing it to twenty others that are contrary (and true), assume the twenty are wrong and not the one in conflict. Bad reasoning! Always reason from the known (the 20), and never from the unknown (the one). The one in conflict must be assumed to be incorrectly interpreted when it cannot be reconciled with what is a known and established truth; not the other way.

By far the most common mistake Bible teachers make is to lift a passage or portion of a passage out of its context and make application without regard to the context of the passage. You can lift a passage out of context and make it say almost anything you want it to say! In real estate they say there are three critical factors to success – location, location, location! Same applies to Scripture – context, context, context! You MUST interpret a passage using its context.

Let me give you an example: Once way before I was saved, I used Matthew 4:4, “... man shall not live by bread alone...” to argue against vegetarianism. It has absolutely nothing to do with that. Out of context it was easy to make it work, and the person I used it against knew even less than I did and bought the argument!

For me the Scriptures harmonized when I discovered the doctrine of dispensations. Understanding this doctrine and the various ages or periods in human history and how God was relating to man during those periods helped me make sense of what seemed to me to be a lot of confusion in the Scriptures. All the seeming conflicts vanished as I began to look at the Word of God in this historical timeline context.

My point is this: Satan does not want you to have a testimony. He will do all he can to confuse you and keep you confused. Anyone with half a brain will agree that if you look around you will see things in other denominations and religions that you know in your heart cannot be true, because they do not agree with what you believe and are usually in conflict with each other. Guess what, they are saying the same thing about what you believe. And that is exactly as Satan designed it and wants to keep it.

And do not buy into this New Age — Neo-Modernism lie that there are many ways to God, and we all find Him in our own “special” way, everything is relative and there are no absolutes. Any thinking person should see that such a theory is not even logical much less biblical. What kind of God sponsors that kind of silliness and confusion? But it appeals to those who want to make their own rules. If there are no rules, then you can do whatever you want and be right. Convenient, huh?

It comes down to this –

- The Bible can be trusted.
- Translations can be somewhat problematic but by no means useless. Find one that works for you. I recommend the KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, or NIV, but others will often do.
- Consulting the original languages can help understand Scripture. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* helps here.
- Interpret in the historical and cultural context. There are books that explain this.
- Interpret a passage in its Biblical context.
- Categorize passages in doctrinal categories and compare the unknown to the known for clarification.
- Man is fallible but can be generally very accurate when guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Be open to Scriptural arguments that are in conflict with your own beliefs and traditions. You may be wrong, but so may the other guy. Use the Word to settle the argument, and when not sure, set it aside and pray about it.

There is truth. There are absolutes. There is right. There is wrong. God has spelled all that out. It is preserved for those who want to know it. You can understand it if you want to. And most importantly, it is not an unachievable goal. You can meet God's standard with God's help, but never of your own efforts.

Evil Spirits Adapt the Lie to Suit Your Weaknesses

We have seen that Scripture can be used in an evil way, but that is no excuse to simply discount all Scripture as untrustworthy as many do. Rather it is a challenge to find the truth among the lies and deception. It is there and can be found by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Evil spirits carefully tune their lies, suggestions, and leadings to the idiosyncrasies of the believer. They have spent your lifetime watching you and observing how you respond to things. They probably know you a lot better than you know yourself. They know your weaknesses, and that fact should frighten you into reality. Because they know you so well, they will not suggest an action to you that is so foreign to you that you will immediately detect the lie. They will avoid things that are contrary to doctrines you are firmly rooted in, but they may use that knowledge to suggest something else that you will accept. They will take something you have previously accepted as true and use that to lead you into a lie, take a truth you embrace and wrap it around a lie. It is a candy shell on the outside, but the inside may not be chocolate.

Satanic guidance alters and misdirects the energies of believer and lessens his service and witness before God. There are two distinct attitudes towards guidance: We can be trusting God to guide or trust that God is guiding. The first, trusting God to guide, means a reliance upon God Himself. The second is an *assumption* that God is guiding.

God does guide in response to definite trust in Him (Outflow), and He guides through the spirit of man who continues to cooperate with His Spirit (Inflow), leaving every

faculty free to act, and the will to choose intelligently the right step in the path before him. Yes God guides, but don't ask Him to choose your sock color each morning. You have to make some decisions for yourself.

In the second instance of the *assumption* that God is guiding, we should never assume. Evil spirits take advantage of this and wait for you to assume, and then they play to your assumptions. When in doubt take the neutral position until you can be sure.

Satan will use counterfeit miracles to trick the unwary. This is a very fruitful area for him. A perfect example is some of these miracle healers we see on TV who I believe to be either a charlatan or are themselves deceived by Satan, probably both. I believe these are demon-enabled "miracles," and by creating the illusion of miracles, the focus shifts from the Word of God to these supernatural manifestations. Yes, sometimes Scripture is quoted, but this is only to give the lie credibility. The objective is to get the believer's focus on the miracle and off the Word of God. The miracle becomes the sustaining element rather than God's Word.

Earlier we said the Word of God was a mirror into our souls in which we were to see our true selves. The purpose is not to bring despair but rather bring hope of forgiveness and the very real possibility of change. But there is a dark side to this that evil spirits use. They try to convict believers into thinking they are so beset by a sin that they cannot gain victory over it, and it may not even be a sin they are really guilty of. The believer begins to hate himself for his failings. This lie can look very much like legitimate conviction by the Holy Spirit, but this conviction brings on despair and depression rather than repentance and forgiveness. The believer cannot forgive himself, and in his mind if he cannot forgive himself, how can God? What results may be an elaborate system of asceticism, as the believer tries to make amends for his sin. They wallow in self-pity and hatred of themselves for that unforgivable sin. God never forgives on the basis of anything we do. God will only forgive on the basis of what Christ did on the Cross and our resting in that.

Confession should be cleansing! Confess it and move on. God has forgiven the sin! To keep returning to it is to deny that and become self-focused. Instead of our focus being on God on His throne, the believer has turned inward. The "experience" has become greater than the truth.

We must be very careful of supernatural leadings. God leads through the spirit of man in cooperation with His Spirit. God calls for the complete use of man's faculties and free will, but God only works in those who have first demonstrated faith towards the object of our faith, Jesus Christ. That is the "outflow." The leading, guiding, enabling, and working is the "inflow" of the Christ life in the believer. That comes into the human spirit through cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Satan tries to sever that relationship between the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit and insert his own leadings through things such as: counterfeit miracles, visions, dreams, revelations, tongues, and false doctrines. This leading usually comes from outside of believer, cleverly packaged in the truth and often in the form of human experiences. What is experienced becomes more real than the

Word of God. The believer thus deceived looks inward to himself and to what he experiences instead of to God.

Previously we discussed how God speaks to man through the human spirit. Communications apart from this process must immediately become suspect and examined carefully. Christ said of his children, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27)

"Hear" is *akouo ak-oo'-o*, and it means to hear and understand or comprehend. Sheep are very skittish animals but become comfortable and reassured by the voice of their shepherd. The shepherd would often sing to his sheep, building a relationship with them. Sheep cannot be herded by the shepherd. They have to be led. They have to want to follow, because they trust the shepherd. Since they are not forced, that implies, even for sheep, a decision to follow.

The same should apply to believers and Christ as the good Shepherd. We follow not because we are forced to follow, not because we are herded, but because we want to follow. Anytime we experience coercion in our leading we should become suspicious. Understand that urging and coercion are not the same, but the difference can be very subtle and difficult to discern. Ask yourself, "Is this urging or coercion?" An example of coercion is someone harping on you to join some religious group or be associated with some movement you suspect is a cult. Maybe it is God leading and maybe you are being dragged into some apostasy or distraction and away from where you are supposed to be. You must intelligently decide which it is. Our following is an intelligent decision made with our free wills because we want to follow. When in doubt take the neutral position until sure and pray about it in the mean time.

Satan will take the lie and wrap it in the truth. It appears genuine on the outside, but the reality is there is deception contained within. The truth "wrapping" makes the bitter deception more palatable. Be very careful of any attempts to get you focused on an emotional experience. When faced with this ask yourself this question and be honest, "What is more important to me, my experiences or the Word of God?" If the answer even smells remotely like the driver may be your emotions or your experiences, you have been deceived.