

Spirit, Soul, and Body - Mind, Will, and Emotions

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I Thessalonians 5:23

The Bible tells us that we are spirit, soul and body (I Thess. 5:23). The SOUL is made up of MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS. The **"natural man" is governed ONLY by his soul and bodily appetites**, because he is spiritually dead (I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-5). We, as born-again Christians, have been made spiritually alive, and we are supposed to be governed and **controlled by the HOLY SPIRIT and our own born-again SPIRIT**, which is created in the image of God (Eph. 4:17-24 calls it the "new man"). We are NOT supposed to be controlled by our SOUL. Our soul, which includes our EMOTIONS, is **UNRELIABLE, we must not trust it**. We MUST renew our minds with the word of God (Romans 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23) and we are RESPONSIBLE (using our FREE WILL) to be careful of what we put before our eyes and allow to enter our minds, because that will AFFECT our EMOTIONS (see Phil. 4:6-9). If you find that your MIND (thoughts) or EMOTIONS are **out of line with what God says**, you MUST NOT allow your SOUL to be the final authority. God's word must be the FINAL AUTHORITY, and **we are told to "take EVERY THOUGHT captive to the OBEDIENCE of Christ"** (II Cor. 10:3-5). This means we must deal with our thought-life and emotions, rather than ALLOWING them to rule and reign over us. All of this is OUR OWN CHOICE to obey what God says in His word, or not. If we obey God and take every thought captive and "guard ourselves" (I John 5:18), the wicked one (Satan) cannot touch us. It is when we REFUSE to OBEY, and **entertain or harbor those thoughts that are contrary to God's word** ("every high thing that exalts itself AGAINST God"), that Satan is allowed an entrance into our lives (Eph. 4:26-27). If this sin is not confessed and corrected, and if we CONTINUALLY entertain wrong thoughts, we give Satan "ground" and ALLOW him to build strongholds in our life. "Ground" means a sphere of jurisdiction that **we VOLUNTARILY give to the enemy**. Many people are MENTALLY LAZY and PASSIVE, and **they ALLOW these wrong thoughts to control them**, and ALLOW Satan to build stronghold after stronghold in their lives. They are saved, but they are miserable by their own CHOICE. They ask for OTHER PEOPLE to PRAY FOR THEM, but they remain in the same condition, because God has told THEM to do something about it, and they REFUSE to do it.

- **John 14: 1 & 27** "LET NOT your heart be troubled...." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. **LET NOT (do not allow)** your heart (emotions) be troubled; neither LET it be afraid."

Is it just our own thoughts, or does Satan ever put wrong thoughts in our minds? I think we have to analyze each situation individually, but the devil certainly does know our weak points and what "buttons to push" in order to tempt us. Sometimes it is the "fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16), and we must extinguish them by putting up the "shield of faith." Other times, it is just that we are ALLOWING our CARNAL MIND and fleshly emotions to carry us away (see Isaiah 64:6 - "our iniquities, like the wind, CARRY US AWAY"). Iniquity means DOING OUR OWN WILL, or GOING OUR OWN WAY (see Isaiah 53:6). Sometimes **we are too quick to blame Satan**, because we are not willing to admit the wickedness of our own fallen human nature, and the effect it has had on our flesh (physical body and unrenewed mind). Our FLESH is capable of all the "works" listed in Galatians 5:13-21, and it says we are in a constant warfare between our FLESH and the SPIRIT (the Holy Spirit, and our spirit, the "new man" created in Christ Jesus). Romans 7:7-23 also speaks of **the battle within ourselves of wanting to do GOD'S WILL**, and another part of us still wanting to sin. In these passages in Galatians and Romans, the devil is not the focus, but rather **the FOCUS is on the constant need to SUBMIT your mind, will and emotions to God, and present your BODY to**

Him as a living sacrifice. **The transformation in your life** will come as your mind is renewed with the word of God, and your body is surrendered to the Lord completely.

- **Romans 12:1-2** "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present (offer your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and **perfect will of God.**"

The "flesh" (your physical body) is ruled by your FIVE PHYSICAL SENSES: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. You are not to base your decisions on just your physical senses either, as we are commanded to "walk by FAITH and not by SIGHT" (II Corinthians 5:7) and to not be "CARNALLY MINDED" (Romans 8:5-7). The word "carnal" just means "of the flesh" or "having to do with the flesh." "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the evidence of **things NOT seen**" (Heb. 11:1), so FAITH is the opposite of living your life by your five physical senses, such as sight, and your emotions. The Bible also mentions being "carnally minded" or having a fleshly mind. Since our thoughts come from and are processed through our brains, then the mind can be considered a part of the "flesh", and **if we don't renew our minds with the word of God**, then our behavior patterns from the old sin nature will continue to rule and dominate us.

- **I Corinthians 3:1-3** "And I, brethren, could **not** speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to CARNAL, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now **you are still not able**; for you are STILL CARNAL. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not **CARNAL and BEHAVING like mere [unsaved] men?**"

Your physical body is also still unredeemed (you won't get your new body until the resurrection), and is **still "programmed" with all of the behavior patterns and DESIRES of your old nature**, even though that old nature (the "old man") is dead. Satan is the "Tempter" (Matt. 4:3, I Thess. 3:5), and he will try to DECEIVE you and trick you into thinking that the sinful desires of your flesh are really YOUR desires. Satan knows that **WHAT you BELIEVE about WHO YOU ARE determines your behavior**, and he DOESN'T want you to know that your old sin nature is dead. He wants you to still think that is the real YOU - that you're still just a rotten old sinner, because then you will think it is NATURAL to still sin! But it is NOT "natural" anymore for you to sin - you have a NEW NATURE! You are **a new creation in Christ in your SPIRIT**, the POWER of sin has been broken over you, but your FLESH (human body) is still unregenerated (un-born again) - it has not yet been changed (see I Cor. 15:50-54). SIN still resides in your fleshly BODY, in the form of uncontrolled bodily appetites. Your BRAIN is part of your body, and it is still filled with **sinful thought patterns**, until you renew it with the word of God. Your emotions are weak, because they are affected by bodily functions: how much sleep you've had, hormones, stress, etc. Body, mind and emotions, with all the **habits and behavior patterns you trained them to do**, are referred to as "the FLESH" (Romans 7:18 & 23).

- **Romans 6:1-5** "What shall we say then? Shall we CONTINUE in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who **DIED to sin** live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into His death**? Therefore we were **BURIED with Him** through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in NEWNESS of LIFE** ."
- **Romans 6:6-7** "Knowing this, that **our OLD MAN was CRUCIFIED with Him**, that the **BODY of sin might be done away with**, that we should no longer be SLAVES of sin. For **he who has DIED** has been freed from sin."

What exactly is the "old man" that was crucified with Christ? The old man is your human nature, warped by sin. It is the person you were BEFORE you were BORN AGAIN - your old

sin-loving SELF, who felt comfortable and at home with sin. Colossians 2:11-12 says God surgically removed the old, dead sin nature from your spirit when He raised you up to new life in Christ. But then Rom. 6:6 says **"that the BODY of sin might be DONE AWAY WITH."** The literal meaning of "done away with" here is **"RENDERED INOPERATIVE"** (not functioning). God has provided a way for us to be FREE from the POWER of sin, to actually have it **"NOT functioning"** in our lives, when we come to understand that **the POWER SOURCE for sin** (the old nature) has been cut off. The POWER of the sin nature over us has been broken, but we STILL have to **ENFORCE the CRUCIFIXION of Christ on our BODY of FLESH, our mind, and our emotions** by being OBEDIENT to God and saying "NO" to old sinful desires. We enforce it one DEED at a time by saying "No" and "putting to death" those evil desires whenever they come up.

- **Romans 8:13** "For if you live according to the flesh you will DIE; but if **by the Spirit you put to DEATH the DEEDS of the BODY**, you will live."
- **I Corinthians 9:27** "But **I DISCIPLINE my BODY** and **bring it into submission**, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (lose my testimony)."
- **Galatians 5:24** "And those who are Christ's **have CRUCIFIED the FLESH** (body) with its PASSIONS and DESIRES."
- **Matthew 16:24-25** "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him DENY himself**, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'

What does all this mean, "DENY himself" and "lose his life for My sake" and "put to death the DEEDS of the BODY"? These all mean the same thing: to get rid of, GIVE UP, DENY (say "No" to) the desires of your flesh; to DISREGARD the INTERESTS of the old man. **Why should you pay attention to his interests anyway? He's dead!** By doing this you fulfill God's will in your life - you give up the "lower" life in order to live the "higher life" with Christ (Phil. 3:12-14). Praise God! **We have a CHOICE!** We can PUT to DEATH, or **KILL those IMPULSES** and temptations coming from our FLESH (the "deeds of the BODY"), and Romans 8:13 says **we do it "by the SPIRIT"** - by the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT in our lives (Eph. 3:20). The alternative, **the other choice**, is to GIVE IN to the temptations, **ACT OUT on the impulses**, and suffer the consequences. For a true, born again **Christian who CONTINUES to LIVE in sin** and according to the desires of his FLESH, an EARLY physical DEATH may be the consequence. God may CUT SHORT the life here on earth of one of His children who continues in DISOBEDIENCE, but they will still go to HEAVEN (I John 5:16, I Corinthians 3:15, I Cor. 5:1-5).

CONCLUSION: The BOTTOM LINE is still **(1.) GET STRONG IN THE WORD OF GOD.** The word of God is what ENABLES you to DISCERN what is of the flesh, of the Spirit, or of the devil; **(2.) OBEY what you read in the WORD.** (Be a doer of the word, James 1:22-25; Matt. 7:24-27); **(3.) ALLOW the Holy Spirit to lead and direct you.** (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16).

- **Hebrews 4:12** "For **the WORD of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the **DIVISION of SOUL and SPIRIT**, and of joints and marrow, and is a **DISCERNER** of the THOUGHTS and INTENTS of the HEART (emotions)."