

1. Called to Be a Person of the Spirit

A mark of Christian maturity, and certainly a necessity for anyone seeking to be used in the gifts of the Spirit consistently, is that we walk as people of the Spirit. There is of course a sense in which all Christians are people of the Spirit, seeing as we were all baptized by the Spirit into the one Body of Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

(1 Cor. 12:13)

If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not even belong to Christ.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom. 8:9b)

But in seeking to advance in the Spirit and keep in step with Him (see Gal. 5:25) we soon realize there is another sense to this phrase. A *spiritual man* is one who:

1. Perceives the activity of God
2. Perceives the things of the spiritual realm in general
3. Hears the instruction and guidance of God concerning what he perceives
4. Obeys the Word of God
5. Follows the ways of God

6. Obeys the voice of the Spirit
7. Places the reasoning processes of his soul or the desires of his flesh in subjection to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to his spirit

The Bible contrasts people of the spirit with people who are of the soul or the flesh.

Let's talk vocabulary for a minute so we have some common ground. By contrast with the ***spiritual*** man, English Bible translations use the words ***natural*** and ***sensual*** in order to describe a person whose life is driven by the reasonings and drives of the human soul. The word ***carnal*** or ***fleshly*** is used to describe someone who is driven by the lusts and desires of the flesh.

A little bit of word study may give us some additional insights here. The word for spirit in Greek is *pneuma*. It's also the normal Greek word for breath and wind. The adjective spiritual is *pneumatikos*. If you are spiritual, led by the Spirit and responding to the Spirit, Paul would describe you as *pneumatikos* – a spiritual one. (The English word pneumatic, referring to things which are filled with air or powered by air, comes from this word.)

The word ***natural***, as in Paul's expression in 1 Cor. 2:14 "*the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God,*" is the word *psuchikos*. This word comes from the word *psuche*, which means *soul*. So literally the Greek language is calling this type of person *soul-ish*. The word *psuche* is the source of our English word "psyche." It may

be a helpful concept to realize that “psychics” operate in the power of soul and not the Spirit.

The word for **carnal** in Greek is *sarkikos*, which comes from *sarx*, meaning flesh.

Vincent’s Word Studies gives us a little more on this in its notes on 1 Cor. 2:14:

The contrast is between a man governed by the divine Spirit and one from whom that Spirit is absent. But *natural*, is not equivalent to *fleshy*. Paul is speaking of natural as contrasted with spiritual cognition applied to spiritual truth, and therefore of the *soul*, as the organ of human cognition, contrasted with the *spirit*, as the organ of spiritual cognition. The man, therefore, whose cognition of truth depends solely upon his natural insight is *natural*, as contrasted with the spiritual man to whom divine insight is imparted. In other words, the organ employed in the apprehension of spiritual truth characterizes the man.

I believe this is accurate; if you use your soul to apprehend spiritual truth, you are soulish – and if you use your spirit, illumined by the Holy Spirit, you will be spiritual. This is important. While we would all agree that fleshly behavior is contrary to the Spirit, we have a harder time seeing that ***so are the ways of the human soul*** in its reasonings and planning apart from God.

This uncovers for us what is perhaps the greatest weakness or flaw in the Church in the Western World. Because the Western Church tends to value knowledge and technology

over everything, it has neglected or even despised a real experience of the Spirit which makes it possible to live in partnership with God. Therefore we in the West have too often missed the vital element of a relationship with God in the Spirit and have become natural or even carnal. Paul blessed the Corinthians this way:

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, **and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit**, be with you all. (2 Cor. 13:14)*

We cannot properly enjoy the fellowship of the Spirit if we are not *spiritual*! Even though he may display a fine Christian character, the soulish man may be incapable of moving in God's purposes and will miss them because he will not flow in the leading and ways of the Spirit. A pharisaical spirit may then develop. Read and reflect on 1 Corinthians 2:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

However we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that are coming to nothing. But we

speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world for our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have there entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him." But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God no man knows, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned by no man.

For "who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

2. Becoming *pneumatikos*: Seven Keys

A. The spiritual man realizes that God's work is done through God's power alone. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." (Zech. 4:6) Remember that Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) But our goal is not simply to function under the power of God; we must take the power of God as our **only** source. To introduce methods or a controlling spirit into the atmosphere of the Spirit is witchcraft. We must avoid all human efforts at manipulation or mixture in supernatural ministry. Do not dip your hand into the dish with Christ as Judas did.

B. We must therefore seek God and wait on Him for fresh fillings of power. The baptism we received at our own "personal Pentecost" was not so much an end in and of itself but was in reality meant to be a door to a new way of life immersed in the oil and flame and wind of God. Peter and the others were surely filled in Acts 2, but were also filled again in Acts 4. Others such as Stephen and Paul were also noted to be "full of the Holy Spirit," even after their initial experience of the Spirit's power. In any case, are we not called to go from grace to grace, strength to strength, and glory to glory?

C. We must then wait on God not only for power but for living words of guidance and instruction. It was not sufficient for the Church to have the general command to evangelize the world. Paul and his co-workers were launched out at the specific leading of the Spirit. (Acts 13) Later on, as they obeyed the Lord's general command, they were forbidden by the Spirit to preach

in a specific area, and then not allowed by Him to enter another. We may presume that this guidance came through inner witness or prophetic utterance. They were then led by a night vision to go into a third, different area where they had not intended to go. (Acts 16)

D. We must be willing to engage in Kingdom living by doing the words of Jesus regardless of our natural experiences or custom. A fine example of this is found in our course book *When Heaven Invades Earth*, when a newlywed couple brought the homeless to their wedding reception. This was literal obedience to words of Jesus which we might be tempted to see as merely poetic. Their radical obedience created opportunities for God to minister His life – opportunities that would otherwise not have materialized. Jesus told us to teach people to do *everything He had commanded*. (Matt. 28:20)

E. The spiritual man does not judge situations with his natural senses. This does not mean that he distrusts his natural senses; rather, he uses them the way God intended – to provide information about what is taking place in the natural realm and not to make decisions about how to proceed in the realm of the spirit. It was prophesied of the Messiah that, being so full of the Spirit, “...*he shall not judge with the sight of his eyes, nor decide with the hearing of his ears...*” (Isa. 11:3)

As we see in 1 Corinthians 2, the natural man cannot know or understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned. Even Christians have a

hard time “un-learning” this way of operating and decision-making, for as God said to Samuel long ago, “Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7) As might have been the case with Samuel in Jesse’s house, spending a long time in an environment where appearances and fleshly ways are highly esteemed can dull the spiritual senses and cause us to think carnally, as others do.

F. The spiritual man’s actions are regulated by love. Faith “works by love,” and as we flow in Christ’s love for others it becomes easier to have faith to believe for great things for them. It becomes easier to believe that God is for them and desires to bless them; thus faith is fueled by being filled with God’s compassion for people. *“God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.”* (See: Gal. 5:6; 1 John 4:16) When we love others we are also closest to discerning God’s true intentions for them and estimation of them.

G. The spiritual man’s mind is renewed to the realities and the possibilities of Kingdom living, and so he sees himself as an ambassador and agent of the Kingdom of God in every circumstance. He has become convinced that he should follow the Word and the Voice of the Spirit – even when what God is saying goes against religion, training, habit, custom, and culture! The result is that he has the impact on people and situations that an ambassador of Christ ought to have – being the determining factor in any room he enters.

3. Understanding the Passions and the Emotions of the Spirit

Although we should know better, Christians are often tempted to think of the Spirit as an influence rather than as a Person – the Third Person of the Trinity. We so often talk about the power of the Spirit and His activity that we can become blind to an important realm of the Spirit’s relationship with us, which is knowing His heart. Do we understand that the Spirit not only performs acts of power but expresses his own personality?

We have been conditioned to view righteous behavior and sinful behavior as legal matters – in other words our deeds render us righteous or unrighteous before God. While this is true, ministry in the things of the Spirit also means this: we must learn that our behaviors and attitudes can attract the Spirit or grieve His heart. We need to be clear about this: the Spirit is omnipresent, and so He in a sense He can never be more present or less present in a particular place. What can be attracted or lost, however, is the sense of the Spirit’s engagement with us. Where there is no flow of the Spirit, ministry will become ritualistic and mechanical. It will lack an evident anointing or sense of His personal leading. So, we must know how to please the Lord – not only for His own sake but for the sake of His work He has called to do in partnership with Him.

A. Grieving the Spirit

In Ephesians 4 we read that we can grieve (sadden, cause distress to) the Holy Spirit, particularly through behaviors which are offensive to Him:

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Eph. 4:29-32)

There are a number of un-Christlike behaviors mentioned in this passage which must be avoided if we are to avoid grieving the Spirit. Most of us will recognize that these behaviors can “spoil” a spiritual atmosphere as well as create embarrassment and conflict. They can sadden our own hearts when they occur in our midst – how much more can they sadden the heart of the Holy Spirit? We should always remember that he is the Spirit of *Holiness*. In Habakkuk 1:3 we read this:

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity...

Uncleanness and immorality will grieve the Spirit:

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. (1 Thess. 4:7-8)

A vengeful and vindictive heart, especially in a ministry context, is offensive to the Spirit:

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (Luke 9:55)

Resisting the Spirit and rebellion against God will grieve the Spirit:

But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. (Isa. 63:10)

And the LORD said, “My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” (Gen. 6:3)

Putting one’s self forward and fostering strife in the Body also grieve the Spirit:

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Gal 5:25-26)

Exercising practical or doctrinal control which shuts out or hinders the move of the Spirit is known as *quenching the Spirit*:

Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. (1 Thess. 5:19-20)

This should govern our behavior in Christian meetings. Indeed, our ministry must allow the Spirit to guide and to operate freely seeing that religion apart from Him, operating in the flesh, can only produce more flesh.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, “This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Zech. 4:6)

**That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
(John 3:6)**

B. Attracting and Welcoming the Spirit

By contrast, the Spirit is welcomed and will abide among us (which is His desire!) when we walk in His ways and do those things which honor Him.

The Spirit is welcomed when we walk in the fear of the Lord.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD... (Isa. 11:2)

The Spirit is welcomed when we are humble in spirit and honor the Word of the Lord.

...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. (Isa. 66:2)

A profitable study in this regard is to study those passages in which the writer discusses the things which the Lord hates and the things which He loves. We must cultivate the

Spirit's Presence among us if we are to be approved by Him as faithful ministers of Christ:

Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Cor. 6:3-10)