



Lecture 1

Becoming Spiritual People

Being a spiritual person or not is a simple choice. God has given every believer everything, no matter their background, family, life history or circumstances. The moment we are saved by God's grace and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit we are fully equipped with every spiritual resource for eternity.

A Christian who does not live a spiritual life is one who is ignorant of this provision or simply not paying attention to God's Word. Choosing not to live a spiritual life is choosing the inferior and destructive life in the flesh, a life which does not reflect our new life and identity in Christ.

WHERE IS YOUR FOCUS?

True spirituality can only be found in the truth of God's Word and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Our Heavenly Father **constantly commands** - not just exhorts - us to be focused first on Him alone.

Colossians 3:2-3 (Wuest translation)

"The things above be constantly setting your mind upon, not the things on the earth; for you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God."

To be spiritual we need to be practical. This is not a contradiction; in obedience to the Word, we need to learn to dismiss anything contrary to God's Word and the Holy Spirit. It is not difficult to discern ungodly temptations, words, actions and attitudes and reject them. **We will not be true spiritual sons and daughters of the living God until we reject what God rejects.** A carnal Christian will go to heaven, but will miss out on the blessing and joy of being a good servant and miss rewards in heaven.

It starts with the mind:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

"For, though we are ordering our behaviour in the sphere of human experience, not in accordance with mere human considerations are we waging warfare [against evil], for the weapons of our warfare are not human but mighty in God's sight, resulting in the demolition of fortresses, demolishing reasonings and every haughty mental elevation which lifts itself up against the experiential knowledge [which we believers have] of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience to the Christ".

Our soul (our mind, will and emotions) is the battlefield. Our spirituality will be determined by what we allow to enter our minds. The Holy Spirit will prompt us to abide by the Word, however we can "quench" (limit) the Holy Spirit by choosing "our way" instead of His way.

In the same way that we ought not offend or hurt the people around us, we should not offend or grieve the Holy Spirit. The believer whose heart and attitude is to honour and respect the Holy Spirit will become a spiritual Christian.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (Wuest translation)

"Stop stifling and suppressing the Spirit. Stop counting as nothing divine revelations given in the local assembly by the one who receives them but be putting all things to the test for the purpose of approving them, and finding that they meet the requirements, put your approval upon them. Be constantly holding fast that which is good.

Can we suppress and grieve the Holy Spirit? Yes! Every time we choose to disobey God and act in rebellion against the Word and His will, we quench (limit) the Holy Spirit. It is as though we're declaring to God, "I know better, I will do it my way, I don't need you." Remember, the Christian life is a relationship: the Holy Spirit rejoices when we depend on Him. We also can grieve Him:

Ephesians 4:30 (Wuest translation)

"And stop grieving the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed with a view to the day of redemption."

Our spiritual life will only be as good as our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Harmony with the Holy Spirit comes from our submission to Him and from the renewal of our minds. Our minds need to be void of ungodly thoughts and strongholds, and constantly renewed with God's Word.

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The Bible assumes we have an experiential knowledge of God. Do we have it? This is the test. Without a knowledge of God gained by experience, we will live dominated by the flesh.

Romans 8:5 (Wuest translation)

"For those who are habitually dominated by the sinful nature put their minds on the things of the sinful nature, but those who are habitually dominated by the Spirit put their minds on the things of the Spirit."

We need to check ourselves constantly. If we ask the Holy Spirit, He will always help us to identify any areas in our lives where we are dominated by the sinful nature and need correction.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (Wuest translation)

"Be becoming therefore imitators of God, as children beloved, and be ordering your behaviour within the sphere of love, even as Christ also loved you and gave himself up in our behalf and in our stead as an offering and a sacrifice to God for an aroma of a sweet smell"

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 (Wuest translation)

"But the unregenerate man of the highest intellectual attainments does not grant access to the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly, and he is not able to come to know them because they are investigated in a spiritual realm. But the spiritual man investigates indeed all things, but he himself is not being probed by anyone".

1 Corinthians 3:1 (Wuest translation)

As for myself, I also, brethren, was not able to speak to you as I would to those dominated by the Holy Spirit, but as I would to those dominated by the evil nature, as I would to those in Christ who are still immature spiritually.

The flesh and self only ever produces grief, pain and sorrow both for us and for those around us. It also interferes in the marvellous plan God has with everyone of us.

There is much joy and fulfilment for us when we choose to live the abundant life Jesus has given us. This spiritual life is ours right now!