

Teaching Series: The Glory of Righteousness

Title: Session 5 – Spirit, Soul, and Body

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Date: January 13th, 2021

Cleansing the Conscience of Sins

As I mentioned briefly earlier, the conscience can be cleansed or it can remain clean by not violating it in the first place. However, when you sin and violate it, the conscience can be cleansed of the guilt of that sin by remembering, meditating, believing, and even speaking out loud four things:

- (1) you were made righteous in your spirit's nature forever at the moment of your salvation;
- (2) you are free of condemnation forever even when you still do sinful deeds;
- (3) your past, present, and future sins have been completely removed at the moment of your salvation;
- (4) in the reality of the spirit, if you were truly born again, you cannot even commit another sin ever again.

Spirit, Soul, and Body

A good understanding about the spirit, soul, and body of the human being, and about their particular roles, is of vital importance in the process of cleansing our conscience, and in growing spiritually. This teaching has revolutionized my personal life and eliminated some of the frustrations and confusion that I experienced when I read and studied the Word of God. It provided a firm foundation for everything else that the Lord revealed to me along the years about righteousness, conscience, confession of sins, eternal security of salvation, and sanctification. It also helped me get rid of a lot of wrong thinking in my life. I pray that it will do the same for you while reading this book.

I would like to begin this section by reading 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that clearly illustrates the three parts of a human being. ***People are spirits that have a soul and live in a body.*** There are many Scriptures that reveal the trichotomy of the human being, but 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is the most clear passage in that direction that doesn't need any other proof:

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV)

²³ 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.

This is so obvious that I don't think there can be any credible argument against the fact that we, humans, are made up of a spirit, soul, and body. This is very important because there are some theologies that actually believe man is only made up of two parts, which is body and soul. That is probably not a dominant theological position, but as far as practice goes, as far as people in their day-to-day living goes, very few people understand the concepts of spirit, soul, and body. Most people confuse soul and spirit as being the same thing and acknowledge only two parts of them: a physical part and a mental-emotional inner part that most people refer to as their personality. As a matter of fact, if you will take a look in the Strong's Concordance, which is one of the main concordances that people use to look up Greek words in the New Testament, it even defines the word "*spirit*" ("*pneuma*" in Greek) as being "the immortal soul" and it doesn't make a distinction between those two. My study of the Word of God has revealed that there is a very distinct difference between spirit and soul, so I cannot agree with that Greek definition of what the word "*pneuma*" means. It means more than the immortal soul; it's talking about the spirit man, the inner part of us.

There are three distinct parts: spirit, soul, and body. Now the body is obvious. If you go look in a mirror, that is the part you see immediately. If you were talking to me face to face right now, you would be looking at my body, but you would be speaking to my soul, which is my mental and emotional part. Some people define the soul as being made of mind, will, and emotions and I think that is certainly true. However, I don't think that is all inclusive, there is more to it. I believe that our conscience is also a part of our soul. The soul is basically the personality of a human being. If I were to touch your physical body, you can feel that. But I can also touch you by words. For instance, through this book, without me touching you physically at all, I am speaking to your soul and it can touch your emotions. It can either make you glad, sad, or angry. You can also say words and hurt people without physically touching them. Every person is in touch with their soulish part as they are with their body part. It's easy for you to search and check how you feel, whether you are happy or depressed.

The body and the soul are two areas that everyone is in touch with constantly and we really don't need a lot of explanation on that. But the spirit part is a totally different matter. In John 3:1-8, when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, one of the rulers of the synagogue who came to Him by night, Jesus told him that he had to be born again. Nicodemus responded: "How can this be? How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?" In the process of explaining this to him, Jesus said: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh. And that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." And what He

was saying was that spirit is spirit and flesh is flesh, and there is no direct connection between the two. They are inter-related and I am going to explain some of that in just a moment, but spirit is spirit, and flesh is flesh.

You cannot feel your spirit in a physical and natural way. Again, if you want to know how your body is, all you have to do is just think and your body instantly tells you if it's tired, or pumped up and your adrenaline is flowing, or if you are excited and ready to go for a run. You can pull an inventory instantly and find out exactly how your body is. You don't even have to think about it, you are constantly being fed that information. You can also pull an inventory on your soulish realm and you can know whether you are glad or sad, whether depression is your problem or fear, or if you are worn-out mentally and need to take a rest. You are instantly in touch with all that. But you cannot contact your spirit through your emotions or through any physical way. The spirit cannot be accessed in any natural way and herein lies one of the great problems in the Christian life: the spirit is the part of us that was radically changed at the moment of salvation. The spirit is the part of us that God communicates with and the spirit is the part of us that all the life and power of God flows through. You cannot just feel and discern spiritual reality and truths through your normal senses. And if you don't understand that, then when the Scripture says that you have the same power in you that raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11), or that you can do the same works that Jesus did (John 14:12), or that you are a completely brand new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), then you will search your physical body and your mental-emotional personality part, and if you cannot see, taste, hear, smell, or feel what the Bible says about you, then immediately you will perceive it as a contradiction and feel conflicted. You will start thinking that the Bible is so hard to understand, you will see the disparity between your experience and what God's Word says, and you might want to throw up your hands in the air and conclude that it's just not true what the Bible says.

One of the greatest keys to walking with the Lord for me has been to understand this reality of spirit, soul, and body, and that the spirit realm cannot be seen or felt. The only way to discern and define spiritual truths is through the Bible. You just need to believe that what God says in His Word about you is true, without trying to access those truths through your senses. Jesus said this in John 6:63,

John 6:63 (NKJV)

⁶³ It's the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. ***The words*** that I speak to you ***are spirit***, and ***they are life***.

The Word of God is spirit and life. The Word of God reveals to us the spiritual reality. If you want to know what your spirit is like, then you have to go to God's Word to find it out. You cannot just go by an emotion, or some type of perception. You have to go to God's Word. Here is another passage of Scripture in James 1:23-25 that says:

James 1:23-25 (NKJV)

²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face ***in a mirror***;

²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

²⁵ But he who looks ***into the perfect law of liberty (namely the Gospel)*** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

This passage of Scripture is likening the Bible with a mirror that you look into, not to see your physical face but to see your spiritual face, to see what you are and who you are in the spirit. When you want to see if your hair is combed, what do you do? Did you know that you have never seen your hair? You have never seen your face either. If you are a woman, you put on makeup in front of a mirror; you are not really looking at your face. What you are doing is looking at a representation, a reflection of your face in a mirror. The truth is that you, with your eyes, have never looked directly into your face. You have always looked at a reflection or a representation, but you got to a place where you trusted that.

The Word of God is a perfect reflection of your new spirit. When you want to see if your hair is combed and your face looks nice, you don't just go by how you feel. You cannot just sit there and say: "Well, I feel that all my makeup is on and my face looks nice and when I touch my hair, it feels that is combed and I am ready to go." You cannot go by how you feel or think. You have to go look in that mirror and then you trust what you see. It's the same thing with the Word of God. The Word of God gives you a perfect picture of who you are in your spirit – that you are the Word made flesh exactly like Jesus was. And it's the only way. You cannot just say: "Well, if I had the power of God on the inside of me, I would know it." No, you wouldn't. Samson didn't know when the Spirit of God together with his strength had departed from him. That shows us he didn't feel anything special when the power was over him, but he was seeing just the manifestation of it. He didn't feel his power. That which is spirit is spirit and that which is flesh is flesh. You cannot perceive the spirit or the power through your fleshly senses. It would be like someone saying: "Well if my makeup was on, I would know it, I would feel it." You cannot feel that, you have to look at it and go by what you see. It's the exact same thing with the Word of God and your spirit: you have to look at your new spirit through the mirror of the Word, not through your five senses or emotions.

Who Are You in the Spirit?

A total transformation has taken place on the inside of every person who has been born again. You can see that in many places in the Bible, 2 Corinthians 5:17 being the cornerstone Scripture in that direction:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new**.

This verse is saying that the Lord has totally changed you once you came into Christ. It doesn't say that all things are becoming new or that they have the potential of becoming new. It rather says in the past tense that all things HAVE BECOME new. If you don't understand the concept of spirit, soul, and body, you are instantly setting yourself up for confusion, frustration, and ultimately, unbelief. That happens because you can tell by process of elimination this is not talking about your physical body. If you were fat before you got saved, you will still be fat after you get saved. Your body didn't instantly pass away and neither all things have become new with it. This is pretty obvious for everybody. The Scripture reveals in 1 Corinthians 15 that the corruptible must put on the incorruptible and this mortal body must put on the immortal one. This passage in 1 Corinthians 15 refers to your physical body. Jesus died for the salvation of your body as well, and there is a time coming, in the future, when you are going to receive a glorified body. But at this moment, your body hasn't been saved or renewed. It has been purchased, but not yet redeemed. It's like Groupon coupons. You purchase them, but then you have to redeem them later on. You don't really want those vouchers, you only keep them so that you can later on redeem them and take advantage of the things you have purchased through them. Your body has been purchased. Your glorified body has already been purchased through the death of the Lord Jesus, but you are still waiting for the redemption of the purchaser's possession. The body has been purchased, the payment has been made, but you still have a corrupted body and you are waiting on an immortal incorruptible body.

Your soul - with its mind, will, emotions, and conscience - is also not the part of you that got saved. There is a lot of confusion on this because you will hear people often say: "Well, man, I am a soul winner. I came to see a soul saved." In the New Testament, there are only two places talking about souls' salvation (James 1:21 and 1 Peter 1:9), and those are not talking about the born-again experience. For instance, if a person is discouraged and in her soulish realm - in her emotions - she feels defeated and discouraged, but then she gets into the Word of God and begins to believe, she receives the peace and the joy of the Lord. This is

soul salvation. But when it comes to being born again, your soul is not the part that gets saved. Our soul can be changed to the degree that we renew our mind, resulting in a change of our attitude and values by the Word of God, but salvation hasn't already happened completely. The soul is being saved, it's in the process of happening, and it's contingent upon us renewing our mind. So, you can see that your soul is not part of what has passed away and of the things that have become new. If you were depressed before you got saved, you will still be depressed after you get saved, unless you begin to believe the Word of God and change the way your soul thinks. That certainly can happen and it should happen, but it doesn't happen automatically. Let me state it this way: if you didn't know math before you got saved, then you won't instantly know math after you get saved. Old things, like lack of knowledge, didn't pass away, and all things in your soul realm didn't become new instantly.

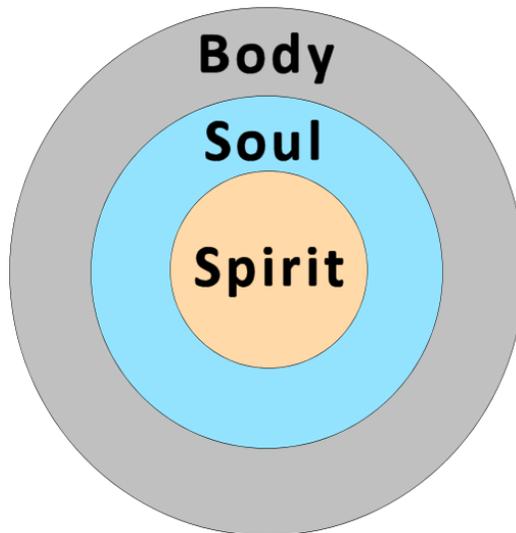
The soul is not changed instantly, but it's in the process of changing. And yet, 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that if any person is in Christ, she is right now, in the present tense, here on earth, a new creation. This is a fact, it's the reality, it's not a promise. The literal translation from Greek of the expression "new creation" is "a new species of being that never existed before." It's talking about a total transformation. Old things have passed away - past tense -, all things have become new. It doesn't say they will pass away in the future if we struggle enough or pray and fast enough. This Scripture is describing a change that takes place through the new birth, which is not still in process, but it's already done. It's an accomplished fact, a done deal. So, by process of elimination you can see that it's not your body and it's not your soul either that is being changed in this way. That leaves your spirit.

Your spirit is the part of you that got totally changed at salvation. When people make Jesus Christ their Lord, there is an instantaneous change that takes place in their spirit. Typically, their body and soul are touched and impacted by the change that has taken place in the spirit, but not in a total and complete way. And if you don't understand this, then you will experience disappointment. "I thought I was a new person, I thought I was changed, I thought Jesus was going to change everything." If you don't understand that this change takes place in the spirit and has to work its way out into the soul and body, then you immediately fall into unbelief and begin to say: "Nothing changed, I am still the same." This may cause some people to seriously doubt whether they were ever saved. The key to all that is to understand that it's the spirit that was totally changed. It's already done. Everything you will ever need in your Christian life is already in your spirit. That is a radical truth.

It took me many years to grab hold of this revelation, but ***you are not in the process of getting anything from God. In your born-again spirit, you have everything you will ever need.*** It's already there in its entirety, in its maturity, and in its completeness. Your spirit is perfect and complete. Your spirit is exactly the same this moment as it will be throughout eternity. You are not going to get a new spirit when you go to heaven. Your spirit is right now as perfect, as mature, as complete, as Jesus is. And the rest of the Christian life is learning to believe that, by looking into the spiritual mirror of the Word of God and believing what It says about you. That is the process of renewing your mind. And as you get your soul in agreement and alignment with what is already present in your spirit, then you will see the physical benefits.

You are made up of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. Your spirit is always for God; it's already created in the likeness and the image of God. It has everything that God has. Then you have your soul and your body, as well. If your soul gets in agreement with your spirit, then there are two against one. Those two parts in agreement will dominate the third part - the physical body. The physical body will then experience the life, victory, and power that is in your spirit. But, if your soul goes in agreement with the physical body and it's dominated by what it can see, taste, hear, smell or feel, then it will stop the life that is in your spirit from ever manifesting itself into the physical realm. Your soul needs to perceive and align itself with what has taken place on the inside of you, meaning in your spirit, so that your spirit can flow through your soul to get into your body and then into the physical world.

Here is a functional diagram that depicts the spirit, soul, and body as three concentric circles. This diagram is an effort to better illustrate the relationship between spirit, soul, and body.



The outer circle is your body. It's the part you can see and fill. Then in the second inner circle you have a part that can't be seen but can be felt. That's your soul. Notice how your soul touches both your body and spirit. Your spirit is the third inner circle. Although it's the center of who you are, it can't be seen or felt.

Most people don't recognize the fact that their spirit is the core of their being. They function primarily out of the soulish part of them, believing that what they think and feel is reality. To them, something is just not "real" if it can't be perceived through their five natural senses. Attempting to be "honest," they search their physical, emotional, and mental realms for God's power. If they can't perceive the power at those levels, then they conclude that they must not have it. They may perceive their souls to be the core of who they are, but God's Word says differently. Your spirit is the real you!

James 2:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ For as the body *without the spirit* is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The life-giving part of you is the spirit. The spirit is where your life comes from. When God created Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7) and he became a "living" soul. The word "breathe" in the Hebrew is the word for "wind" (*ruach*) and it was literally translated "spirit" in other places like Job 26:4 and Proverbs 20:27. We use this word for "spirit." God created the physical and everything was there, but it didn't have any life until He breathed into him and imparted spirit into Adam's body. The spirit is your life-giving part (John 6:63; 1 Corinthians 15:45). Since your life comes from your spirit, it's the innermost circle of the three. Notice also how your spirit is completely surrounded by your soul. It has no direct access to your physical body.

