

# Faith and the Dividing of Soul from Spirit

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# **Faith and the Dividing of Soul from Spirit**

**By David A. DePra**



***Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb 4:11-13)***

Discernment between soul and spirit in ONESELF is essential if the believer is to walk in the Truth and not be deceived by his or her own nature. But in order to get to the root of this issue, we must first put forth some basics.

### **A Primary Passage**

This passage from Hebrews begins with a contrast between soul and spirit. It introduces the necessity of discerning between soul and spirit.

This passage is a description as to how God sets us free from unbelief, and builds in us the faith of Jesus Christ. This contrast is clearly introduced as the subject matter with the exhortation, "Let us labor to enter into that rest (by faith) lest any man fall after the same example of (Israel's) unbelief."

Do Christians want MORE FAITH? I suppose we would all shout, "Yes!" Well, we are here given a description of how faith comes to be in each of us. Thus, the passage merits our attention.

## **How Faith Comes**

Note how the passage begins: "the Word of God is quick and powerful...." But we cannot read these words without bringing into the discussion a similar verse from Romans. Paul tells us in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing...the Word of God." This is the exact same Truth here in Hebrews 4 – only here, in Hebrews 4, it is expanded. This passage from Hebrews 4 gets into the guts of that in a deeper way. We could rightly say that it is a more detailed description of what happens in us when God reveals to us the Truth, and what will take place if we hear. Faith will come to be. Both passages are talking about that same issue.

Romans 10:17 tells us that faith is the result of God FIRST speaking Truth to us – and then, once God speaks, faith will come to be in us if we HEAR. "Faith comes by hearing what God speaks." That is so simple that we miss it.

Most of us completely misunderstand how faith comes to be. We think that it is up to us to muster up faith out of OURSELVES – perhaps in response to what God speaks. We suppose that God does the speaking and we do the believing. But this isn't what the Bible teaches – indeed, we have no faith to muster up out of ourselves. This is why it seems so hard for many of us to believe and trust God. We are trying to muster up – we are trying to generate faith – from out of

ourselves; from out of our natural man. But there isn't any faith in there. There is no capacity in natural man to receive, let alone believe, the things of God.

Faith in Christ is not the product of anything found in natural man. Now, certainly natural man has an ability to believe all manner of things. Man, in fact, is a, "believing creature" – the capacity is there. But natural man has no Truth in him, and cannot find it. Natural man is at enmity against God. So if there is to be any possibility for real faith, God must FIRST speak. God must initiate the possibilities of faith by first revealing to us some Truth.

Once God does reveal to a person some light or Truth it enables a person to hear or believe. They do not yet actually believe – that is not forced – but they CAN hear. God speaks in a way that the person can understand and to which a person can respond by opening themselves. This is what the Bible means by HEARING.

Calvinism teaches that a man cannot hear what God speaks unless God first saves them by unconditional election. This leads to the false doctrine of, "regeneration BEFORE faith." No. While a person is still spiritually dead, the Word of God can penetrate and enable them to hear – as Jesus said, "the dead shall hear the voice of God and those that hear shall live." The Truth is, "faith before regeneration."

Indeed, regarding salvation, Romans 10:17 is clear: God speaks, a man is able to hear, and if he hears, faith is born. It is only then that

salvation becomes a reality for him, for one cannot be saved unless he puts faith in Christ.

Thus, on any matter, real faith is the result of us hearing what God speaks – the Truth God speaks is the real source of all faith. Indeed, we might say that our HEARING – which is a HEART matter – is like a door. Before God speaks there is no faith in us. But once God speaks there is something TO believe and see – there is the possibility of faith. Our hearing is the door through which we allow the Truth God speaks to enter. And when it does, a work begins in us – a work that results in FAITH. Indeed, that work that results in faith is what is being described in Hebrews 4.

If you read Romans 10:17, the conclusion is inescapable: Real faith is the result of the Truth God speaks being made real IN US. Or to put it another way, if we open ourselves to the Truth God speaks, then we will BE MADE TRUE unto God. That is FAITH.

God's Word is like a seed. Our hearts are like the soil – our hearing is the condition of the soil. If we hear what God speaks, the seed will grow and become faith. Therefore, our faith will be the outcome of the very Word that God spoke to begin with.

Now, if faith comes to be by our hearing the Truth God speaks, then it only follows that that faith that come to be is anchored in the Truth from which it came. You cannot divorce one from the other. Thus, all faith that is of God is for only the Truth – because it is gendered BY the Truth.

All faith that is in error is the product, not of God, but of ourselves and the enemy.

### **Dividing Asunder**

From the above passage, note the phrase, "dividing asunder of soul and spirit." We are being told that this is what the Word of God DOES – divides soul from spirit. But we have read that Romans 10:17 says that it is by this same Word of God that faith comes to be. Obviously, there is a connection. Hebrews 4:11-13 is saying that the Word of God divides asunder soul from spirit. Romans 10 says that it is by hearing the Word of God that faith comes to be. If you put these two together you can conclude that the Word of God that genders faith in us will likewise be dividing asunder soul and spirit. The two are the same work that God does in us to gender faith. Hebrews 4 is really an elaboration upon Romans 10:17.

There is no way to get at the core of this Truth unless we first understand what the Bible means when it talks about soul vs. spirit. Other places it uses the contrast of flesh vs. spirit, the natural man vs. the spiritual man, the new creation vs. the old creation, the inner man vs. the outer man, or the old man in Adam vs. the new man in Christ. All of these contrasts are basically the SAME. What do each mean?

When a person is saved, their human spirit, which was dead, is made ONE with the Spirit of Jesus Christ – the Holy Spirit. They are then ALIVE spiritually – this is the seat or core of salvation. Christ, who said, "I am THE LIFE," is then, OUR life. (see Col. 3:4) Our salvation is a reality not



because of some THING God gives us, or because of some THING God does to us. No. God doesn't give us a THING – He gives us Himself through Christ. All life is in the Son, and we have eternal life only because God gives us Jesus Christ – we are made ONE with Him through a spiritual UNION.

Paul referred to this oneness in I Corinthians 6:17 when he said, "He that is joined (cemented) to the Lord is one Spirit (with Him.)" This spiritual union is expressed through the picture of being, "baptized into Christ," (Rom. 6:3), and that of, "being planted into Christ." (Rom. 6:5) It is what behind Paul's proclamation that he had been, "crucified WITH Christ." Indeed, the definition of Christianity is, "Christ in you," or, if you prefer, being, "in Christ." This is a spiritual ONENESS; a spiritual UNION.

Now, that spiritual union is the new creation IN Christ Jesus. Of course, Christ brings to this union all of the eternal value. You are a new creation ONLY if you are IN Christ Jesus. Thus, all of the terms that Bible uses, including that of SPIRIT – as opposed to soul or flesh – are referring to this spiritual union of God and man IN His Son.

But notice what else this means: If the new creation in Christ is the union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of Christ – if that constitutes the new spiritual man – then all that is OUTSIDE of that is NOT the new creation. It remains of the OLD creation – it is the soul, the flesh, or the natural.

Thus, we have a definite line or DIVISION – that of the new from the old -- that of the natural

from the spiritual. Or, to go back to Hebrews 4 – we have a dividing of soul from Spirit. This division is the very nature of things for anyone who has been born again in Jesus Christ. If Christ is in you, you are a new creation – but your old nature, your body, your emotions, indeed, your natural soul, remains.

Here we begin to see what Hebrews 4 is talking about. It says that the Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword – which cuts perfectly – and that it divides by cutting between soul and spirit. In other words, the Truth and Light that God reveals to a person is going to separate IN THEM the soul from the Spirit. They are not only going to KNOW which is which, but they are going to be able to live from OUT OF Jesus Christ, rather than live from out of themselves, or natural man. This is an awesome thought, but it is what Hebrews 4 is getting at.

### **Seeing Jesus Christ**

When the Bible uses the term, "The Word of God," it is referring to any revelation that God speaks by any means – all of which will, of course, be affirmed in the written Word. But what IS God speaking? Hebrews 1:1 makes it abundantly clear that, "God is speaking to us IN His Son." The Greek says, "God is speaking Son-wise." In short, God is speaking or revealing Christ. Of course. For Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. He IS the Truth. He IS the Light. He is embodied in any Word of God.

But again, the Word of God divides soul from Spirit. Perhaps we can now see WHY. The Word of God divides soul from Spirit because if God is

speaking Christ, and we open our ears, we now know the Spirit – we now KNOW CHRIST. And by default, that means we will now what is NOT of Christ.

What is the key to all discernment? Is it to simply know Bible verses? People have tried to discern simply by comparing what they are discerning to Bible verses, but the problem is that you need discernment to understand the Bible verses as well. There are thousands of professing Christians everywhere who can tell you what the Bible SAYS, but are wrong about what it MEANS. Thus, if they take what they think it MEANS and use that faulty understanding as a tool for discernment, their standard is wrong. Their discernment will be wrong. There is a lot more in that which could be mentioned. But for now, it is sufficient to say that we need more than a knowledge of theology – even if we have a good one – to discern soul from spirit.

The key to all discernment is to know Jesus Christ. We have to know Him in an inward way. We have to not only know the Truth that is in Christ Jesus, but we have to be in the process of being MADE TRUE unto God through a knowledge of Him. Jesus Christ has to be our standard. Only then can we know what is OF HIM, and only then can we know what is NOT of Him. Only then can we know the soul from the Spirit.

If I handed you a cloth tape measure, like the one used by tailors, but did not tell you that the inch marks were actually 7/8 inches apart, you would be using as your standard for measuring a LIE. And yet if this lying tape measure was all that you had, how would you know? If you turned

this cloth tape measure over on itself that would not help, for you would be measuring it by itself – and the lie would verify the lie. Only if you introduced a TRUE tape measure would the LIE be exposed. This is much how it works spiritually. You and I will never know what is of the soul or what is of the Spirit – let alone be able to function from out of the Spirit – until we clearly see and know Him whose Spirit is in us – Jesus Christ.

This is why Hebrews 4 says that The Word of God divides asunder soul and Spirit. The Word of God is God speaking Christ – it is God revealing Christ to us. And if we hear Him, and come to know Christ, the result is going to be that we are going to also know what is NOT of Christ. It will be clear to us what is of OUR soul vs. what is of Jesus Christ, who dwells in us.

Christians cannot know what is of God vs. what is of them unless they know CHRIST. There is no, "how to," manual. You have to know HIM.

### **The Work of the Cross**

Paul spoke of, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2) Note that there are TWO references here – but that they cannot be separated. There is the Person of Jesus Christ, and there is His work on the Cross. But you cannot have Christ without the Cross, and you cannot have the Cross without Christ. The only Jesus Christ that there exists is the One who died on the Cross for us and was raised. Thus, the moment you receive Christ as Savior, you will become, "crucified with Christ," (see Gal. 2:20), but also, "risen with Christ." (see Col. 3:1) In short, Jesus Christ IS

Christ crucified and risen. There isn't any other Christ.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were historical events – but these events are eternally bound up in Him. They are now of His Person – and when we are made one with Christ, we are made one with Him IN His death and resurrection. This is why the only true gospel of Jesus Christ is the one that preaches, yes, His historical death and resurrection. But the gospel I preach is NOT the true one unless it includes the fact that I am crucified WITH Christ, unto the death of the old man, and raised WITH Christ unto newness of life.

This ties directly into this idea of soul vs. Spirit. We have shown that the new creation IN Christ Jesus consists of our spiritual union with Him – this is what it means to be IN CHRIST. This union is what Hebrews 4 referring to with the term, "Spirit" – as opposed to the term "soul." The Spirit, or new spiritual creation, is that which is RISEN WITH CHRIST. In contrast, the body, the natural, the soul, or the flesh, is that which is NOT risen with Christ in this age. Indeed, the soul is of the OLD man – and because it is, it is under the Cross.

Add all of this up and what you have is a spiritual union between the believer and Jesus Christ – which is the new creation – all of which is the result of being risen with Him. In contrast, however, there is the soul – the natural man – which is OUTSIDE of this union with Christ. That natural man has, in fact, been CUT OFF from the new creation by death – through the Cross. The two are distinct.

Thus, when we are told that the Word of God DIVIDES soul from Spirit we are being told that what God speaks is the TRUTH about what Christ has done – and the TRUTH about the reality of Christ in us. In other words, God brings to us a revelation of Christ within, and as we begin to know Him, we actually begin to experientially know the dividing of the old man from the new. We actually experience it.

Earlier I noted that it is one thing to know the Truth as facts or doctrines. But I said that we must BE MADE TRUE unto God by this Truth. Only then can our faith be real. We are made true by seeing Jesus. Well, here again we see the same principle from Hebrews 4. God MAKES US TRUE by speaking or revealing Christ to us – and as He does, we begin to experience a separation of soul from the new man in Christ – that is, as we begin to experience Christ, we begin to experience the work of the Cross that is upon our old man, and begin to experience the power of His resurrection that is inherent in the new. This makes us TRUE unto God – because it is setting us free from the LIE of the old creation.

We can memorize and parrot this as a doctrine all we want – we can teach all we want about the separation of soul from Spirit. We can talk about God, "forming Christ within us," (see Gal. 4:19) until we are blue in the face. But we have to actually experience this. There is no way to do so short of the work of the Cross upon our old nature, so that the life we share with Christ might emerge.

We read a description of this process in II Cor. 4:

***But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,  
that the excellency of the power may be of  
God, and not of us. We are troubled on every  
side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed,  
but not in despair; Persecuted, but not  
forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;  
Always bearing about in the body the dying  
of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus  
might be made manifest in our body. For we  
which live are always delivered unto death  
for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus  
might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.  
So then death works in us, but life in you. (2  
Cor 4:7-12)***

I go back again to my example of the cloth tape measure – the tape is a LIE. Until the Truth is brought in – in the form of a truthful tape -- no one is going to realize it is a lie. So it is with human beings. We are all a LIE – by nature we are that. There is no truth in us. But until the Truth is actually brought into us we will think we are normal. The most we could hope for is to attach ourselves to a doctrine that tells us we are not normal, but in fact, this will do little to set us free. Yet as God SPEAKS Christ to us – reveals Christ to us – and as we HEAR – there will come LIGHT and TRUTH into our consciousness. This light and Truth, who is a Person, will absolutely expose the lie for what it is. And as they happens, there will come a separation – a separation of the OLD creation, which is the LIE, from the NEW creation, which is a living expression of the Truth in Christ.

Often it takes quite a trauma to do this work – God must do whatever is necessary to expose the

lie that we are in our natural or soul man. But as we HEAR Him, and pick up that Cross, the death wrought by the Cross upon the old man will be made manifest. The life wrought through the resurrection will be made manifest – and that life will BE Christ.

In II Corinthians 4, quoted above, we see this happening. It is nothing more than a description of the separation of soul, which is our old man in Adam, from the Spirit, which is Christ in us the hope of glory. It is a description of death to us, but life in Him.

Jesus said, "You must lose YOUR life to find true life." Well, HE is our life. It is the same Truth. The old is under a curse – it is under the Cross. God is making a NEW man through His Son.

This Truth is actually all through the Bible – it has to be because it is at the foundation of the Christian experience. If you want to know what God is doing with you, it is right here, in these passages of Hebrews 4:11-13, II Cor. 4:7-12, and of course, Romans 10:17. There are many others. And yet despite the fact that this is what God is doing – all geared to reveling Christ in and through us – how often is this even mentioned among Christians today? You rarely hear it at all.

### **Soul or Spirit Life**

If the Truth received is going to more and more bring death to our old man – death to our SELF – so that Christ might more and more be made manifest, it ought to be clear as to where our faith must be: Solely and completely in Christ.



Meaning that NONE of our faith can be in ourselves.

Now, you and I would never argue with that. We know it is true. But functionally, we nevertheless, by habit and through our natural patterns, put faith in ourselves all the time. Many of us are so used to putting faith in ourselves that we don't realize what we are doing – we might even think that doing so IS faith in God.

Well, I said that Truth will make us true. The more we open ourselves to the Truth, the more our SELF is going to be exposed for what it is – and this will leave us with no faith in ourselves. We have to come to the point where we are fully convinced that there is NO GOOD in ourselves. Only then will we stop putting our faith there. But this work of the Truth is not going to simply show us all the bad that we are – no. We are going to see there is no good in ourselves because we are seeing Christ – He is the Light that will show us that. There will always be a parallel – as we see the Truth about Christ, by default we will gladly embrace the Truth about self.

Faith in SELF is subtle. As mentioned, in principle, we would all agree that we should have no faith in ourselves. But do we realize that if we are living FROM OUT of ourselves that this is faith in ourselves? We may not call it that. In fact, living from out of ourselves comes so natural that we will likely not even realize what we are doing, or that there is an alternative in Christ.

To live from out of myself certainly means that I am motivated by what I want – I walk according to my will. But it also includes using my reactions

– emotionally or intellectually – as the measuring stick for truth; or for what is right. In short, to live from out of myself means that I walk according to SELF instead of according to Christ.

I believe that one of the biggest deceptions of the enemy is to get us to live from out of ourselves – the deception is to make us think that this equals living from Christ. This deception is so prevalent today that it has been smuggled into Christian teaching. For example, how often we hear about how God is going to, "make us like Jesus." We are taught to focus on how God is going to give us a wonderful sense of self-affirmation and esteem – we are told that the love of God for us will do this. Today, Christianity has become nothing more than self-improvement – with the name of Jesus pasted on it.

Is that Christianity? That God is going to act upon you and I and bring out the greatness that is in us? Joel Osteen states that God wants to bring out the champion that is in you. Is that what God is doing? Is God going to take our natural man and reshape him to look like His Son? No. In fact, all of these errors are a denial of the Cross. The Cross is denied anytime natural man – the old man in Adam – is brought into resurrection life without the need to be crucified with Christ. Indeed, the very essence of ANTICHRIST is, "Christ without the Cross." Antichrist is Adam stepping around the Cross and taking upon himself the things of God.

Remember that God symbolically stationed an angel with a flaming sword at the entrance of the garden of Eden so that Adam could not re-enter and partake of the tree of life. Had God allowed

Adam to have LIFE in his state of death it would have not only made a devil out of Adam, but God would have been denying Himself. No. Yet today's Christian teaching often suggests that God intends to give life to the Adam race. It suggests that if the Adam race could just simply eat of the tree of life he could live again, and share in the things of God – that Adam could somehow be rehabilitated. This is a lie.

God has one will for the old man in Adam – death. If only we could see that. The Adam race is dead – and there is not going to be any resuscitation for the Adam race. Rather, God wants us to confess and embrace that Truth that we are dead, and to give ourselves to the One who gave Himself for us. By faith we become ONE in Spirit with Christ – we are made one with Him in His death and resurrection. This means a full death to the old, but life in Christ.

Consequently, God is not ever going to try to, "bring out the champion in us," because there is none to bring out. He is not going to bring out some kind of inherent greatness – for there is no good thing that dwells in our flesh. Neither is God going to take hold of our soul or natural man and make him to look like Jesus. No. Rather than make us look LIKE Jesus, God has given us Jesus Himself to dwell within us – and the Christian life is one where the Christ who is in us is to be manifest through us. In short, if I am in Christ, the power of His Cross will be upon my soul and natural man – so that the life and power of the Christ within might emerge and be seen.

This distinction is not merely a matter of semantics. There is a world of difference between

trying to look like Jesus, or live like Jesus – there is a world of difference between that and Jesus Christ actually living in and through me. Indeed, the Truth about this is what Paul was getting at in Galatians:

***I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)***

You will note the, "I," in this verse, as in oneness with CHRIST. Paul states, "I am crucified WITH Christ." That is more than just, "Christ was crucified FOR me." Well, Christ was crucified FOR us. But it is precisely because He was crucified FOR us that we can, and must, now be crucified WITH Him. How many see that there is death upon us – by virtue of our union with Christ? Death of what – our old man in Adam. Paul says in Romans 6, "Our old man is crucified with Him." Thus, His death is OUR death – but not just in a legal sense. It is in an eternal sense with great impact.

Paul also says that even though he is crucified WITH Christ that, "nevertheless I live."

But he is not alive in Adam as before. No. He says, "Yet NOT I, but Christ lives in me." Here again we see the new creation in Christ. We also see that Christianity is not us living LIKE Christ, but rather, Christ living in and through us.

How does Christ live in and through us? Well, not by taking us over, or by somehow, "by-passing," us. No. Christ can only live in us if we are

crucified with Him – only if our wills are crucified with Him, and only if our natural man comes under the Cross. In effect, we have to be brought to the place where we no longer live from out of ourselves, but live from out of Christ. This is impossible for us to accomplish – it is not a matter of laws and rules. Rather, it is a matter of the work of the Cross to where our SOUL power is broken, so that the Spirit of God might govern.

If you and I want Christ to actually LIVE in us, then our living under the power of SELF, and the power of soul, must come to an end. This comes to pass only if God separates soul from spirit – and our soul life comes under the Cross. This is impossible through any sort of human effort. But it is exactly what happens when a person is made one with Christ.

What else would we expect? If you are made ONE with Jesus Christ, then everything that HE IS – including all He has done -- will impact everything you are. And what He has done is bear the Adam race in His body unto death. Thus, you and I – everything that belongs to the Adam race -- is under death. This is not just legal. It is something that is going to be progressively experienced. If you want to go on with God you will indeed LIVE – but it is going to be, "yet NOT I, but Christ." All that is of the soulish, natural life, is shut out by the Cross.

Christ has also been raised to newness of life. We are dead, but our life is hid with Christ in God – we are raised, not independent of Him, but IN HIM. Thus, the resurrection life of Christ only functions when we are living from OUT OF HIM, rather than from OUT OF SELF.

## **Religious Flesh**

The term, "religious flesh," means natural man trying to be a Christian by living from out of himself – to accomplish what he thinks is God's will and purpose. This doesn't mean the person lacks Christ in them. It simply means that Christ cannot live through them – instead, they try to live from soul power – from human effort.

Of course, as already discussed, this error is the result of not coming under the work of the Cross, either by refusing to do so, or because the person is ignorant. But such a person has really never experienced a dividing of soul from spirit. They really don't know the difference. Consequently, they operate from the soul thinking they are living from the Spirit of Christ.

The Bible describes these possibilities with the phrases, "walk according to the flesh," and, "walk according to the Spirit." It is the same principle. To walk according to the flesh is to live from OUT OF the flesh, which is to live from OUT OF your SELF. You live by mustering up the assets of your flesh, and you receive from God by embracing Christ with your flesh. And you address all of your failures with your flesh as well.

Of course, what I am describing is really FAITH IN SELF, rather than faith that is solely in Christ – it comes down to that in the end. But we don't usually know what we are doing at the time. There are thousands of well-intended Christian people today who are walking completely in the flesh – not bad or ugly flesh – but walking in

religious and nice looking flesh, all the while thinking they are walking in the Spirit. They don't know their soul from the Spirit of God.

This has resulted in ground for the enemy to accomplish great deception -- everything from false leadings to false revivals. Make no question about it, the soul realm in man can be a very powerful realm. People can become overwhelmed by it. This is how it gets passed off as the Spirit of God.

The Bible reveals that the soul realm – the natural realm – is the realm of the enemy. When God originally created Adam, the Spirit of God was one with the spirit of man. Man was intended to govern his soul and body through his union with the Spirit of God. But when Adam sinned, he walked away from God, and his spirit was no longer one with the Spirit of God – this is why man's spirit is dead. What happened was that man's soul and body then governed him. Satan gained control. And there was no escape.

Through Christ, man is reunited in spirit with God. But without Christ, the body and soul will continue to govern. Indeed, even if Christ is in me, and there is no division of soul from Spirit, I will not be able to truly walk in the Spirit of God. My soul will tend to govern me. The goal of Satan will be to try to convince me that my soul life is the Spirit of God.

### **False Feelings**

This is why Christian people can have, "leadings," that they actually FEEL, and believe are of God – but they are NOT. They are feeling and sensing

something else – their, "leading," is primarily a creation of something out of themselves. You hear phrases such as, "I feel in my spirit," etc. There is NO such phrase or teaching in the Bible. You also hear such statements as, "I sense the presence of the Holy Spirit," or, "the anointing of the Spirit is great tonight." Well, again, there is no such reference or wording in the New Testament. Indeed, it is entirely possible that ALL of that – all of that very real and intense feeling – is of the soul realm, and not of God. People can cry, tremble, shout, jump, and more recently, act like a dog or cat – and KNOW that they are under some kind of power – but it is NOT the Holy Spirit of God. It is the power of the soul – it is the psychic realm.

I'm not saying emotions are wrong, or that we would never get emotional if God were working in our midst. But what I am saying is that the emotions are not God. They are us – perhaps reacting to God – but nevertheless US. Emotions are not spiritual. We cannot believe with our emotions, and we cannot, "feel God," with our emotions or sense life. It is utter nonsense to say that we can – for God is Spirit – but emotions or any of our senses are of the soul.

It is one thing to REACT in our soul. It is another to say that this reaction indicates Truth, or that it proves God has touched us. There have been people who, because they BELIEVED God was speaking to them, or had touched them, have reacted in very dynamic ways. But upon closer examination, it is proven that God was doing nothing of the kind. Remember the time a bunch of people thought the face of Jesus was on the



side of a building? It was just water stain. But there were people there crying and praising God; falling to their knees. The only thing there that was real was their reaction to a lie. It was ALL THEM. But they truly FELT it.

On Christian TV today they often show crowds jumping up and down, or sometimes a few people with tears, raised hands, or even falling on their faces. Much of the time this is happening while terrible heresy is being preached. Those folks are reacting to great error – but they think it is the Truth. Is this of God? No. It is OF THEM. But there are many who assume that all of that could not be happening unless God was doing it. That is nonsense.

The psychic realm is REAL. It carries power. But it is not inhabited by God. If we would experience the division of soul from Spirit, we would know error from Truth. If we knew Christ we would know what is of Him, and what is not of Him. We cannot discern these things any other way.

### **Personal Dangers**

The dangers of not discerning soul from Spirit need not be limited to church meetings or big crowds. The biggest problems usually occur in personal lives. It affects the very foundation of our Christian faith.

For example, Christian people think that how they feel or react about themselves, others, or towards what they hear – people believe that how something affects THEM is the indicator of the truth about it. We put our SELF at the core and use SELF as the standard by which we determine

the truth about anything. Even unbelievers do this – sure they do – because it is of the soul. The believer is supposed to know Christ – and knowing Him provides LIGHT regarding all else.

When we err in this way we are putting our faith in ourselves, rather than One who is OTHER THAN ourselves. In addition, we are silly if we think we have any possibility of come to the right conclusions about ourselves. All of this, to one extent or another, is nothing more than trying to walk in the Light without the Light. We are trying to make our own Light.

Again I can point to the example of the tape measure. Turn a lying tape measure over on itself and you will get affirmation every time. Why? Because not only is it a lying tape measure, but that same lie is built into what it will use to judge itself. What you end up with is a continual loop that cannot be resolved. Such are the lives of many Christian people – they are depressed, in despair, and perhaps tormented by their own failures, but they don't know Christ. Indeed, many don't KNOW TO KNOW Christ. They don't know HE is the solution. So they are making do with themselves – walking in darkness not knowing there is a Light.

If the soul of man is to be divided from the Spirit by the Truth God speaks, then can we see the utter hopelessness of trying to live fully within the SOUL? If soul is to be divided from Spirit IN US, then if it is NOT yet divided we are going to operate fully within the soul and we will not know what is happening to us, or what is wrong.

Have you ever asked yourself, or God, the question, "How can I be this way if Christ is in me? How can I have these attitudes if I am born again?" Yet you are really asking, "How can my soul – my natural man – be this way if Christ is in me?" It's just that you think your soul – your old man – is supposed to be like Christ. This was never to be the case. Your old man is DEAD – you are giving him all this attention and trying to revive him – because your old man is presently ALL you know. You still need a division of YOUR soul from the Spirit of Christ.

God would say to us, "You are lamenting the condition of the natural man – but if you really saw the Truth, your natural man is much worse than you will ever see. There is NO redemption there. The old man in Adam is DEAD. Why are you looking to that which is DEAD in order to find evidence of LIFE? You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."

You are never going to find anything good in the old man, your soul life, or your natural man. Indeed, the work of the Cross will have to so convince you of that fact that you will then STOP trying to find good. You will finally realize that all good is solely in Christ. The great news is that you are a new creation in Him.

So here we again see the key: The work of the Cross. The Word God speaks will reveal separate soul from Spirit, and in doing so, reveal that the soul life is a DEAD thing – it is really the ground of the enemy. Then, as we read from II Corinthians 4, the Spirit in Christ – the life of Christ – can emerge.

None of this is possible without the ongoing work of the Cross. You cannot study your way into this reality. You cannot do good works and get there. No. You have to take your place in the DEATH of Christ. If you and I want to say, with Paul, "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ," we have to be, "crucified with Christ."

This is why it is a ploy of the enemy to deny, neglect, omit, or distort, the Truth and necessity of the Cross. You hear little of the Cross today – and when you hear of it, it is usually limited to salvation only, or it is distorted.

It is possible to know all of this doctrinally but to nevertheless remain deceived. Why? Because knowing things doctrinally does not equal seeing the Person of Jesus. Knowing we are to receive Light isn't the same as actually receiving it. Knowing we must repent isn't the same as actually repenting. Christianity is Christ in us. That is stated doctrinally. But it is a living experience with God Himself.

### **Fake Faith**

Faith is evidence and substance – of that which is of God. Faith COMES by hearing the Word of God. Does any of that sound like real faith is mustered up by US – does it sound like faith originates with us and is generated out of ourselves up to God? No.

Yet most of us try to do exactly that. We try to muster up faith in our soul life – through feelings, emotions, temperament, or even intellect – and if we manage to create a certain state of mind or mood, we think we have faith. And then we try to

protect it, or perpetuate it. This is not the faith of Christ. It is not real faith, but fake faith.

This is one reason why such heretical teachings as, "Word of Faith," has deceived so many people. That teaching tells us that faith is a force – and that it is a force that can actually create what we confess by our words. Ok. Go ahead and try.

So many of these modern teachings that are promoted by such false teachers as Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Fred Price, Kenneth Hagin, Marilyn Hickey – I could go on – they are all being taught and practiced within the SOUL realm. They are not based upon a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is not the Spirit of Truth.

Many of us try to believe with our soul. What I means is that we think that faith is a FEELING – we think it is sort of a good feeling towards something. If we feel positive towards something we think this means God approves of it, etc. Or maybe we continually check inside of ourselves to, "see if we are believing," which to us probably means we feel happy or confident towards God. ALL of this is of religious flesh. It has NOTHING to do with Christ.

True faith is the result of seeing and embracing the Truth – it is the result of seeing and knowing Jesus Christ. As God speaks the Truth to us, there will come a separation of our soul from His Spirit – we will see what is OF God and what is not of God, but of ourselves. In other words, as God speaks Christ we will see Christ – but also see what is NOT of Christ. Then our faith will increase. There is simply no way to increase in faith unless we see more of Christ.

John the Baptist said, "I must decrease that He might increase." There it is. The power of SELF must decrease so that the power of the Spirit might increase. We are only strong in Christ to the extent that we are weak in ourselves. This is not religion, or some rule God invented. It is reflective of the Truth, and it is a return to the original relationship God intended to have with us.

The Cross will bring the decrease to us. By the time God is done with us, we will have absolutely NO confidence in our flesh – and we will be happy that we have seen the Truth about it. All of our faith will be moved over to Jesus Christ – because He will increase. We will be able to live from HIM, instead of continually trying to live for God from out of ourselves.

Fake faith is faith in SELF – but it is also faith from OUT of SELF. True faith is born of the revelation God gives of His Son. Faith comes by hearing the Truth God speaks. Note that: Faith must COME. It isn't there in us to begin with. It comes by revelation received.

Do you want more faith? Then ask God to reveal to you more of Christ. But be prepared, in seeing Christ, to see what is NOT of Him. Be prepared to have everything that is OF YOU exposed and divided from all that is of Christ. Actually, we ought to embrace such a thing. It spells freedom – seeing the Truth always does.

### **Some Examples**

Paul said, "The just shall live FROM OUT OF faith." (Romans 1:16-17) This is the correct

translation and is certainly clearer than simply saying, "The just shall live BY faith." Contrast that over and against living from out of yourself – and thinking that this IS faith. Christians do that all the time.

I want to give a couple of very simple examples – nothing necessarily earthshaking in themselves – but these do betray a complete blindness to the Truth, and illustrate how well-intended folks can operate fully from themselves and not even realize it.

I remember a number of years ago a lady in church requested that during prayer time that the men and women split into separate groups. She said to do this, "because I feel that when we pray that way that it is more effective." I asked what she meant. She said, "There is something about when all the women pray together that seems much more powerful. I'm sure it is the same with the men."

Let's look at this. Put aside the sincerity of the woman – I'm sure she was sincere and meant well. But can we see that she is in complete error? Paul said, "There is neither... male nor female..." In addition, do we seriously believe that God hears us better if we are divided by gender? Do we think that when Christian women get together without the men – or the men without the women – do we think that this somehow is able to generate a greater power up to God in order to get Him to respond? Who IS our Mediator unto God? It is Christ alone. It is not Christ, plus our gender group. Thus, built into this very sincere woman's request was both a blindness to the Truth, but also a denial of the Truth.

But WHY did this woman believe this error? Why did she believe that there was greater power when the women prayed separate from the men? It was because praying that way did something FOR HER – not for God. SHE felt better about doing things that way. SHE believed, and likely FELT, in her soul, that something better was happening. SHE had a reaction in her soul that was powerful enough to convince her that this was of the Spirit of God. It was NOT. But she thought it was.

Now, incidentally, I'm not saying it is WRONG for women or men to pray separately. No. What I am saying is that it is error to think that this makes the prayer more effective. It does not. It might make those praying feel better. But it does not make God feel better.

Can we see how easy it is to think that how WE feel, and how WE are affected – all within our emotions and temperament – can we see how easy it is to think that this FEELING indicates the Truth about God and His ways? This is nothing more than using OUR SELF as the standard for Truth. It is really faith in SELF.

I remember one incident where the leader of a home group stated directly that God was telling him that someone was lying. This leader was WRONG. There was NO lie. But you see, to admit that, or to even consider it, would have meant that this leader was not hearing from God, but operating from his own SELF. He wasn't going to do that. It would open up too many possibilities about himself. Thus, the pride of this man was the avenue by which a REAL LIE entered in. He



was operating from out of himself, rather than from out of Christ.

Why do we think that entire GROUPS of Christian people can be mutually and collectively DECEIVED? And why do we think that this deception can be so effectively perpetuated? The cause of group deception is the same as the cause of individual deception – there is an appeal for the deception in the heart. There can be a tremendous SOUL appeal. In the group, they all have the same place of appeal. The deception is perpetuated because everyone thinks the same, and goes around affirming to each other, by word or deed, that that are all in the right. There is peer pressure and the power of fear – all matters of the natural or soul realm. There forms a binding, which amplifies the power of deception. Few are willing to break rank.

There are many Christian people today who are under the delusion that how something affects THEM is how it affects God. If someone hurts them, then that is an evil person in God's eyes. If someone flatters them, then that is a good person. There seems to be very little separation in the minds of people between their SELF and Jesus Christ in them. Many think the two are the same – which is deception, and the result of NOT hearing the Word of God.

## **Ministry**

Much ministry today is lived from out of SELF – it is mostly soul power. I'm including in that what appears to be, "good," ministry. Do we think that good ministry that is from out of man's self, is ultimately that much better than, "bad," ministry

that is out of man's self? Well, it is a little better, of course. But in the end, none of it is presently of Christ.

If a person uses his intellect, temperament, and personality, to preach the gospel – if he has a natural charisma and ability that is able to make people feel good – is this of the Spirit of God, or the soul of man? Hitler had all of those things – I rest my case. He had a tremendous power over people that went beyond military power. There was force there – some might say it was the Devil – but even so, there was ground for that. And that ground was something in men.

I have seen false teachers get up and bring their audience to tears. I have seen their listeners jump up and down, fall on their face, and even give praise to God – all over rank heresy. I have seen people exclaim that the presence of God is thick in a place – they sweat, cry over it, and burst out into a dialog of unknown tongues. I have heard people, right in the middle of such things, break out into what is supposed to be a prophetic word – often the prophecy itself is laced with error. Do we imagine that because such things – which look dramatic and supernatural are of God? Well, most of the time the people doing them aren't faking. So what is up with this?

It is all soul power. Remember the Beatles? Look at the frenzy that occurred wherever they went. Transfer the same thing on over into what is supposed to be spiritual – you will get some of that same frenzy. It is the soul. It is PSYCHIC. It is real. But it isn't of God.

Jesus said that such signs and wonders would occur, such as fire from heaven in the sight of people, in such a convincing way that even the elect could be deceived. But none of it would be of God – it would be used to lead people astray FROM God. This is all of the soul realm – backed by evil spiritual forces. Thus, is the importance of knowing the Truth vs. knowing what man produces.

### **The Ground of the Enemy**

When Adam fell, his spirit died, and thus, his soul and body became the ground in the human race upon which the enemy could work. Once we realize this we will see that we are trifling with powerful forces when we try to mistake the flesh or soul for the Spirit. There are great dangers.

The soul is essentially the power of SELF – and this is where the sin of Satan, and on a lower level, the sin of Adam, took place. They put SELF before God. Thus, the sin nature is exactly this – SELF as god – and when I operate from out of my soul, I am operating from out of that sin nature – operating from out of myself. Despite my ignorance and good intentions it will ultimately lead me down a path away from God. Thankfully, for one born again, God will continually speak. The question is whether we will listen.

The tragedy is that in today's church, there is very little realization about any of these things. That is because there is very little revelation of Christ within. If you don't know Him, you won't know what is not of Him, and thus, you will continue doing what comes, "natural." You will

operate from out of your self – and never realize what you are doing, or where it can all lead you.

Jesus prophesied that, "the love of many will grow cold." This means the love of God, and the love of the Truth, as much as anything else. Today people have become numbed and callous to God. Even in many Christian churches, if you would begin to talk about KNOWING CHRIST – you would get a blank stare. There is no awareness of our need. We are blind and don't know it. Indeed, in many places, if you begin to teach the Truth you will be viewed as boring, or as someone who doesn't realize that the need today is for members and money. I'm not kidding. This is the way it is in many places today. I submit that the complete inability of many Christian people to so much as recognize their need is as much a terrible deception as is any embracement of false doctrine. The enemy is happy to keep us happy without Christ. If he manages that, he has us.

Satan is the father and source of all lies about God, but he has no power unless he is able to deceive with those lies – the power of Satan is in getting people to believe his lies. Man is not the source of all lies, but because of the fall of Satan, man has become a depository of lies – his entire nature can be said to be a lie. The only solution is the Truth. And when God begins to speak it, and IF we hear it, the division will occur between the lie and the Truth. Just as God began the physical creation in Genesis by saying, "Let there be light," and this resulted in a division between light and darkness, so it is IN US. But there are many who, while saying they want light, will not

accept what that Light reveals about THEMSELVES. This is the pivot point upon which all things turn between man and God. (see John 3:19-21)

God has put away through death the old creation in Adam – "in Adam all die." This is a finished work, but we must be brought into the reality of it in Christ – "in Christ all are alive." It starts when God speaks, "Let there be light," to us. This Word of God is living and powerful – if we hear, the Truth and light will divide our soul from His Spirit. And our faith will increase as this is done, because our knowledge of the Truth in Christ will increase.

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