

Practical Christian Living

Advance in Faith Unit 104

Week 5: The Inner You



Introduction

The purpose of this session is:

- *To explore the 'internal' world of the believer*
- *To identify the stewardship responsibilities of the believer with regard to emotional, volitional, cognitive and spiritual capacities.*
- *To encourage believers toward nurturing a healthy and growing inner life.*

1. The Human Trichotomy

Human beings are multi-faceted creatures made up of essentially three inter-dependent parts: spirit, soul and body.

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. (1 Thessalonians 5:2)



2. The SPIRIT of the believer

The 'spirit' is often referred to as the 'heart'. It is the essential inner you. It is distinct from your body and soul but acts in an intimate and interdependent way with both. Your spirit is *regenerated* (**Titus 3:5**) or *born again* (**John 3:1-21**) through faith in Christ by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

2.1 *The Heart: Spiritual Responsibilities of the Believer:*

2.1.1 *Recognise God's ownership of your spirit (1 Cor. 6:20-21)*

Acknowledge that you are God's and that He has rightful claim to your life.

2.1.2 *Worship God in spirit (John 4:19-21) (Matthew 15:8)*

To worship God in spirit is to engage the heart. This is the kind of worship that goes beyond mere ritual, ceremony or outward observances that have no impact on or connection to the inner person of the heart.

2.1.3 *Pray to God with the spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15)*

Prayer is communication with God that doesn't always require words (or words that we understand cognitively). Prayer can be an internal engagement that transcends the world of words and rational recognition.

2.1.4 *Guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23)*

Your 'heart' / spirit is the source of the most important issues of life. What you allow into your heart will determine what comes out of it and how you will live, love and relate to both God and others.

3. The SOUL of the believer

The soul consists of the Mind, Will and Emotions.

3.1 *The Mind: Intellectual Responsibilities of the Believer:*

3.1.1 *Direct your mind (Philippians 4:8)*

Choose what you think about and give priority to that which is good, beneficial and uplifting (E.G. the Word of God) **(Psalm 119:97)**.

Other mental activities (reading / studying) also stimulate one to think analytically, critically and discerningly. The mind needs 'exercise' in the same way the body does to remain healthy and functional.

3.1.2 *Discipline your mind (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

Bring the thoughts of your mind into obedience to Christ's lordship. Your mind is always active and needs to be directed and controlled. If allowed to lie 'idle' it will naturally tend to drift away from that which is righteous and good (due to the corruption of sin).

3.1.3 *Pray with your mind (1 Corinthians 14:15)*

Pray with your intellect and employ your deductive, reasoning and mental capabilities.

3.1.4 *Renew your mind (Romans 12:1-2)*

Conform your patterns of thought to the truth of God's word.

3.2 *The Will: Volitional Responsibilities of the Believer*

3.2.1 *Obey God (1 Samuel 15:22)*

Obedience to the will of God involves the submission of your own will to His. This often involves a struggle **(Luke 22:42)**. Obedience to God's will is the highest demonstration of love for God **(John 14:24)**. Selective obedience or incomplete obedience is disobedience. God requires complete and wholehearted obedience.

3.2.2 *Choose what is right and good (Deuteronomy 30:19)*

God has given us the ability to choose. He created man with a free will and respects man's ability to decide for himself. Every God-given

ability has a corresponding responsibility. Man therefore not only has the capacity to choose but the obligation to do so. These choices have multigenerational consequences.

“The only freedom we have in life is the freedom to choose and then we are bound by our choices.” – Ed Cole

3.2.3 *Do good (Titus 1:16; 2:7; 2:14; 3:1,8) (Hebrews 10:25)*

Good works, charitable deeds and acts of kindness are all chosen or refused. We are exhorted to willingly give, share, do good, be kind, love, etc.

3.3 The Emotions: Emotional Responsibilities of the Believer

3.3.1 *Worship God (Matthew 22:37)*

Worship and service of God should be passionate and enthusiastic and engage the soul. Emotion in worship is certainly not inappropriate if it is not self-indulgent or over-bearing. God created us as emotional beings with the ability to feel and function on an emotional level.

3.3.2 *Acknowledge emotions (Mark 14:33-34) (Luke 10:21)*

It is healthy to acknowledge emotions, including the “negative” ones (sorrow, grief, anger, etc.). Jesus was an emotional man and was never afraid to show His emotion in both word and deed. Stored up emotions lead to frustration and emotional burnout. Unexpressed anger can lead to a root of bitterness.

3.3.3 *Manage emotions (Galatians 5:23)*

Self-control is a fruit of the indwelling Spirit of God in the believer and is required for the management of emotions. Emotion should never be allowed to rule a believer’s life. Emotions are good and serve a purpose (social, relational, etc.) but should not dictate believer’s long-term course of action or behaviour.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the ‘signs’ that someone’s spirit has been ‘regenerated’ or ‘made alive’ by the Spirit of God? How do you know if you are ‘born again’?
2. What practical steps can we take to ensure that our regenerated ‘heart’ (spirit) leads and guides our bodies and souls in serving God and others?
3. What should someone do if they feel that they are being overwhelmed by feelings beyond their control (anxiety, fear, depression, anger, etc.)?

Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:23

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.