"The SPIRITUAL Christian"

(Selected Scriptures)
11/22/06

One who is spiritual will have:

1. A Miraculous New Birth which imparts a new nature
   John 3:1-8; Titus 3:5; I Cor. 6:9-11, 19-20

2. A Yielded Life which allows the Spirit to take control
   Eph. 5:18-21; Gal. 5:16

3. An Enlightened Mind which discerns between truth and error
   I Cor. 2:10-12, 14; Eph. 1:17; I John 2:20, 27

4. An Obedient Will which submits to God's Commands
   I John 3:24

5. A Virtuous Heart which bears fruitful attitudes and actions
   Gal. 5:22; cp. Rom. 5:5, 15:30; I Peter 2:5, cp. with Heb. 13:15

6. A Gentle Spirit which humbly confronts those who err from the right path
   Gal. 6:1

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The following are the works of the Holy Spirit:

--The new birth of the Holy Spirit
--The baptism of the Holy Spirit
--The sealing of the Holy Spirit
--The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
--The filling of the Holy Spirit
--The power of the Holy Spirit
--The gifts of the Holy Spirit
--The intercession of the Holy Spirit
--The resurrection of the Holy Spirit

One who is spiritual will have:

1. A Miraculous New Birth which imparts a new nature

John 3:1-8; Titus 3:5; I Cor. 6:9-11, 19-20

John 3:1-8

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

One of the happiest times in life is when a mother gives birth to a healthy baby boy or girl. There was a specific time and place when you were born. At that time, you were given the last name of your father and your parents may have noticed how much you looked like them. Most people even remember their birthday with a time of celebration each year. Even though the day you were born was an important day, it was not the most important day of your life.

The Lord Jesus spoke of a birth more important than even your physical birth. He said that it is not enough for someone to be born once, but they must be born twice.

In this message, we will discover what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

What is the new birth?

The new birth is a vitally important birth (v.1-3)

“Religious” people need the new Birth (v.1-2)

The new birth is a supernatural birth (v. 4-6)

It is a work accomplished by the Holy Spirit, not by man's efforts (Jn. 1:13)

The Work of Regeneration (How is man regenerated?)

1. The Author of regeneration = God (Jn. 1:12-13)

   The new birth is provided because of the love of God (I Jn. 3:1; Ja. 1:18)

2. The Agent of regeneration = The Holy Spirit (Ti. 3:5)

   "Regeneration" - Greek "palingenesia" -
   palin = again
   genesis = birth

   "Renewing" - lit. to make "new again"

3. The Instrument of Regeneration = The Word of God
   (I Peter 1:23-25; Ja. 1:18; the Gospel message - I Cor. 4:15)

4. The Attainment of Regeneration - Faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26; Jn. 1:12-13)

What the New Birth is not:

1) The new birth is not of <u>blood</u> (1:13a)

not hereditary (EX: by being linked to Abraham – Mt. 3:8-9; Gal. 3:6)

2) The new birth is not of the <u>will of the flesh</u> (v. 13a)

not a result of human decision or changing of bad attitudes or bad habits (Rom. 8:7-8)

3) The new birth is not through the <u>will of another man</u> (v. 13b)

not through infant circumcision nor infant baptism

The new birth is an <u>instantaneous</u> birth (v. 6-7)

Just as one is born physically only <u>once</u>, so one is born again spiritually only <u>once</u> (for all time). (cp. Jn. 1:13; I Pet. 1:23)

The new birth is an <u>mysterious</u> birth (v. 8)

"listeth" - wills; the wind blows where it desires, man has no control over it.

So the Spirit of God works independently of the works and efforts of men mysteriously transforming people in the invisible part of their inner most being

"Jesus explained that we cannot control the work of the Holy Spirit. He works in ways we cannot predict or understand. Just as you did not control your physical birth, so you cannot control your spiritual birth" (Life Application Bible, not. P. 1905)

The new birth is a <u>invisible yet powerful</u> birth (v.8)

The new birth is visible only by its results.

Just as one can see the <u>effects</u> of the <u>wind</u> and not the wind itself, so one can see the <u>effects</u> of the new birth, but not the birth itself. The effect of the new birth is a changed heart (Mt. 12:33, 35) which evidences itself by a changed lifestyle (II Cor. 5:17).

WHAT IS THE <u>EVIDENCE</u> OF BEING "BORN AGAIN?"

Just as growing children have a tendency to "take after" their parents, children of God will also take after their Heavenly Father as they grow up spiritually.

What will God's children be like?

Those who are born of God will have:

1. A lifestyle characterized by <u>righteousness</u> (I Jn. 2:29)
2. A freedom from continual <u>sinning</u> (I Jn. 3:9; 5:18)
3. A <u>love</u> for one's brother (I Jn. 3:10, 14; 4:7; I Pet. 1:22-23)
4. A <u>confidence</u> in the Biblical revelation concerning Jesus Christ (I Jn. 5:1)
5. A love for <u>God</u> (I Jn. 5:1-2; Jn. 8:42)
6. A sincere desire to be <u>obedient</u> to God (I Jn. 5:2-3)
7. Victory over the <u>world's system</u> (I Jn. 5:4)
8. A concern for moral <u>purity</u> (I Jn. 5:18)

Those who are born only once will die twice (Rev. 20:15; 21:8), but those who are born twice will die only once (and should the Lord return in our lifetime—not even once!)

Titus 3:5
Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

1 Corinthians 6:9-11
Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

2. A <u>Yielded</u> <u>Life</u> which allows the Spirit to take control

Eph. 5:18-21; Gal. 5:16

Ephesians 5:18-21
And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Galatians 5:16
This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

See: Ephesians 5:18-20

Believers, We must be Spirit Filled!

*This point is crucial (necessary) to obeying the other points in the context: Namely Walking Circumspectly (Carefully); Understanding the will of God; and Redeeming the time.

The <u>Command</u> to be Spirit-Filled (Eph. 5:18)

A. THE WRONG CONTROLLING INFLUENCE (v. 18a)

"Be not drunk with wine"

"Wine" = Prov. 20:1 - "Wine is a mocker"
READ Prov. 23:29-35

Wine infers any external influence that controls you (rock music, drugs, bad habits, etc.)

"Excess" = wild and disorderly living produced

Cp. Tit. 1:6 - Pastor is not to be "accused of riot" (same word)

Cp. Luke 15:13 - Prodigal son "wasted his substance with riotous living"

Paul may be referring to people who worshipped a wine god called Dionysus. The worshippers felt that they were united, indwelt, and controlled by Dionysus, who "gave them special powers and abilities."

B. THE RIGHT CONTROLLING INFLUENCE (v. 18b)

NOTE: Contrasts:
1. "Drunk" with "filled" (causes of influence)
2. "Wine" with "Spirit" (source of influence)
3. "Excess" with "speaking" etc. (outcome of influence)

Key Text: Ephesians 5:18

The Nature of being Spirit-Filled

a. What is the filling of the Spirit?

1) The filling of the Spirit is the will of God (Eph. 5:17).

2) The filling of the Spirit is not an option, but an obligation.
It is a command! To not be filled is to be disobedient to God and to be living in sin!

3) The filling of the Spirit is to be a <u>continuous experience</u> of the believer.

a) Proof: The present tense imperative points to the repetitious nature of the Spirit filling a believer throughout his life.

b) There is one baptism of the Spirit (Eph. 4:5), but there are <u>many fillings</u>!

4) The filling of the Spirit is a <u>work of God</u>.

a) Proof: The <u>passive</u> voice of the imperative - "be filled."

b) God is saying <u>allow</u> yourself to be filled. God does the filling as the believer does the yielding.

5) The filling of the Spirit is <u>not</u> a spiritual <u>gift</u> (The Ephesians had all the spiritual blessings in Christ - 1:3; the command for them to be filled proves that not all of the Ephesians were filled).

6) The filling of the Spirit does <u>not</u> refer to the <u>baptism</u> of the Spirit nor the <u>indwelling</u> of the Spirit. All Christians have the baptism and the indwelling, but not all are filled.

There is a <u>distinction</u> between the <u>baptism</u> of the Spirit and the <u>filling</u> of the Spirit.

7) The filling of the Spirit refers to the <u>control</u> of the Holy Spirit (verses 18-21).

a) Note the contrast between being filled (controlled) with "<u>wine</u>" (v. 18a, cp. Prov. 20:1, 23:29-35) which leads to "excess" ("riotous" living - Titus 1:6; Lk. 15:13); and being filled (controlled) with the <u>Spirit</u> which leads to spiritual singing (v. 19), thankfulness (v. 20), and Godly submission (v. 21).

b) Note: The filling of the Spirit is not you getting more of the Holy Spirit, but it is you letting the Holy Spirit get more of you!

The <u>evidence</u> of being Spirit-Filled?

1) An <u>inward</u> evidence (v. 19) (praise and joy)

The fruits of the Spirit are the evidence

(Gal. 5:22-23 - "The fruit of [produced by] the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patience], gentleness, [lit. kindness], goodness, faith, meekness [gentleness], (and) temperance [self-control] . . .").

2) An <u>upward</u> evidence (v. 20) (thankful heart to God)

3) An <u>outward</u> evidence (v. 21) (a submissive attitude and action)

The <u>Examples</u> of those who were Spirit-Filled.

<u>Who was Filled?</u>	<u>What did the Filling produce?</u>
The disciples at Pentecost	The <u>special ability</u> to speak in foreign dialects ("tongues" - a first century sign to unbelieving Israel – I Cor. 14:21-22)
The Apostle Peter	<u>Unction</u> to preach God's truth (Acts 4:8)
The assembly of believers	<u>Courage</u> to speak God's Word (Acts 4:31)
The deacons	<u>Leadership</u> ability (Acts 6:5)
The deacon Stephen	<u>Peace</u> in the midst of persecution (Acts 7:55)
The Apostle Paul	<u>Spiritual Discernment</u> (Acts 13:9)
The Gentile disciples	<u>Joy</u> (Acts 13:52)

The key to being Spirit filled?

***Basically, the key to being Spirit filled is a yieldedness to God on a daily basis.**

God automatically fills the believer with His Spirit as he/she surrenders to Him. It is God's responsibility to fill us; our responsibility is to allow Him to do so. The Spirit's fullness can be the daily experience of every believer if there is a moment by moment submissive and open heart to the Spirit. Only then will He take full command of the believer's life.
Three conditions for being filled with the Spirit:

1) Don't quench the Spirit (I Th. 5:19).

You quench the Spirit by not allowing God to speak to you - via His Word (I Th. 5:20).

2) Don't grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30).

a) To grieve means to cause sorrow to the person of the Holy Spirit.

b) You grieve Him by sin (Eph. 4:29, 31).

*God does not fill dirty vessels!

3) Walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

This means to live a life of surrender or yieldedness to the Spirit so that the Holy Spirit can direct your steps, actions, and attitudes.

3. An Enlightened Mind which discerns between truth and error

I Cor. 2:10-12, 14; Eph. 1:17; I John 2:20, 27

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

V. 10

Though the unsaved lost world has no inkling of an idea what God has given to His people and what God has planned for His people, we have seen, heard, and it has entered into our hearts by the supernatural unveiling work of the Holy Spirit.

"Our salvation involves all three persons in the Godhead (Eph. 1:3-14; I Pet. 1:2). You cannot be saved apart from the Father's electing grace, the Son's loving sacrifice, and the Spirit's ministry of conviction and regeneration" (Wiersbe, p. 575).

The Father planned to save me before the world began,
The Son died to save me almost 2,000 years ago,
The Spirit opened my eyes and saved me in March, 1976.

The Holy Spirit knows the depths of God's mysterious secrets. Those who have His Spirit have been initiated into His past, present, and future wisdom.

"Searcheth" - Does not mean that the Spirit searches with a view to obtaining information; rather, it is a way of saying that He penetrates into all things" (Leon Morris, p. 57).

V. 11

To demonstrate how the Holy Spirit has insight into the mind of God, Paul uses an illustration.

Man has a human spirit with which he can comprehend and know the abstract thoughts of other men who share the same human spirit. I can talk to my dog about physics and mathematics, but my dog will never understand; the brute has not the capacity. However, I can speak about abstract concepts with people, and they get what I'm saying. Why? Because we share the same Adamic nature.

"For a flea to understand a dog, it would have to be at least as advanced as a dog" (MacArthur, p. 60).

For man to understand God, he must be as advanced as God (which he is not even remotely close to).
Just as man relates (communicates) on a level above the animal realm, so God has thoughts and concepts that are beyond our grasp to reach without the Holy Spirit's illumination.

"No man" - Not even the greatest of geniuses can by empiricism (observation) or rationalism (reason) come to understand God's hidden truth.

Romans 11:33 - *"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"*

No one knows God's ways like the Spirit, because the Spirit has the same divine nature as God!

Important theological note: Just as there is no distinction between man and his human spirit, so there is no distinction between God and His Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows God's mind because He is God!

V. 12

"Received" - No one is born with the Holy Spirit; He must be received.

It is God who gives His Spirit. The Spirit is not earned, worked for, or deserved.

Prior to the Holy Spirit's regenerating work, we had the spirit of the world. We thought like the world, reasoned like the world, planned like the world, etc. But now we have a new Spirit (Ezek. 36:26).

Why did God give us His Holy Spirit? ***"That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."***

The Holy Spirit opened our minds to the grace of God, and to the gifts He gives by grace!

The glories of eternity thrill our hearts because the Holy Spirit has shown us things to come (via His Word).

Every believers has an in-house "resident Truth Teacher" (MacArthur, p. 64) (I Jn. 2:27).

Never take arrogant pride in your spiritual knowledge, because it is the Holy Spirit who gave you such knowledge.

1 Corinthians 2:14
But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

V. 14

"Natural man" - the man who is limited to his five senses (Hence, the *"sensual"* man - Jude 19).

"Natural" - "having only the things of nature" (Wiersbe, p. 577) (Born of natural parents from the natural line of Adam).

This old nature cannot be improved, fixed, repaired or reformed. It must be replaced via the new birth.

"The natural man" - lit. "the soulish man" (i.e. the man devoid of the Holy Spirit).

The man who is left to himself. (He has a soul, but not the Holy Spirit).

He is a man left to himself without the special revelation of God. He has not God's revelation because he has not God's Spirit.

The natural man does not have the desire nor ability to understand God's truth.

The natural man "totally and persistently does not welcome spiritual concepts. He is inhospitable to Biblical doctrines and moral principles" (Gromacki, p. 40).

John 8:47 - *"He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."*

Because the *"natural man"* does not have the capacity to comprehend the Holy Spirit's message, he regards it as ***"foolishness"*** (folly, nonsense).

It does not make sense to his limited mind because he dwells in the realm of darkness and sin.

The natural man is not "in tune" with the Spirit. If he had a new "tuner" (i.e. a new heart), the message he views as "static" to his ears would have a discernable, clear sound.

Not only does he refuse to ***"receive"*** the Spirit's message, he cannot even ***"know"*** it (he does not have the capacity or ability to comprehend it).

Apart from the Holy Spirit's working on a man and opening his eyes to the truth, it is absolutely impossible for him to understand.
This is why a man must be *"born again"* by the Spirit (Jn. 3).

Satan has blinded the minds of those who don't believe (II Cor. 4:3-4).

"Paul rejects Philo's view that man has within him--breathed into him by God--the capacity for knowing God and the higher truths of the universe (Rienecker, p. 392).

Man can know about God via creation (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20) and via conscience (Rom. 2:14), but cannot know God and His mysterious ways and plans for the future.

"Spiritually discerned" - spiritually judged. No one can understand God's ways who is under God's judgment.

Ephesians 1:17
That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

1 John 2:20
But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

v. 20

"But" - in contrast to the defectors (v. 19).

"Ye have an unction" - you have a spiritual anointing

"Unction" - (*chrisma* from *chrio*) to anoint. In the LXX Old Testament it was used of a mixture of oil and aromatic herbs which would be poured on the head of prophets (I Ki. 19:16), priests (Ex. 28:41; 29:7), and kings (I Sam. 10:1).

In the New Testament, the term refers to a spiritual anointing which comes from God upon all who are in Christ (II Cor. 1:21).

"That believers have 'an anointing from the Holy One' indicates that this anointing renders them holy, separating them to God. The passage teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the all-efficient means of enabling believers to possess a knowledge of the truth." (Vine, p. 28-29)

The anointing John speaks of here is not limited to some believers but is given (by grace) to all. This anointing comes from God, via the Holy Spirit, who enters your life upon belief (Acts 2:38-39) and baptizes you into the body of Christ (II Cor. 12:13).

1 John 2:27
But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

"Teacheth" - present tense; the Holy Spirit is (right now) teaching us as believers.

He has both "taught" you in the past and "teacheth" you in the present.

The real teacher is the Holy Spirit (the Holy Spirit who teaches for your "one Master" - Christ - Mt. 23:10).

To the degree that a man of God is faithful to God's Word will determine the degree to which the Holy Spirit teaches through that man.

The teaching the Spirit gives is free (no tuition), easy (no books needed), and direct (no professors with Ph.D's needed).

John is not denying the need for Bible teachers and preachers.

--Such are a gift from Christ (Eph. 4:11-12)

--Such are used by Christ (Mt. 28:19-20)

--Such are to be heard and heeded as they impart God's Word (Heb. 13:17; II Tim. 4:2; Heb. 10:25; I Th. 5:20).

What John is saying in context is that you don't need a teacher to teach you how to distinguish truth from lies (truth from error).

The Spirit only teaches truth (Jn. 16:13) and He often does this through human instruments (Eph. 4:11-14) (Ryrie note).

However, the ability to distinguish truth from error is an ability you all have if you have the anointing.

4. An Obedient Will which submits to God's Commands

I John 3:24

1 John 3:24
And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

God abides close to the obedient child of His (SEE: Jn. 15:1-10)

You will never experience the intimate, close fellowship of God unless you make a deliberate decision to live a life of strict, conscientious obedience to His Word.

One of the Holy Spirit's most important jobs in our lives is to assure us of our relationship to God

(Rom. 8:14-16 - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God)

When we sin, we forfeit this vital ministry of assurance that the Spirit wants to give us.

5. A Virtuous Heart which bears fruitful attitudes and actions

Gal. 5:22; cp. Rom. 5:5, 15:30; I Peter 2:5, cp. with Heb. 13:15

Galatians 5:22
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Romans 5:5
And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Romans 15:30
Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

1 Peter 2:5
Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13:15
By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

When the Holy Spirit is allowed to minister in the life of a Christian, He gives him the following <u>abilities</u>:

1) The ability to <u>worship</u> (Jn. 4:24; Phil. 3:3).
24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in
truth.

2) The ability to <u>pray</u> with wisdom (Eph. 6:18; Jude 20).
18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

3) The ability to <u>understand God's Word</u> (I Cor. 2:10-12, 2:14; Eph. 1:17).
17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

5) The ability to <u>love</u> God (Rom. 5:5).
5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6) The ability to <u>love</u> others (Col. 1:8; Rom. 15:30).
8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.
30 ¶ Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

7) The ability to have <u>unity</u> with other believers (Eph. 4:3).
3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

8) The ability to <u>conquer sin</u> (Rom. 8:13).
13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live

9) The ability to <u>be strong</u> in the "<u>inner man</u>" (Eph. 3:16).
16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

10) The ability to be <u>virtuous</u> (Gal. 5:22) (the Spirit produces internal "fruit").

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

11) The ability to live life <u>without fear</u> (II Tim. 1:7).

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

12) The ability to be <u>encouraged</u> ("comforted" - Acts 9:31).

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied

13) The ability to have <u>boldness in witnessing</u> (Acts 4:8, 31).

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,…31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

14) The ability to serve God in <u>full-time ministry</u> (Acts 20:28).

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

It is the Holy Spirit who "<u>calls men</u>" to the ministry (Ex. the pastorate - Acts 20:28).

15) The ability to <u>preach</u> God's Word with divine <u>power</u> (I Cor. 2:4).

4 And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

6. A <u>Gentle</u> <u>Spirit</u> which humbly confronts those who err from the right path

Gal. 6:1

Galatians 6:1
Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

What Is Spirituality?
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Charles C. Ryrie

Oddly enough, the concept of spirituality, though the subject of much preaching, writing, and discussion, is seldom defined. Usually anything that approaches a definition will be in the nature of a description of the characteristics of spirituality, but one searches in vain in literature for a concise definition of the concept itself. The reason for this is that the concept includes several factors, and it is not easy to weave these together into a balanced definition. Too, the only verse in the Bible that approaches a definition is rather difficult of interpretation (1 Cor. 2:15--"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things"). Consequently, it is avoided. Nevertheless, it is important to try to formulate a definition, for this is like the cornerstone which determines the shape of the entire building.

The Concept of Spirituality

Genuine spirituality involves three factors. The first is regeneration. No one can be spiritual in the biblical sense without having first experienced the new life that is freely given to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Spirituality without regeneration is reformation.

Second, the Holy Spirit is preeminently involved in producing spirituality. This is not to say that the other persons of the Godhead do not have their particular work in this, nor that the believer himself has no responsibility, nor that there are not other means of grace; but it is to affirm His major role in spirituality. The ministries of the Spirit involve teaching (John 16:12-15), guiding (Rom. 8:14), assuring (Rom. 8:16), praying (Rom. 8:26), the exercise of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7), warring against the flesh (Gal. 5:17), and all of these depend for their full manifestation on the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by the Spirit. The clue to this definition is found in Ephesians 5:18 where there is contrast and comparison between drunkenness and Spirit-filling. It is the comparison which gives the clue, for just as a drunken person is controlled by the liquor which he consumes, so a Spirit-filled Christian is controlled by the Spirit. This will cause him to act in ways which are unnatural to him, not implying that such ways will be erratic or abnormal, but asserting that they will not be the ways of the old life. Control by the Spirit is a necessary part of spirituality.

The third factor involved in spirituality is time. If the spiritual person judges or examines or discerns all things (1 Cor. 2:15), this must involve time in order to gain knowledge and to acquire experience for discerning all things. The Amplified Bible elaborates on the verse in this fashion: "He can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him." This could not be accomplished overnight; it is something which is true only of a mature Christian.

In that word maturity I think we have the key to the concept of spirituality, for Christian maturity is the growth which the Holy Spirit produces over a period of time in the believer. To be sure, the same amount of time is not required for each individual, but some time is necessary for all. It is not the time itself which is determinative of maturity; rather it is the progress made and growth achieved which is all-important. Rate multiplied by time equals distance, so that the distance to maturity may be covered in a

shorter time if the rate of growth is accelerated. And it will be accelerated if none of the control which ought to be given to the Holy Spirit is retained by self.

Here is a proposed definition of spirituality which attempts to be concise and at the same time to keep these above-discussed factors in mind. Spiritually is a mature and maturing relation to the Holy Spirit. While this may simply be another way of saying that spirituality is Christian maturity, it tries to delineate more openly the factors of Spirit-control over a period of time. Certainly the definition satisfies the requirements of the description of a spiritual man in 1 Corinthians 2:15, for one who is experiencing a grown-up relation to the Holy Spirit will be able to discern all things and at the same time not be understood by others.

If this be a correct definition, there are certain ramifications of it which ought to be thought through.

A new Christian cannot be called spiritual simply because he has not had sufficient time to grow and develop in Christian knowledge and experience. A new believer can be Spirit-controlled, but the area of control is subject to expansion in the normal process of Christian growth. A young Christian has not yet been confronted with many areas within the general sphere of Christian conduct, for instance; and while he may be completely willing to let the Spirit control his life and actions, he has not yet gained the experience and maturity that comes from having faced these problems and having made Spirit-controlled decisions about them. When he is first saved he may not even know that there is such a person as a weaker brother, and, although he may not be unwilling to curb his liberty for the sake of that brother, he has not yet faced the doing of it, to say nothing of having guided others into right decisions about such matters. Spirit-control may be total over the new Christian's life insofar as he has knowledge of that life in his newborn state, but as his knowledge increases and his growth progresses, new vistas of life break upon him which must also be consciously yielded to God's direction. Time to gain maturity is needed for genuine spirituality.

A Christian of longer standing may not be spiritual not because he has not had enough time but because during the years of his Christian life he has not allowed the Holy Spirit to control him. Whereas the new Christian may lack the time required to become spiritual, the believer of longer standing may be deficient in yieldedness. And without complete and continued control by the Spirit he cannot be spiritual. This, of course, was the burden of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for his readers were in this exact condition.

A Christian can backslide in certain areas of his life without losing all the ground he has gained during his Christian lifetime. The flesh may control his actions during a period of backsliding, but when he comes back to the Lord he does not necessarily have to start the process of growth all over again. For example, a believer may backslide with regard to personal Bible study, but when he comes back to it he will not have forgotten everything he formerly knew. However, this principle does not apply in every area of life, for there are some aspects of living, such as fidelity in marriage, which if violated can never be fully redeemed. The sin can be forgiven, fellowship restored, but the ground lost cannot be recovered.

There are stages of growth within the area of maturity. The best illustration is that of the human being who, though in adulthood, continues to grow, develop, and mature. The spiritual man who is experiencing a grown-up relation to the Holy Spirit is not stagnant

in his Christian life, for he also has a growing relationship in his walk with the Lord. Although we never arrive at perfection in this life, it is also true that we never ascend to a plateau above and beyond which there is no further ground to gain. Spirituality, then, is a mature and a growing relationship to the Spirit.

The state of babyhood need not last long. Let no one try to take refuge in a fraudulent kind of piety which demeans or ignores the processes of growth that have advanced him to a state of maturity which he refuses to recognize. False humility is sometimes the reason for such lack of recognition of maturity which has actually been achieved. After all, when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians those believers were about four or five years old in the faith, and he expected them to be spiritual by that time. He makes it quite clear that, although when he was with them he could not speak to them as spiritual people (for they were then babes in Christ), he fully anticipated that by the time he wrote this letter to them they would have matured to the point where he could address them as spiritual (1 Cor. 3:1-2). With the passing of only a few years, babyhood should also disappear.

The Characteristics of Spirituality

Spirituality is more easily characterized than defined. And in these biblical characteristics of spirituality we have concrete tests by which one may determine whether or not he is spiritual.

Spirituality will be seen in one's character. If spirituality involves control by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), and if the Spirit has come to glorify Christ (John 16:14), then a spiritual person will manifest Christ in his character and actions. To glory is to show, display, or manifest. The evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of a life is not found in manifestations of the Spirit, but in the display of Christ. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is a perfect description of the character of Christ; thus, the Christian who is spiritual will display love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. These are the traits that will describe his character.

In his conduct the spiritual believer will imitate Christ. One of the wrong emphases in victorious life teachings today demeans this aspect of the truth. We are told not to imitate Christ since this involves striving which is a work of the flesh; rather, we should simply allow Christ to live out His life through us. Actually it is not a question of one view or the other; both ideas are scriptural. Christ lives in me, and the life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20), but I am also exhorted to "follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21) and to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6). Obviously if the Holy Spirit is allowed to produce the character of Christ in an individual, the life that he lives will imitate Christ. One of the most rewarding studies in the Gospels is to note the details of our Lord's life which we as His followers would do well to imitate.

Spirituality will be seen in one's knowledge. The strong meat of the Word of God belongs to mature Christians (Heb. 5:14), and Paul expected the Corinthians after four or five years of Christian experience to be able to understand strong meat of the Word. The milk of the Word is for babes in Christ, and Paul does not scold the Corinthians for feeding on milk when they were first converted. But when their diet continued to consist only of milk, he, like the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, denounces them as defective Christians. What is meat truth? Of course, the Bible does not label passages milk or meat so it is not always easy to answer that question. However, one subject is

clearly designated meat, and that is the matter which reminded the writer to the Hebrews of the inability of his readers to understand what he was writing about. And that subject is the truth about Melchisedek and his priesthood (Heb. 5:10-11). Here is an example from the Bible itself of the meat of the Word, and it may rightly be used as a test of one's spirituality.

Spirituality will be seen in one's attitudes. A spiritual Christian will exhibit at least two basic attitudes throughout life. The first is an attitude of thankfulness. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). This admonition follows the command to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and is thereby one of the characteristics of a Spirit-filled life. It is to be an all-inclusive attitude in the life of the believer. It should apply at all times ("always") and in all situations ("for all things"). No time and no circumstance is expected. This means that grumbling, carping criticism, discontent, etc., will not characterize a spiritual Christian. This does not mean he can never be discontented in the proper exercise of godly ambition nor that he should never criticize in the sense of exercising discernment (Phil. 1:9-10). But the kind of attitude that blames God for that which we do not like or that is vexed with His dealings with us is not a characteristic of genuine spirituality.

The other attitude of life which characterizes the spiritual Christian is, in the words of Paul, that of "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). This is not entirely a positional matter; that is, it does not only relate to the unity within the body of Christ which the Holy Spirit has brought about by baptizing every believer into that body (1 Cor. 12:13). It is true that we could never make such unity, but we are exhorted to endeavor to keep it. The very fact that the word keep is used shows that the unity has been made by the Spirit, but the fact that there is also an exhortation shows that we must not disrupt that unity. Obviously, there is no problem about keeping unity with members of the body of Christ who have predeceased me; nor is there any difficulty in maintaining unity with those other Christians whom I do not know or with whom I have no contact. Therefore, the only sphere in which this exhortation has any relevance is the group of believers with whom I am thrown in contact. And it goes without saying that there are many practical problems in trying to keep the unity of the Spirit among believers I know--and the same is true for believers who know me. But, difficult as this may be, it is a requirement of spirituality.

It was the lack of this attitude that called forth Paul's scathing denunciation of the Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:1-7; cf. 1 Cor. 1:12-13). Disunity had developed among believers who should have been worshipping together. Actually, there were four parties in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12). The "Paul Party" was perhaps a large group in the church who had been converted under Paul and who continued to adhere to him. But as is often the case, they seemed disposed to be more Pauline than Paul was and to disparage other gifted men, all of which resulted in detracting from the glory of Christ. The "Apollos Party" (Acts 18:24-28) also contained some personal converts as well as those who had been won over by Apollos' genial manner and eloquent preaching. Some may have followed him because they considered his teaching more advanced than Paul's plain gospel preaching or they were attracted to his more cultured manner. The "Peter Party" would undoubtedly have been composed of conservative Jewish believers who rallied to the hero of Pentecost. The "Christ Party" was perhaps the most difficult to get along with, for those in this group prided themselves on being His followers, not any mere man's

disciples. They were Gnostics before Gnosticism, and they unquestionably strutted their supposed spiritual superiority before all.

This is the kind of situation, attitude, and activity that Paul unhesitatingly labels “carnal” (1 Cor. 3:3), for it broke the unity of the Spirit.

However, this is an area in which there needs to be very carefully balanced thinking, for all division is not necessarily wrong, and all unions are not per se right. In the same epistle (1 Cor. 11:19) Paul said: “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” The noun heretic is used one time in the New Testament (Titus 3:10), but the adjective is used twice (here and Gal. 5:20 where the action is condemned as a work of the flesh). The word means a willful choosing for one’s self which results in a party division. Even though heresy is a work of the flesh which is often performed by a carnal Christian, it may be used for good so that those who are not involved in heresy will stand out in the churches. But heresy seems to involve the espousal of error which in turn causes the division. In such instances the heretic is to be admonished twice, then ignored (Titus 3:11), while the part of the divided group that did not follow the error goes on demonstrating its purity of doctrine by abounding in the work of the Lord. Thus to put in balance 1 Corinthians 3:1-5 and 1 Corinthians 11:19 we may say this: divisions involving heresy may be good and necessary, but divisions over personalities are carnal.

Thankfulness at all times and in all circumstances and the maintenance of unity in that part of the body of Christ with which I live and am concerned with all of the implications pertaining thereto are the two basic attitudes of life that must characterize genuine, biblical spirituality.

Spirituality will be seen in one’s conduct. Spirituality is also demonstrated in one’s self by proper conduct which is the result of the correct, discerning, and mature use of knowledge (Heb. 5:13-14). We have already noticed that knowledge of the Word including meat truth is a prerequisite for spirituality, but such knowledge must be used properly in order to be spiritual. The readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews were unskillful in the word of righteousness (Heb. 5:13); that is, the word concerning uprightness in both doctrine and practice. As a result, they were unable to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). This should not be limited to things morally good or evil, but includes things superior versus inferior, things better versus those things which are best. A spiritual Christian will be able to tread his way carefully through the complexities of Christian living so that he not only does that which is right and scriptural but also that which is useful and for the good of others.

Notice that again in this passage the matter of time is involved in maturity or spirituality. These people had had time to use and exercise their spiritual senses though they had not done so. But time is required to reach this state and achieve the ability to use God’s Word skillfully.

Spirituality will be seen in one’s home. The easiest place in which to be spiritual is in public; the most difficult is at home. The relationships of the home are intimate and continuous, while our activities and impressions made in public are intermittent and casual. This axiomatic reminder is especially necessary for Christian workers who too often can make a show of professional spirituality in public ministry while living a carnal life at home.

Again it is the Ephesian passage concerning the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-21) which provides the biblical basis for this characteristic of spirituality. The command to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) is followed by four coordinate phrases each of which begins with a participle. Together they constitute results or characteristics of the Spirit-filled life. The four participles are speaking, singing (Eph. 5:19), giving thanks (Eph. 5:20), and submitting (Eph. 5:21), and the last is not only the conclusion to verses 18-21 [Eph. 5:18-21] but it is also the topic sentence to that which follows beginning in verse 22 [Eph. 5:22]. In other words, submission which is an evidence of the filling of the Spirit will be seen in the relationships of the home most vividly.

The word submit means to place one's self in a subordinate rank. This means distinctive things for the husband and for the wife in the home, but both are to be submissive to one another (not just the wife to the husband as is commonly taught). For the husband it involves at least three things. (1) He is to lead, for he is the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23). This does not make him a dictator, but the responsible leader of the family who not only has the privilege of making the final decision but also the responsibility. (2) He is to love his wife (Eph. 5:25). A man needs this reminder, for he by nature is prone to be less demonstrative if not less loving than a woman. (3) He is to nurture his wife (Eph. 5:29). The word translated nourish means to bring to maturity and is used in the New Testament in this verse and in Eph. 6:4 only. The word cherish means to warm and in the New Testament it is used only here and in 1 Thessalonians 2:7. The point is simply that the husband is ultimately responsible for helping bring to spiritual maturity his wife and family. The contemporary tragedy is simply that usually the opposite is the case. It is too often the wife who is spiritually astute and who is forced, so to speak, to pull her husband along. Both should be spiritually keen, and it is the husband's responsibility to take the leadership in this most important matter.

The spiritual wife will be subject to the leadership of her husband (Eph. 5:22, 24). In other words, she will not work at cross purposes with her husband's leadership in the family. This does not mean that she has no voice, for the husband is a presiding officer over the members of the family (that word is used in 1 Tim. 3:4).

Spirituality will be seen in one's church. The other principal area in which personal spirituality will be demonstrated is the church. We have already seen that a spiritual person will try to keep the unity of the Spirit in the sphere with which he is chiefly concerned--his own local church. A factious spirit is carnality.

The positive contribution a spiritual Christian will bring to the church is through the exercise of his spiritual gifts. The immature Christian promotes division; the mature one, unity through the use of his gifts (1 Cor. 12:25). It goes without saying, then (or does it?), that the church member who is always creating problems and who constantly demands to be catered to is not a genuinely spiritual person. But the one who is serving the Lord by promoting the welfare of the church is evincing a mature spiritual life. Accusing the brethren is the work of the devil (Rev. 12:10); caring for the brethren is the work of the Lord through His mature children.

This is genuine and wholesome spirituality. The concept is that of a mature and maturing relationship to the Holy Spirit which will be demonstrated in one's personal life. This is biblical spirituality.

The Spiritual Man
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Stanley D. Toussaint

What is the spiritual life? This basic and fundamental question is not a simple one to answer. All too often well meaning teachers, preachers, and writers have erred in one of two directions. Either they have been guilty of oversimplification or they have presented a doctrine which is hardly more than mystical obscurantism. On one side the impression is sometimes given that spirituality is simply a matter of conforming one's life to a few elemental rules. If a certain prescribed pattern is followed, a believer in Christ automatically becomes spiritual. The spiritual life then comes into danger of becoming a matter of mechanics without heart. At the other extreme there are those who portray the spiritual life as some mystical obscurity that defies either attainment or satisfaction. It is proffered as though it were some mysterious secret open to only a fortunate few.

The Bible rather presents the spiritual life as something profound, yet practical, that will work in the life of a business man, housewife, farmer, laborer, or executive. It is meant for every Christian, no matter what his station in life may be.

What then is the spiritual life? To answer this question properly it is necessary to examine the New Testament viewpoint of the spiritual man. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 to 1 Corinthians 3:4 Paul refers to four types of people--the natural man, the spiritual man, the infant Christian, and the carnal Christian. A brief study of this passage will lead to a better comprehension of the spiritual man and consequently will help to formulate a definition of the spiritual life.

The natural man: In 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul writes: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The first question that needs to be answered is, Who is the natural man? By this term Paul is referring to an unregenerate soul, a man who needs Christ as his Savior. Two related passages, Romans 8:9 and Jude 19, confirm this conclusion. Romans 8:9 asserts: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This verse teaches the fact of the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit; every Christian is indwelled by the Spirit. The second passage is Jude 19. In describing scoffers of the faith Jude writes: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." The word translated sensual is the same as the one rendered natural in 1 Corinthians 2:14. Therefore, Jude is in effect saying the natural man does not possess the Spirit of God. If all of God's children possess the Holy Spirit as Romans 8:9 asserts, and the natural man does not have His indwelling presence, it can only be deduced the natural man is not a born-again child of God and is therefore lost; that is, he is destined for eternal condemnation. All of this can be reduced to a very simple syllogism: major premise: a man without the Holy Spirit is a lost man; minor premise: the natural man is without the Holy Spirit; conclusion: the natural man is a lost man.

This conclusion is verified by the Apostle Paul's assertions concerning the natural man. Paul says two things about him which could only be true of a lost or unsaved man. First, this one does not receive the things that come from and relate to the Spirit of God. The verb translated receive quite literally means welcome. The natural man not only fails to lay hold of spiritual truths; they are somewhat repugnant to him. Having made this assertion concerning an unsaved person, Paul goes on to explain why this is so. An

unregenerate man considers spiritual things to be foolishness. Prayer, the study of God's Word, Christian fellowship, faith, giving, witnessing, and all other things of the Spirit are nonsensical to him. These are counted as having little or no worth. The natural man does not welcome spiritual things for they are foolishness to him.

A second assertion is made in this passage concerning the unsaved man. Paul writes: "Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Here is a problem. An unsaved man certainly can know in the sense that he can understand spiritual truths. Many have been the atheists, agnostics, and unbelievers who have understood the Biblical doctrines of the virgin birth, the deity of Jesus Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the resurrection and return of Christ, and other such truths, only to reject and scoff at them. Some unbelievers have known and studied the Bible more intensively than many Christians. What then does Paul mean when he says a natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God? Paul is not discussing the matter of an unsaved man's ability to understand spiritual things; rather he is portraying the lost person's inability to interact with the things of the Holy Spirit. The word that Paul employs here does not simply mean to know about; it implies a sort of recognition and acknowledgment. The word is used in this sense several times in the New Testament (e.g., Matt. 7:23; John 10:14-15; Rom. 7:7; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:19). While an unsaved man may understand doctrine, he cannot interact with spiritual things. There is a definite reason for this. The apostle states: "Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The natural man does not possess the Holy Spirit and therefore cannot interact with spiritual realities. He is spiritually dead and insensitive. The natural man then is unsaved and is characterized by two things--a failure to welcome the things of the Spirit of God, and an inability to interact with them.

The spiritual man. The second type of person to which Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 2 is the spiritual man. Because it is quite obvious the apostle sets this one forth as the Christian's ideal, it is essential that a clear perception of Paul's concept of the spiritual man be gained. This is necessary in order to arrive at a proper definition of the spiritual life. 1 Corinthians 2:15 declares: "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." In the main there are two views as to the person Paul is describing here. Many feel the spiritual man is any Christian who genuinely loves the Lord and is living the Spirit-filled life.(1) This interpretation is fundamentally based on the modern usage of the term spiritual. Today it is employed to describe a devoted Christian regardless of his spiritual immaturity. However, this is not the sense in which Paul employs the word. There are several reasons why it is incorrect to apply this verse to all who are Spirit-filled, including neophytes in the faith. First, Paul says this is a person who is characterized by profound perception and spiritual understanding (cf. 1 Cor. 14:37). Christians young in the faith certainly cannot be described in such a manner. In Hebrews 5:13-14 the readers of that epistle are reminded: "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Discernment is the result of the exercise and use of spiritual faculties and this can only come with time. Second, in 1 Corinthians 3:1 the babe in Christ is contrasted with the spiritual Christian: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." The sharp distinction made between the

spiritual man and the new Christian prohibits their being equated. Third, Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:6 refers to those who are spiritually mature in stating, “We speak wisdom among them that are full grown” (literal translation). The wisdom which Paul preached was better comprehended by the mature Christians at Corinth than by the more immature. In both 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 1 Corinthians 2:15 Paul recognized there were Christians more fully developed than others who entered into the truths which he preached. The mature Christian of 1 Corinthians 2:6 appreciated God’s wisdom, and the spiritual man of 1 Corinthians 2.15 apprehended it. It becomes quite clear the two terms describe the same person.

Who then is the spiritual person? By this term the apostle is describing a mature Christian. Such a believer has developed and matured over a period of time into spiritual adulthood. It is this man that Paul sets forth as the ideal of every Christian. Concerning the spiritual Christian Paul also makes two assertions. First, the spiritual Christian discerns all things. The verb which is employed here actually means to examine. It was used of a preliminary examination in preparation for a court trial. Only a Christian who is spiritually mature has the proper perspective to make a correct examination of spiritual matters. He has insight which others do not possess.

The second affirmation Paul makes pertaining to the spiritual man relates to the inability of the world of men to examine him. When Paul says, “Yet he himself is judged of no man,” it is quite evident he assumes the examiner of the spiritual man to be an unregenerate person. This certainly does not mean a spiritual man is always beyond reproach. Just as the natural man cannot know spiritual things because they are spiritually discerned, so he cannot pass judgment on the spiritual man because he does not as an unsaved man possess the Holy Spirit. The unregenerate person is unqualified to make inquiry into the life of a spiritually mature saint of God.

The infant Christian. The third type of person Paul describes in this passage is the Christian who is immature. He is portrayed in the first two verses of 1 Corinthians 3: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”

The word carnal which is found here implies weakness. It is a translation of the Greek word sarkinos and is more properly rendered fleshen. The particular weakness that Paul has in view is immaturity. The Corinthians are reminded in this passage of their beginnings in the Christian faith. When they first came to know the Lord Jesus, Paul carefully taught them as fleshen and weak Christians, as the babes in Christ they were. At that time they were nurtured on a very simple fare of basic Christian truths and not with more profound doctrines which they could not then assimilate. It should be noticed that Paul does not blame such a person for his immaturity; this is what is to be expected of new converts.

The carnal Christian. In 1 Corinthians 3:3-4 Paul writes: “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”

Here the fourth type of man is discussed, the carnal Christian. The term carnal which Paul uses in these two verses is a translation of the Greek word sarkikos and literally means fleshly. In contemporary Christian circles carnal is a word that describes a

Christian who is not maintaining a good testimony. He is one who is living for the material world and for prestige in the eyes of men. In part this is the sense in which Paul employs the word here. Basically it implies willfulness in living in sin. The Corinthians should have developed and matured in the Christian faith, but instead they stubbornly pursued their own selfish course and became carnal Christians.(2) No newborn Christian is blamable for his immaturity; however, every carnal or fleshly Christian is culpable for willfully living in sin and not developing in the spiritual life.

The carnal Christian of 1 Corinthians 3:3-4 has two characteristics. First, he cannot perceive and appreciate the more profound truths of Christ when he is old enough in the faith to be able to do so. To the Corinthians Paul says; “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal.” The tragedy of these words is found in their application to today’s Christians. The complaint against the church at Corinth could be leveled at believer after believer in contemporary Christianity. These have been in the faith for years but still cannot go beyond the ABC’s of doctrine.

The second characteristic of the carnal Christian is selfishness and pride. It is betrayed by envy, strife, and divisions. Blinded by conceit, these Christians live only for themselves and consequently cannot get along with others. This is a basic spiritual principle: a man’s relationship with God is seen in his relationships with men, in particular with God’s people. If he cannot get along well with others, it is a fair indication he is not getting along with God either.

The fourth type of a person Paul refers to here is a Christian who has failed to mature because he has been willfully living like the natural man.

A conclusion. Because the spiritual man is presented by Paul as the ideal and he is to be defined as a mature believer, one must conclude the spiritual life is the life that produces the mature Christian. It is the kind of life that will lead to spiritual adulthood. The implications of this simple definition are varied and far-reaching. For one thing, this indicates the spiritual life is a gradual development. No young Christian can be designated as being spiritual in the Pauline sense of that term. It is reserved for those who have sufficiently developed to be called mature. At the same time, this should be a reminder to young Christians not to become discouraged. A first-grader who is learning the simplest things of arithmetic does not give up because he cannot carry out a problem involving calculus. Bit by bit he learns his mathematics and advances from one step to another. The spiritual life is like that. It is a gradual development that calls for one’s best efforts where he is right now. By the same token, an immature Christian is not suddenly transformed into spiritual adulthood by some emotional or ecstatic experience. This does not produce perception, the hallmark of maturity. It is a gradual process, just as physical maturation is the result of progressive development.

There is a second implication that needs to be noted. Perception results from the exercise and use of spiritual senses (Heb. 5:13-14). It is necessary, therefore, to have a balanced spiritual life in order to attain maturity. The spiritual life that produces the fully developed Christian must contain every possible ingredient of the Christian life. Bible study, prayer, witnessing, sharing, Christian fellowship, and the recognition of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit are a few of these. The development of Christian maturity as in natural maturity involves every possible area of the spiritual life.

Even though a Christian is mature, there is always room for further development. This is a third implication. Spiritual maturity does not mean there is a cessation of spiritual growth. Full grown people develop in physical prowess; emotionally mature individuals grow emotionally; and the mentally mature expand intellectually. So it is in the spiritual life. Because of his discernment, a Christian may be considered to be spiritual, but he is never to cease his spiritual development. As Paul said: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12-14).

By way of conclusion it may be said the spiritual life is not simply a matter of conforming one’s life to a few prescribed rules. Nor is it a mystical obscurantism which is beyond definition or attainment. It is the kind of life that produces spiritual maturity. For this reason the spiritual man referred to in 1 Corinthians 2:15 is the ideal who is also to be the normal Christian. The spiritual man is an ideal because he is so far beyond the average Christian’s experience, but at the same time the spiritual man ought to be the normal outgrowth of the kind of life every believer is living. Tragically this is not what is seen in too many cases today. Only as Christians en masse commit themselves to a well rounded spiritual life will this ideal become realized as the normal experience of believers.