

THE INNER MAN

The Apostle Paul said: "...though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

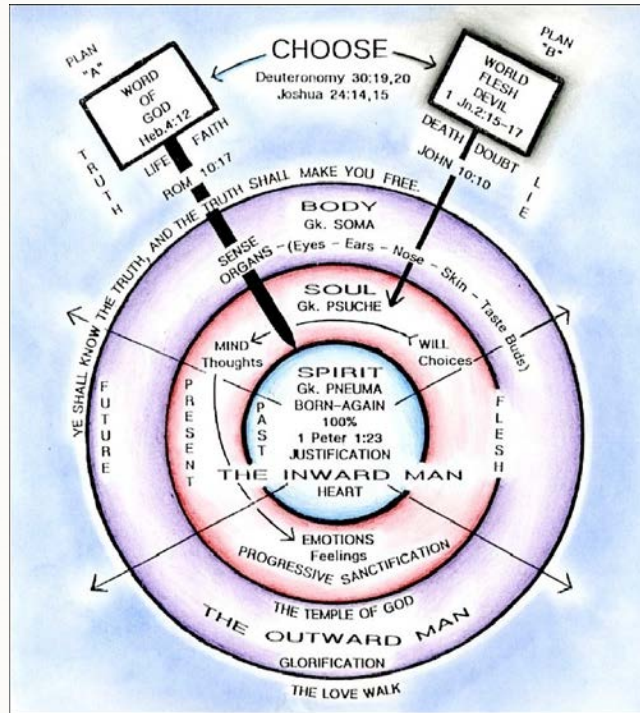
The inner or inward man is the non-material part of man. The material part of man, or the body, is the outward man. The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible says the heart is "...the inner man; the function of the mind, where man remembers, thinks; the seat and center of all physical and spiritual life; the soul or mind as the foundation and seat of thoughts, passion, desires, affections, appetites, purposes, endeavors."

By this definition, the heart and the inner man are the same. The inner man is made up of both spirit (Greek: Pneuma) and soul (Greek: Psuche). The body (Greek: Soma) is the house for the inner man.

THE PARTS OF MAN

The spirit is the part of the inner man that is regenerated at new birth. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "...You must be born again" (John 3:3, 7). David gave us the reason for this need as he cried out to God in Psalms: "Behold, I

was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom" (51:5, 6). The born again experience is the wisdom of God, and through Christ, the life, light and love of God is shed forth in and through our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 4:6).



The soul is the part of the inner man that needs renewal. 2 Corinthians 4:16 explains, "...though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." The soul and spirit make up the heart of man or the inner man which energizes the body. Paul prayed that the soulful part of the Ephesians' inner man would "...be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (3:16).

The body is the outward part of man that houses the sense organs. The life of the body is the spirit. James told us, "...the body without the spirit is dead..." (2:26). As Christians, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20). The apostle Paul spoke of our being in an "earthly tent" while earnestly longing for a heavenly house not made with

hands (2 Corinthians 5:1, 2). Solomon used the image of a house to describe the process of our bodies growing old (Ecclesiastes 12:3-7). One day Jesus "...will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body..." (Philippians 3:21).

THE HEART OF MAN ("KARDIA")

Remember, the heart is our inner man which is made up of spirit and soul. The heart must be changed to affect the outward. If we are not born again, we must receive Christ into our heart to be set free from our sinful nature, that is "...the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2; Jude 19).

One of the things the Lord hates is a "...heart that devises [to think, to design, to contrive, to propose] wicked plans" (Proverbs 6:18, emphasis added). Jesus had much to say about the wickedness of the heart. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34, 35). "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man..." (Matthew 15:18-20a). Jesus said the Pharisees, "...outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:28).

The Holy Spirit gives new life as the essence of God's power acts upon the heart or inner man. This is because "...the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:3-6). The prophet Jeremiah spoke for the Lord saying, "...I will put my law into their minds and write it on their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (31:33).

The unregenerated heart is "...deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9; 18:12), much less discipline [training that corrects, molds and perfects] it. We must have a new heart to grow toward wholeness. Just as our spirit must be made new through regeneration, our soul [mind, will and emotions] must be renewed through transformation,

that is, "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:2).

THE CIRCUMCISION OF MAN (SPIRIT CHANGE)

The Bible clearly states that "...man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). God's promise of a heart transplant is applicable for us, as it was for Israel, when He said: "...I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19, 18:31, 36:26, 27, 44:7). Paul spoke of this new heart and spirit in his letter to the Romans: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (2:28, 29).

Circumcision of the flesh by the Jew was a forerunner or symbol of a New Testament fulfillment in Christ (Genesis, chapter 17). Because of the resurrection, circumcision is not only of the body, but of the spirit and soul (Colossians 2:11, 12). By the new birth, the fleshly nature is cut away from the heart, 100% in the spirit, and then the soul by continually renewing the mind, symbolizing circumcision. The Lord says to us, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked [hard, firm and rigid] no longer" (Deuteronomy 10:16, emphasis added; cf. Jeremiah 4:4).

THE DISCIPLINE OF MAN (SOUL CHANGE)

Therefore, the soulish part of the inner man must still be disciplined through spiritual circumcision by faith in God's grace. The Apostle Paul exhorted: "...throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness — righteous, holy, and true" (Ephesians 4:22-24, NLT).

The word "disciple" in the New Testament means "disciplined one." "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (John 8:31, 32, NLT).

Paul wrote to Timothy: "Train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:7-8, NLT). The word must be hidden in our heart (Psalms 119:11). Only this new heart, a heart capable of knowing God (Jeremiah 24:7) and experiencing emotions in a God-ordained way is able to be disciplined (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13, 17-21).

But always remember, "...sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Grace is God's favor and ability, working in man, making him able to do what he cannot do in his own ability through the Law. The power of grace will determine whether your life will be one of influence, peace, rest and victory, or one of difficulty, frustration, anguish and defeat. "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6).

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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.

I Thessalonians 5:23

The foundation of the Christian life is based on faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary. Our spirit is made alive [born again] when "...joined unto the Lord" (1 Cor. 6:17), through regeneration. Our new Spirit is released through our soul [mind, will and emotions]. This release empowers our walk to be in harmony with the Spirit. Our soul is the gateway which releases the Holy Spirit and brings forth the power and life of God into our actions and relationships. Our bodily conduct comes under control of the Spirit as we choose in our soul to walk in line with God's word through renewing the mind (Rom. 12:2).

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