

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Realizing the Surpassing Value of Knowing Jesus Christ Our Lord

Christ's Victory Over Our Fallen Nature

Romans 12:1-2

Intro: In the previous study we considered the distinction between the spirit, soul, and body in the total plan of redemption and viewed salvation in its progressive aspect of past, present, and future. It is helpful to understand the three part aspect of our human nature in order to understand the work of redemption. In practice we are not three parts that operate independently but a single whole, a human being, and each part affects the other in a complex and interconnected way.

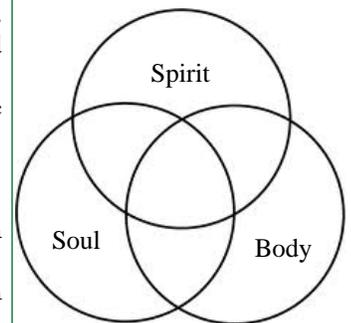
I. New Birth Addition—The Transformation in Regeneration (Review for Reference Only)

- A. Prior to being born again, we are essentially “Soul-Body” people, being spiritually dead. In the new birth our spirit is regenerated and we become whole people alive unto God adding the third dimension to our total nature.
- B. We now have three interconnected and intricately connected parts that exert influence in all directions: see diagram in right column
- C. We were originally intended to live out of the spirit in communion with God, informing our soul (mind, will, emotions) in all areas and giving life to our bodies.
 1. In the fall the order was disrupted, the body became susceptible to disease and death and the soul exerted the influence and control over life’s direction and choices
 2. In regeneration we become alive to God and His Holy Spirit returns to His human temple, taking up residence within to restore communion and Spiritual power

II. Total Depravity Means We Are Really Broken!

- A. It was not merely the spirit that died in the fall—every part of our being became devoid of the life of God and left, earth bound, to ruin at all levels:
 1. The body became mortal, corrupt, and susceptible to disease and deformity
 - a. It wears out, runs down, deteriorates, ages, and dies
 - b. It is susceptible to infection, inflammation, and disease
 - c. It is susceptible to genetic defects and inherited weaknesses
 - d. Its appetites grew out of proportion and became a controlling influence
 - e. These ALL influence our soul/state of being
 2. The mind was darkened and blinded to truth resulting in false beliefs about what is real and valuable. With a foundation of wrong beliefs, rationalism leads to wrong conclusions and ultimately to bad choices.
 3. The will was immediately locked into the bondage of sin with an underlying rebellion toward God, now informed by wrong information through the mind, and lost in an unending sequence of wrong choices.
 4. The emotions, also damaged and disproportioned, exert influence on the mind and will and frequently drive behavior by the whim of feelings.
- B. Additionally there is a synergistic influence of both of these systems:
 1. The state of the body, pain, disease, and defects influence the state of the emotions, beliefs of the mind, and the will in a direction aimed at alleviating physical distress at any cost.
 2. The general state of a life guided by wrong beliefs and a sequence of bad choices leads to failure, distress, disappointment, despair, and coupled with the reality of one’s own mortality as well as the death of loved ones, leads to stresses that affect the normal functioning of the mind and nervous system, the immune system, and other organ systems
 3. Sinful choices aimed at satisfying the physical appetites of the body also lead to infections and disease adding emotional and mental stress to a system already in failure. (poor sleep patterns, lack of reasonable exercise, poor diet, exposure to harmful toxins, excessive consumption, immorality and poor sexual health)

Romans 12:1 Therefore ^aI urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to ^bpresent your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, ¹acceptable to God, which is your ²spiritual service of worship. ² And do not ^abe conformed to ^bthis ¹world, but be transformed by the ^crenewing of your mind, so that you may ^{2d}prove what the will of God is, that which is good and ³acceptable and perfect.



Isaiah 55:8-9 ⁸ "For My thoughts are not ^ayour thoughts, Nor are ^byour ways My ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "For ^aas the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Proverbs 3:5-8 ⁵ ^a"Trust in the LORD with all your heart And ^bdo not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways ^aacknowledge Him, And He will ^bmake your paths straight. ⁷ ^aDo not be wise in your own eyes; ^bFear the LORD and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be ^ahealing to your ¹body And ^brefreshment to your bones.

Proverbs 14:12 ¹² There ^ais a way which seems right to a man, But its ^bend is the way of death.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 ³ And even if our ^agospel is ^bveiled, it is veiled ¹to ^cthose who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case ^athe god of ^bthis ¹world has ^cblinded the minds of the unbelieving ²so that they might not see the ^alight of the gospel of the ^eglory of Christ, who is the ^fimage of God.

My Own Righteousness: Read the Law → Decide to Obey → Temptation → Ask for Help → Struggle → Pass/Fail

Righteousness from God: Abide in Christ → Tempt/Direct → Surrender → Holy Spirit Works → Christ-like Action

- C. The sins of the fathers are passed down to the third & fourth generations
1. This is a statement of fact and a strong warning to all to break the patterns of sin in their generation.
 2. Patterns of behavior and defense mechanisms are learned from a family environment where the sins of the parents and extended family conspire to influence the development of the children in ways that mimic the weaknesses and addictions of the parents
 3. Genetic defects develop within family lines and predispose the children to susceptibilities, weaknesses, and potential mental/emotional/addictive patterns of behavior
 4. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood. Demons invited into the home and family structure by the sinful patterns of the parents gain access to children often from birth and begin their insidious influence. This often leads to bondage at very young ages which further deepens the family heritage of generational sins.

Transition: It is out of this utter hopelessness of total depravity affecting every level and aspect of our being that Jesus comes to us and offers full redemption: regeneration, salvation from our sin, freedom to the captive, release from bondage, and the promise of resurrection and future glory in a heavenly home not marred by the effects of sin or even its presence.

III. Sin IS the human problem and Jesus IS the total answer: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!

- A. Every victory in our life is won by believing Jesus Christ—we are never asked to work *per se*, only to believe by faith
- B. We begin by believing the truth: agreement with God regarding the cause of our sins and failures—owning our own baggage (Pilgrim's Progress) and taking full responsibility for our own behavior
- C. We are changed into His likeness by believing in His power to do, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, what we are unable to do ourselves: having acknowledged our sin in contrast to His holiness, we now trust him to live His perfect life through us
- D. The path to becoming like Christ begins with the renewing of the mind: exposing our wrong beliefs about what is good and valuable to the light of His glory and replacing them with the revelation of His truth and character.

NOTES

Paul R. Martin
Senior Pastor
Alliance Bible Church of McHenry, IL

