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Your Spirit, Soul, and Body

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Your Spirit, Soul, and Body


Day 20

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. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

God designed us in His image. He wants us to know and radiate His nature of lovingkindness. We are called to be like Jesus in this world.

So, how does God intend that we function? How *did* God make us to be like Him?

We are made up of three parts: *spirit*, *soul*, and *body*. Each has a different and vital function, but God designed that the parts work together in agreement with Him.

 Three concentric circles representing spirit, soul, and body (from the small to large)

Our *spirit* is designed to be the resting place for God. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). When we believe in Jesus, He comes to live in our spirit and we are “born again” into eternal life.

But our life in Christ isn’t meant to stop there. Our soul and body also need restoring.

Our *soul* is composed of our *mind*, *will*, and emotions; it is our unique self. God made our mind, will, and emotions to be filled with Him—permeated by His thoughts and feelings. We are meant to be led by His Spirit in our spirit. But we have free will. Our soul can do as it pleases. It can agree with the Spirit or it can hold to thoughts and emotions that oppose God. It can choose its own will over God’s.

As we grow in relationship with God, we surrender the ways of our independent soul and let Him lead. Untrue, hurtful thoughts and feelings we learned from trying to survive on our own in a messed-up world die away as we grow in agreement with Him.

We don't lose our unique self as we grow in Christ. Our personality is a lasting gift God gives to each one of us. We may still enjoy painting or playing soccer, for example. We may still tend to be quiet and reserved or talkative and outgoing. But now God's nature flows through our unique personality.

Our *body* is the house for the inward, hidden spirit and soul. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you" (1 Corinthians 6:19). The *body* keeps us alive on earth. It eats, drinks and interfaces with the physical world. In God's design, our *body* expresses our mind, will, and emotions. When our soul is renewed, as we paint, we portray the beauty of the earth He created or the compassion of a mother for her baby. When our soul is renewed, we treat other soccer players with the same care and compassion God has for us. It is the contents of our soul—not our spirit directly—that causes our body to act as it does.

We are not meant to forge our own way in life by relying on the strength of our independent soul and trying to make ourselves look "right" on the outside. God's intent is that we be led by the Spirit—not the soul (no matter the "good" or religious nature of its intentions). God's design is that we know His love deep inside of us and radiate Him from the inside out. Our spirit is made alive with His Spirit. Our soul is renewed so that we come to think and feel about ourselves and others as God does. And our body manifests the contents of our soul, giving God expression on earth.

In this way, God is seen and heard through each and every one of His children. He is the source of His image in us. Just as God showed Himself through Jesus Christ, He shows Himself through us. He is the source of love and we are the spirit-soul-body channels that express His love on earth.

It is a promise. The God of peace will sanctify us completely in spirit, soul, and body. "He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."

Ponder for a Moment

In what ways does this understanding of how God created you—spirit, soul, and body—bring clarity to your struggles and/or purpose in life? Explain.