

Wholly Sanctified: A Series on Emotions / Pt 1 • Getting Sorted Out

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 5:23

Our aim at Calvary Chapel Oxnard is to **Become More Like Jesus by Learning & Living God's Word**. While our usual course is to study **thru** Scripture, verse by verse, book by book, we do occasionally take on a short series. We're doing that now with a series on **Emotions**. We do so because this is a largely-misunderstood and oft-neglected part of spiritual training.

Because Jesus was fully human, He had emotions. He got angry. He was sad. By the puns He often used we see his humor. On the cross He expressed the utmost anguish. While Jesus had emotions, they were never expressed in a manner that dishonored God. Since our goal is to be LIKE Jesus, it's wise for us to dive in to what Scripture says about this important part of our lives.

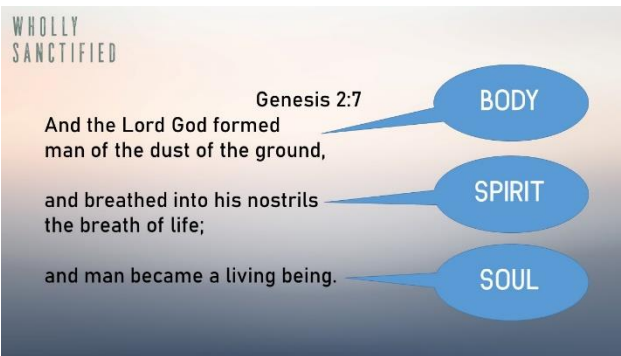
Body – Soul – Spirit

We begin with 1 Thess 5. As Paul moves to end his letter, he announces a blessing on them. "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." We've drawn the title of this series from this; where Paul prays they'd be **sanctified completely**. To be *sanctified* means to be *set-apart* for a special purpose. It's the process of spiritual growth and maturity.

Paul understands our progress in Christ as including ALL we are; body, soul, and spirit. Following Jesus and becoming more like Him isn't just a *spiritual* matter. God isn't only interested in your spirit. He loves and wants to save **all** of you; all you are. You **ARE** body, soul & spirit.

We go back to the beginning and the creation of human beings to see that.

Man's Original State



In Genesis 2:7 we read -

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground

There's the **body**.

and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;

There's the **spirit**. In Hebrew, there's a close connection between breath, wind & spirit. It's all the idea of **unseen movement**; an invisible force that animates and gives life. So →

and man became a living being.

Better; a living **soul**.



When God put a spirit in his body, Adam became a living creature; a living soul. It's as though the soul is the *transmission* between spirit and body. Think of a car. There's the *body*, it's got a paint job and trim. It's what we *see*. Under the hood, *hidden* is the engine, the power that makes it go. That's the *spirit*. What connects the engine *to* the body so it *can* go is the transmission. That's the *soul*.

The word translated "being" in verse 7 is rendered as "soul" and "person" in other places. It often linked to desire and passion.

Combining its various shades of meaning we glean that the soul is the *personality*. A person's *essence* as a unique being. It's the sum of their *mind, emotions, and will*.

By "mind," don't think *brain*, that physical organ inside your cranium. That's a part of the body. The mind is more than the brain. It's the immaterial part of us that assigns value and priority to the facts our brain catalogs.

The *spirit* is *also* immaterial. It's what makes us unique; different from animals. The spirit is that *divine spark*, implanted by God that brought humans a form of life that's eternal. It's in the sphere of the spirit we apprehend *morality and truth*, eternal values drawn from the nature of God Himself. It's in the spirit God placed His image.

In humanity's original creation, these three parts were in perfect harmony, each fulfilling its intended role. Genesis 1:26-27 says Adam was created in God's *image and likeness*. In John 4:24, Jesus says God Is Spirit. So, prior to the Fall, Man was mainly *spiritually-minded*. His primary context for living was in and from the perspective of the spirit; what's right and true.

Then in Genesis 3:8, God comes to the Garden in the "cool of the day." The way it's written, we get the sense this was a regular deal, a frequent appoint God enjoyed with Adam and Eve. Since God is Spirit that means Adam and Eve communed with Him *in* the spirit. The spirit was their main mode of life. Their soul, meaning their mind, emotions, and will, yielded to and were influenced by the goodness and truth their spirit embraced.

Their *minds* were pure and clean, realizing the power of truth and constantly making connections and drawing conclusions about the righteousness and love of God. Their *will*, informed as it was by a pure mind, was in a state of constant surrender to the Lord. And their *emotions*, designed by God to be responders to and affirmers of the right choices of the will, supplied constant delight.

Their bodies were but vehicles their spirit and soul traveled in on God's good earth. *Before the Fall*, the body fulfilled its task in simplicity and innocence when we read Adam and Eve were "naked but not ashamed." Little attention was paid the body beyond what was necessary for its maintenance. It was respected as a part of God's creation and managed to His glory.

To make this visual, Man was arranged like this. The spirit prevailed, the soul deferred to the spirit and the body submitted to them both.

The soul, comprised of the mind, will, and emotions, was like this. The mind was in the superior position, feeding off input from the spirit. The will, informed by the mind made choices aligned with the spirit. The emotions, as responders rejoiced in the wise choices of the will. So it was all good.

Again, prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve were primarily *spiritually-minded*, being informed by the truth and righteousness of God. Their minds were immersed in truth and so able to assign a right set of values and priorities to all of life, including their interaction with creation. Their will, informed as it was by the mind, constantly submitted to that which was right and good. Their emotions continuously rejoiced in the good results of such wise and honorable choices. So their bodies enjoyed the blessings and pleasure of living in an environment unhindered by sin and death.

Too bad things didn't stay that way.

THE FALL

Look at what happened when they disobeyed God and sinned.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:7-8

Their eyes were "opened!" Weren't they before? Of course. So what's this mean?



Take note what they *saw*; their nakedness. Of what? Their bodies. Suddenly, the needs of the body have risen to first place. So they took *immediate action* to meet that need. Notice what they didn't do; go running to God for help. That's a major clue about a huge change that's taken place; a sure sign Adam and Eve have suffered a mortal spiritual blow. They thought they could *hide* from God.

When God first gave the prohibition of eating the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil He said the penalty was death. They didn't die physically the *moment* they ate, although they did plunge the entire creation under the curse where death is the end of all things. But they did die *spiritually*. Their spirit lost touch with the Author of Life as evidenced by their grasp on morality and truth being thrown into confusion. They grew fearful of God and thought they could hide from Him. These are all totally inappropriate responses to God Who's full of mercy and grace. But these responses signal how spiritually out of touch with God they now were.

Observe the *reversal* that's taken place. The body has now risen to prominence while the spirit has been shattered and lost fellowship with God. Ephesians 2:1 says that before we come to faith in Christ, we are "dead in trespasses and sins." That deadness is in the realm of our spirit; we are spiritually cut-off from fellowship with God. Just as with our physical senses, if one is lost the others are heightened in an attempt to compensate. So when the spirit's dominance was lost, the body's role grew dramatically.

Returning to our visual, here's what happened in the Fall. The body rose to dominance while the spirit lost fellowship with God. The Bible calls that separation from God, the Author of Life, *death*.



The reversal that flipped Spirit and Body occurred in the soul as well. It's also seen an inversion. Instead of yielding to and being influenced by the spirit, the soul now serves the demands of the body. The emotions, originally designed to be responders to and endorsers of right choices rises to the high-ground. Pleasurable emotions become a priority while painful emotions are shunned. The will is driven to make choices to produce pleasure. And the mind, once filled with holiness and truth is now pressed into figuring out how to maximize pleasure & avoid pain. The mind is consumed with scheming to justify the choices of an emotion-controlled

will.

Here's how the Apostle Paul describes this upside-down life apart from God ...

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Ephesians 4:17-19

The mind of the lost person is empty and vain because it lacks the enlightening power of the Spirit. Though his head may be full of facts, truth is lost to him. He's alienated; separated, cut-off from spiritual life. Corpses don't feel anything, and that's what the unbeliever is, a spiritual corpse. So Paul says he is "past feeling." Without spiritual life, there is no life left but the life of the body. So the unbeliever defines himself *by the body*, and goes "hog-wild" in living in the realm of the flesh – trying to find satisfaction, which forever eludes him because that's not what he was created for.

Born Again

When we are born again, God does a work of spiritual resurrection within us.

After He rose from the dead, Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." [John 20:22] At that point they were born-again as evidenced by their finally understanding His teaching. Just as God breathed into Adam's nostrils to *start* his spiritual life in the original creation, so the new creation of salvation begins with God breathing on us and imparting His Spirit. His Spirit quickens ours. In a kind of "spiritual mouth-to-mouth resuscitation" the Lord installs spiritual life in us. The moment we're born again, we go from the being spiritually dead to alive.

We know that we have passed from death to life

1 John 3:14

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-5

This regeneration doesn't automatically restore us, however, to the condition of man *before* the Fall. It puts us in a new configuration. In this arrangement, we *choose* in which mode we're going to live, the flesh or the spirit.

This is why we see **constant appeals** in the New Testament to "*live in the Spirit.*" Because we *do* choose where we'll live; the flesh or spirit; yielding to the unchanging Truth of God or the fickle demands of our emotions.

In Matthew 26:41 Jesus said to the disciples, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Paul lays it out in Galatians 5:16&17. "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

The Battle between the flesh and the spirit rages because prior to our being born again, we lived our life *out of* and *for* the flesh. We identified ourselves by a flesh-dominated life and developed habits that are now deeply ingrained. To complicate matters, we live in a world of other people who live in and for the flesh. The system is engineered by the devil to constantly hammer us with temptation to live in the flesh.

The Priority of the Soul

The crucial issue is the *soul*, for it's there the choice is made *where* we'll walk.

Note that in both the Pre & Post Fall conditions of Man, the one unchanged part of the soul is the *will*. It's the *pivot* around which all else swings. Eve *chose* to sin; she made a choice to exchange the truth of God for a lie. Adam *chose* to follow her.

What's important to realize is that the will makes its choice based on the information the *mind* sends it. So the mind is the one part of the soul we need to focus on that to ensure we chose to walk in the spirit and not the flesh. What's in the mind *sways* the will. That's why in Rom 8:1-8 Paul says ...

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. . . . For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Rom 12:2 makes it even clearer.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

This "*transformation*" is the outworking of our conversion *from* spiritually-dead and body-dominated, to those who walk in the spirit. That transformation takes place through renewing our minds. And that happens when we turn from ways of the world to Way of God revealed in His Word. The life of the spirit is a life of faith. And faith comes by hearing the Word, as Paul says in Romans 10:17

The Battle and Role of the Emotions

Our emotions were originally meant by God to be a *responder to* and *endorser of* right choices. Those choices were informed by a truth-filled mind, yielded to a spirit in fellowship with God. Emotions were never meant to *drive* choice, nor should we live with an aim to *gain a certain feeling*. The person who makes happiness their aim

will never attain it because happiness isn't the goal God designed us for. It's the by-product of pursuing the right goal. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." [Matthew 6:33] Satisfaction and fulfillment aren't something we get by focusing on. They are the *result* of intimate communion with God. That's what we're created for. Whenever you find yourself making choices aimed at *feeling* better, realize you're aiming in the wrong direction.

Aspirin doesn't solve the *cause* of pain; it just blocks the pain signal to the brain. It's a temporary *mask* that doesn't fix the problem. Don't make the mistake of living your life by taking *spiritual* aspirin; making choices aimed at maximizing happiness and minimizing sadness. Walk in the spirit. That's the right strategy for obtaining lasting happiness and true satisfaction.