

# BEING SPIRITUAL

We are encouraged, perhaps admonished, by the scriptures to walk in the Spirit so we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. As a young Baptist boy growing up I knew what the 'lusts of the flesh' were. After much maturing I have discovered that the young Baptist boy's vision saw only the tip of the iceberg. The major point is not how to discover the lusts of the flesh, although it is true that we are told also to flee earthly lusts. The major point is that we are to 'walk in the Spirit'. How do we do that? What, in fact, do we even mean by 'walking in the Spirit'. This is a great mystery, one which we will not totally illuminate in one short article.

This author has attempted to discuss the difference between this 'world' and the 'Kingdom', probably with little success. There are several areas which are very difficult for us to really make a part of our daily lives. Let us take a look at some of these:

1. Those who have believed themselves 'into Christ Jesus' have been born 'of the Spirit'. What does this mean? It means that they have received a new form of life, the life of God, who is Spirit. Therefore, they have become a child of God, by birth. Just as they received physical genes from physical parents, they have now received Spiritual genes from their Spiritual parent. With these new 'genes' they have been 'regenerated' (re-gened). Due to the fall of Adam they had been degenerated (de-gened) but now they have the genetic inheritance from God Himself. They have been born anew with His nature now a genetic part of their nature. This is not an implantation, not an impartation. This is an infusion which so saturates the individual that every gene, every molecule bears the imprint of God. We are ever prone to look at our own behavior and doubt that we have truly been converted. We wonder what new teaching, what new 'experience', what new 'ministry' we need so that we can be like Christ. Our problem right here is simply unbelief. We do not believe what Jesus said, what Father has said, what the New Testament scriptures have said. We believe what we see. That is dangerous. I assisted a young Norwegian student who was also an amateur (and very good) magician. I had heard of him before that evening and was watching very carefully. I was ALERT. I saw no tricks, I discovered nothing about how he did things yet he walked off with my watch (I was especially watching for this) and my belt and I never felt a thing. Frankly my Christian friend, we see very little of the 'real' in this life and much that we do see, we misinterpret. We will be much better off if we will trust what God says above what we see and are taught by others. You may trust that you ARE A NEW CREATURE, regardless of how you feel. This

happened because of Father's work, Father's plan and you did not, can not, make it happen. You fulfill the original conditions by trusting in and believing in Jesus as God's Christ and He must do the rest. It is His job to do the Spiritual birthing, you cannot. Your mission now, is to convince your mind that YOU are much more than you seem to be, even to yourself. Your mission is to accept Father's revelation of WHO YOU ARE rather than the diminished version our enemy tries to beguile us with.

2. God loves you (and me). He is **not still trying to make up His mind** about us. The decision was made long ago (sometime slightly before the 'foundations of the world'). The relationship which He has known about for eternity came into our experience through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. He loves YOU ! You are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. You are His child, born of Him and this, because He chose it. We have been taught a legalistic, performance oriented Christianity which has produced in us a striving to 'come to the place' where we are found acceptable. This is man made, not God revealed. God's revelation is that out of the work of and on the cross we have the potential to be set free from the bondage of sin. This comes to us because WE HAVE this intimate relationship. It does not come to us so that we can obtain that relationship. Jesus prayed that we 'would be one'. He in us, us in Him, and that we would be one with the Father. I believe that this prayer of Jesus was answered when we 'believed into Him' and received the Holy Spirit. We simply can not get any closer than this. This is the penultimate. I in Him, He in me. Wow! The Christian dilemma is not achieving this, it is believing this. Set a mind- set within yourself that this is true, now. This is not something that some day may be. It is a truth that is true - now.

3. The nature of the spiritual realms is truly different than the nature of the physical realms. Walking in the Spirit is different that walking in the flesh. This has often been interpreted as walking in holiness versus walking in sinful indulgence. This is grave error and leads to legalism. The Lord here is talking about your version of 'reality'. For many, even many Christians, though they believe in heaven and an eternal existence, their lives here are lived essentially from a natural, physical, view of the universe. Their value system is little removed from the unbeliever. Their treasures are essentially stored up in barns (and banks). Their emotions fluctuate with their fortunes and happenstances. Remember, happiness depends on happenings. As Jack Taylor has said "If things happen happily, then they are happy". Joy is based on seeing things that are not seen, rather than happenings. In the spirituals we know that the one who is servant, is chief. Conversely, the one who serves not, is least. In the Spirituals the one who is dead to their own success but lives for the increase of their Lord is the one with great abundance while the one who works to build their own Kingdom loses all.

The one who allows the agape of Father to flow through their lives becomes incredibly rich. The more they try to give away the more they have until there accrues an embarrassment of riches. Conversely the one who works to have others love them will discover themselves eternally impoverished. Truly the ways of the Kingdom are different than the ways of the world. If we will focus on Kingdom ways this will become clear. If we listen to the lies of the enemy, nothing is clear.

How then do we walk in the Spirit. It is not at all by trying to live more Holy lives (though this truly is an inevitable result). We walk in the Spirit by setting our minds on the Spirit. We set our hearts on 'home' knowing that the world of the Spirit is a reality beyond the world of the 'world'. It is indeed a basic attitude, a mind-set which creates a filter for all of the events which enter our lives. This filter produces a complete change in our system of values. In many ways it is very confusing because we lose many answers, gain many questions. We have fewer explanations about 'why' things happen. Yet in truth this is also a simpler, kinder mind-set because it allows us to adopt the view of a small child who holds the hand of Father. This Father is trusted in everything and we gradually come to the place where we are more content trusting the Father who knows and guides all things than we were when we tried to control as much as possible.

There are no new thoughts presented here. One is tempted to borrow Lewis' phrase of Mere Christianity to describe this. These are basic, fundamental, scriptural concepts. Our problem is not found in knowing what God has said. Our problem is in believing what God has said – especially about ourselves. Now is a good time to strip away the schizophrenia which surrounds so many of us. Cease allowing the world's philosophies and traditions to steal the simplicity of the 'Good News of Jesus Christ'. The Good News is simply:

## Christ in you, the hope of Glory !!

Written under the auspices of New Life Inc., a non-profit Christian organization. If you are interested in other writings contact: R. L. Pendleton, 322 Quincy St., Rapid City, SD 57701 There are no charges for writings and there will be no request for donations.