

Gospel and the Spirit of Life — 1

Outline

1. Human beings were created with Body, Soul & Spirit by God
2. Human Beings separate themselves from God
3. Human Beings reconciled with God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ
4. Human Beings in Fellowship with the Spirit of Life (Holy Spirit)

1. God created human beings with body, soul and spirit (*1 Thess 5:23*).

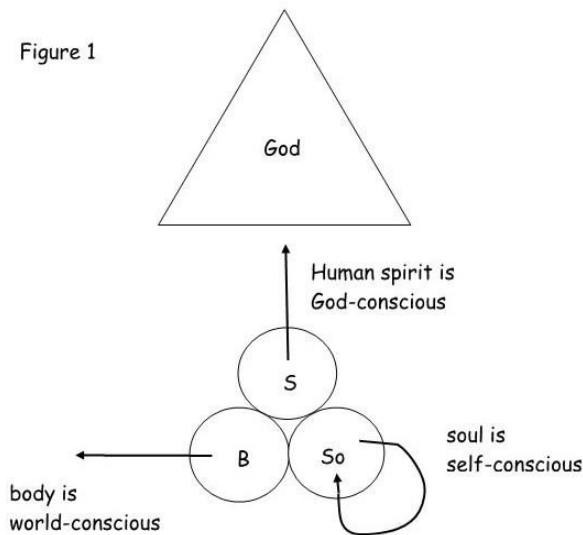


Figure 1 With our body and through our five senses of touch, hearing, seeing, smelling and tasting., we are conscious of the world. We observe the world through our five senses and send that information to our minds for storage and analysis. Therefore, the knowledge we get from our five senses is called “sensual knowledge”.

Our soul is self-conscious. The universe is so large, and we are so small — yet our soul makes us feel that we are the centre of the whole universe. Our soul consists of our emotions and mind. The will of man is also part of his soul but lies somewhere between soul and spirit.

Our spirit is God-conscious. A man could be born of any nationality, religion, or period of human history. Yet, he will always bow down and worship God—because man has a component called spirit that makes him conscious of God.

God is Spirit. We can neither touch, hear, see, smell, or taste Him. The only contact we can make with God is through our spirit. God wants us to worship Him in spirit and truth. We call that Fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

God created animals, birds, fish etc. They have a body with the five senses, very much like that of man. Therefore, we recognise a dog eating or drinking because we eat and drink. We can identify all the body functions in a dog because we have the same functions. Animals have emotions too. We know when a dog is angry, sad, or happy because we feel the same way and can recognise that in a dog. Animals have a type

of soul inferior to ours and are tied up very much with their bodies. However, animals do not have a “spirit”. If they did, they would worship God and be conscious of Him. We would recognise them worshipping God. But nowhere can we find any animal, bird, or fish worshipping God in any period of human history.

2. Human beings separate themselves from God

There were two very significant trees in the Garden. One was the Tree of Life, and the other was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God forbade man to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. This represents telling God, “I know you are good, but I want to know what is good and bad for me, and apart from what You tell me. I don’t want to depend upon God; I want to be independent of God.” God had warned man that he would die if he ate from the forbidden tree.

The Tree of Life represents dependence on God for Life — it represents Honouring God with Humility and Trust in God, and it leads to Eternal Life.

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil represents s Rebelling against God with Pride and Independence from God, leading to death.

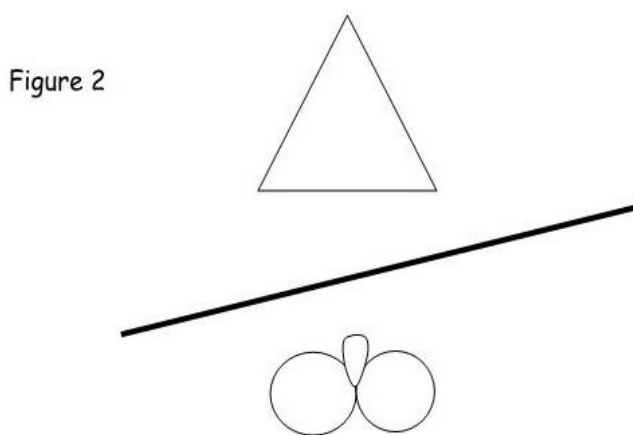


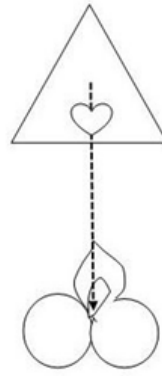
Figure 2 shows a person separated from God because the human race comes from Adam and has inherited his adamic-nature of rebellion, pride and independence from God. From the time of Adam, the whole human race is born in rebellion against God. Notice that man’s spirit is small and shrinking because it is separated from God. Yet it still exists and tries to worship God. All human beings, throughout history, in every continent on earth, have wanted to worship God — but of their own making and understanding. Living independently of God brought human misery caused by sin, death and Satan. No religious leader can save us; no science can save us from human misery. Only the Creator God can save us. And He did, by sending His Son Jesus.

3. Human Beings reconciled to God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Jesus was not born of Adam. He was conceived in the womb of a virgin named Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He was born without sin. He lived a sinless life from birth to death. He lived the life we should have lived but didn’t. He came to take our sins upon Himself and die the death we should have, but He died instead because He loved us. When we trust Him as our Saviour, He not only reconciles us to God, but God sees in us the righteous life that Jesus lived for our sake. *2 Cor 5:21 God made Him, who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we become the righteousness of God.* This is the gospel.

Figure 3: Shows a man who has accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. This man has no sin barrier between him and God because Jesus paid for his sin. The Holy Spirit resides in him (*Rom 8:9*). As the believer meditates on God’s love displayed on the cross, the Holy Spirit transforms him more and more into the likeness of Jesus (*2 Cor 3:18*). All he has to do is to **embrace the cross of Jesus by faith, in every circumstance, good, bad or difficult**. This way, he draws closer to God, and God draws closer to him (*James 4:6*). The spirit of man will begin to grow from being undernourished to becoming full of the Holy Spirit. The means of growing in the Spirit is always by faith, for without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Figure 3



With the help of God's grace, man can sow in the spirit and reap in the spirit. He can sow in the spirit by expressing his faith in:

- Being secure in God's love (*Zeph 3:17*)
- Casting all cares on God, for He cares for us (*1Peter 5:7*)
- Thanking, praising, worshipping and praying to God (*Ps 50:23*)
- Hearing and obeying God's word (*John 6:63*)
- Believing and confessing God's promises (*2Cor 4:13-14*)
- Showing love and justice to others (*Micah 6:8, Gal 6:9-10*)
- Praying in tongues (*1 Cor 14:4*) — is the only gift of the Spirit to build us.

4. Human Beings in Fellowship with the Spirit of Life (Holy Spirit)

Figure 4

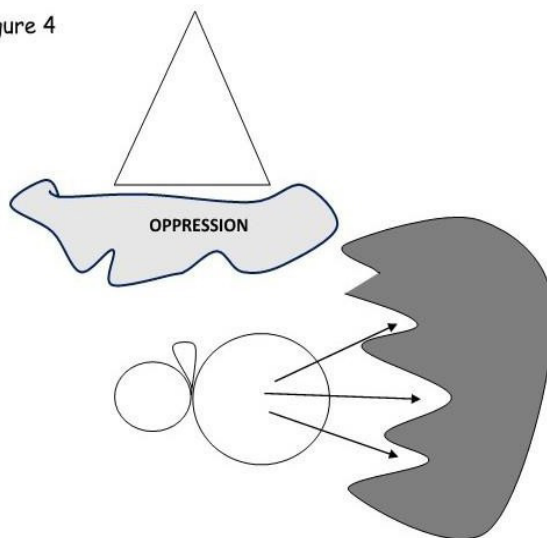


Figure 4: The believer faces serious trouble from external provocation. But notice he has not taken any help from God. Instead, he reacts to the problem with his soul (in Figure 4) by getting angry, self-pity, sulking, worrying, or silently fretting. The result is that his soul gets enlarged compared to his spirit. The man is not living by his spirit but lives by his soul. This is

equally true if the person reacts against external provocation (e.g. lusts of the eyes and lusts of the flesh) by his body, in which case his body gets inflamed and enlarged. The believer is carnal (unspiritual). Very soon, a cloud of oppression will be over him, making him unable to sense the presence of God.

How does he take help from God?

By asking God for mercy and grace to help him (Heb 4:16)

By confessing all known sins and forgiving those who have hurt him.

By casting all his cares upon God (1 Peter 5:7). Often, believers keep their troubles in their hands and then pray to God to solve them. The problems remain held in their hands at the end of their prayer — this is not faith! But **faith** is trusting in God's love displayed on the cross. Then believers can cast their troubles into God's hands and pray that God would solve them because He loves them. The problems are left in God's hands at the end of their prayer, not theirs. They walk away, comforted that God has all their troubles in His hands and trusting that He will solve them in His time and in His way. God is both willing and able to do that. Only then can they go to the next step.

By praising God vocally, though not necessarily loudly. He must look upon the Lord, who is high and lifted and sovereign over the world. He must know that the Lord is faithful to the covenant that He has made with all believers. These are the high praises of God. These praises may be quiet or loud. But it is praised by faith that is higher than the troubles that beset the believer. He must praise God until he finds a breakthrough in his spirit when all oppression leaves him (Ps22:3, Ps 149:6-10 NKJV).

By asking others to pray for him.

By being open to a wise spiritual counsellor.

By responding with the opposite spirit.

Figure 5

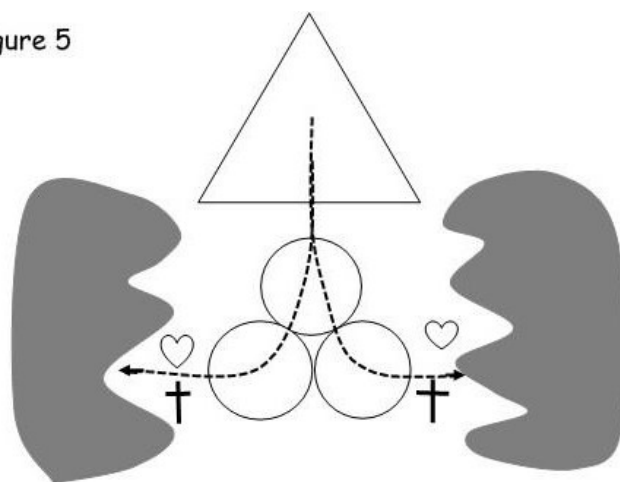


Figure 5: How the believer responds with the opposite spirit. By refusing to react with his body or soul. For example, if a person slaps you, do not slap him back. If someone gets angry with you and shouts at you, do not shout back at him. Where there is hate, the believer responds with love. Where there is revenge, the believer responds with forgiveness. Where there is strife, the believer responds with peace. Where there is lust, the believer responds with purity.

Because he takes help from God, the believer will find God's power flowing through him and can respond with the opposite spirit instead of reacting to the provocation or giving in to the temptation.

As a believer takes the advice given, he will find that he has the peace of God amid trouble and temptation. He will have the ministry of the Holy Spirit working through him. This way, the believer can have Fellowship of the Holy Spirit in trouble and temptation. Notice how the spirit of man has been growing from strength to strength. His spirit is enlarged and bigger than his body or soul. He is now led by the Holy Spirit, who communicates with his spirit. He is not led by his body or soul, as in Figure 4. This is the only way that a truly mature Christian should live. Suppose our foolishness and immaturity caused the trouble in the first place. In that case, the Holy Spirit will bring us to repentance and help us overcome our foolishness, resulting in us growing into maturity. However, suppose Satan, working through others or circumstances, had caused the trouble. Then eventually, the trouble will be overcome by God's power working through

us as we yield to God. Jesus says, *“In this world, you will have trouble, but take heart in Me for I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)*. Jesus overcame the world. Through us and in union with Him, Jesus overcomes the world repeatedly — bringing His kingdom here on earth as it is heaven.

UNION WITH CHRIST

Examine all the prayers of Paul (sample given below). Notice that Paul does not pray for material benefits like suitable housing for the poor or rainfall for a good harvest. However, nothing is wrong with praying for them. But his focus is always on strengthening **our union with Christ** when we face troubles and temptations:

*Eph 3:16-17 I pray that out of his glorious riches, **he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.***

Paul encourages us to overcome troubles and temptations. Jesus wants us to reign with Him by enduring (overcoming) our troubles and temptations (2 Tim 2:12). And the way to do it is **in union with Christ** (Eph 3:16-17).

The moment you are born again, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, dwells in your heart. But you must allow Him to lead you daily by yielding to Him (Figure 5) instead of letting your carnal desires lead you (Figure 4). And remember, the Holy Spirit is God, and He is powerful.

Eph 1:17-20 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is same as the mighty strength he exerted in Christ when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.