

PNEUMATOLOGY (84)

6) I Thess. 5:20-21; Acts 4:31 - From these passages we observe that one who is filled with the Spirit will be one with an intense desire to know the Word of God.

When these qualities begin to show up in our life and become more and more developed, the Spirit of God is filling us and we are well on our way to becoming the Spirit-filled and developed believer that God wants us to become. The fact of the Spirit's work and the force of the Spirit's work will not be seen in the manner in which the Spirit works, but in the results the Spirit produces. The Spirit of God, who indwells every believer is working in many unseen ways, but the evidence of the Spirit's work is seen in the quality of results which come through the individual.

Seven pneumatological works have been examined—restraining, conviction, regeneration, indwelling, baptism, sealing, and filling. It is this final work, filling, which God desires and expects the believer to adjust and cooperate as he journeys through life. As the believer yields to God's Spirit and becomes more faithful, he is more filled. It is the filled believer who is the spiritual believer and it is the filled believer who becomes the more God-honoring believer.

Having thus concluded this part of the study, we think it fitting to journey into an area which examines the believer's spirituality and responsibility. After all, "spirituality" is Spirit-related.

QUESTION #11 – What is spirituality?

It is very evident from a text like I Cor. 2:15-3:1 that in the family of God, some believers are deemed spiritual by God and others are classified as carnal or fleshly. There is a general and obvious difference between these believers which is clearly seen in their character and quality of daily life. From this very context, we also learn that a key factor to spirituality is the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:12-13). Therefore, it is very legitimate to connect the subject of spirituality to the doctrine of Pneumatology.

The potential for spirituality does not exist in an unsaved, natural man because the Spirit of God does not indwell him (I Cor. 2:14; Romans 8:9). However, once one becomes a Christian the potential exists for one to be classified by God as being spiritual. One is a Christian because one is properly related to Jesus Christ; one is a spiritual Christian because one is properly related to the Holy Spirit.

Having observed these realities, a working definition of spirituality is this—**spirituality is the work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to salvation, in which He fully develops and manifests Himself to and through a believer's life and personality, which is evidenced by that believer's character and quality of life, which is rightly related to the Word of God and the Spirit of God, which are given to produce conformity to God's will and plan for that believer in this age.**

This definition breaks down into several parts worth noting:

PNEUMATOLOGY (85)

1) Spirituality is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a very critical point to realize. Spirituality is not and cannot ever be a work of us. There are two ways to approach spirituality—1) Depend on yourself to accomplish it; 2) Depend on God's Spirit to accomplish it. The first way depends on one's own power and ability and the second depends on the Spirit's power and ability. These two approaches to spirituality are incompatible and, as Paul said, "in opposition to one another" (Gal. 5:17).

2) Spirituality is a work subsequent to salvation.

It is here that many believers are very confused. The problem of spirituality is not one of how a believer should live that he might be accepted by God, but rather how should he live in view of the fact that he is accepted by God. Dr. Chafer said it well: "The new problem which he (Christian) confronts...is not one of how he should live that he might be accepted and perfected before God, but rather of how he, an accepted and perfected person, should live after these stupendous realities are accomplished by the grace and power of God. Until this vital distinction is comprehended and received, there will be no progress made in the extensive field of truth which directs the Christian's life and service" (Vol. 6, p. 163).

No attainment of true spirituality is possible until the believer realizes that they are not obligated to live a God-honoring life in order to be acceptable to God, but that they are already acceptable to God by virtue of their position in Christ. It is right here where true spiritual thinking and true spirituality really begin. Spirituality requires that the believer draw a clear distinction between union with Christ and communion with Christ. The Holy Spirit will not ever produce true spirituality when positional truth concerning which is solely and totally by God's grace is denied.

3) Spirituality is the work of the Spirit in which He fully develops and manifests Himself to and through a believer's life and personality.

The acceptable, perfect will of God for a believer's life is a development of that life to a level that the Spirit of God can reveal the specific spiritual gift He has given and then work through that individual to use that gift for God's work and glory (Romans 12:1-8).

It is possible to attain a spiritual status of full, complete spirituality; however, it is not possible to attain a spiritual status of sinless Christlikeness (i.e. Philippians 3:13-14). As a believer walks in the Spirit and depends on the Spirit, that believer will not quench nor grieve the Spirit of God and thus a great transformation will take place in which the mind of that believer is renewed in accordance with the Word and will of God. The believer will begin to think as the Spirit is directing Him to think and ultimately the Spirit will take that one to the point in which He cannot only reveal one's spiritual gift, but can fully develop it and use it for God's glory.

As we yield to God's Spirit and permit Him to conform our will to His will, He develops us to the point that He may fully manifest Himself through us, and that is spirituality.

PNEUMATOLOGY (86)

Once the spiritual gift has been identified and is being used, one may continue to walk in the Spirit to the extent that the Spirit uses that person to the fullest possible level so that one may say at the end of life, as Paul said, "I have finished the course" (II Tim. 4:7). This would be the ultimate level of spiritual development.

4) Spirituality is the work of the Spirit which is evidenced by the believer's character and quality of life which is rightly related to the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote: "The attitude of any person toward the Word of God is a certain indication of the innermost character and reality of that person's spiritual state" (*Ibid.*, p. 168). Spirituality is directly linked to one's attitude toward God's Word (Heb. 5:11-14; I Cor. 2:10-3:2). When one is being led of God's Spirit into true spirituality, that one will love God's Word rightly taught and divided. That one will love to make right application of the Word of God in any given matter or issue in life. Such a proper relationship to the Word of God will lead one to—
1) Not pursue that which God would classify as evil; and 2) To pursue that which God would classify as good. The believer who is becoming spiritual will have a Spirit-directed passion to know and obey God's Word in matters of good and evil.

For example, spiritual people will hate what God hates (i.e. Prov. 6:16-19) and they will love what God loves (Ps. 33:5). Spiritual people will desire to base decisions on the Word of God. They will have an appetite to listen to God's Word, to learn God's Word and to apply God's Word. Spiritual people will be drawn to places where the Word of God is taken very seriously because they take it seriously. There is no question that true spirituality is vitally linked to the Word of God. The professing believer who has no burning desire to know God's Word may be led by "a spirit," but is not being led by "God's Spirit."

5) Spirituality is the work of the Holy Spirit which produces conformity to God's will and plan for that believer in this age.

This point is extremely important. Spirituality is individual. God has an individual plan and gift for the believer and as one yields to the Spirit of God, God is in the process of producing conformity to God's will and plan for that individual. Too often it is proclaimed that spirituality means one must conform to some standardized experience or service (i.e. missions, pastorate, etc.). This is not biblical for spirituality is not this necessarily; spirituality is yielding to God's Spirit right where one is presently located. That is God's will and plan and He will control the geography of all of this.

Also carefully notice that the conformity must be for a believer in this age. Spirituality which is produced by God's Spirit is something very peculiar to this Grace Age. If a believer attempts to put himself back under the Law or under a system of legalism, he is not on a course in which the Holy Spirit may produce a true spirituality. It will never happen! Many misguided and ignorant believers are attempting to be spiritual by putting themselves back under O.T. Mosaic requirements or some code of legalism. Spirituality will **never** be attained this way for it is contrary to grace.

PNEUMATOLOGY (87)

Legalistic people cannot ever be Spirit filled spiritual people because God's Spirit is stifled by a legalism that is not conforming to God's work in this age. The Holy Spirit desires to produce a conformity to New Testament Grace Age truth and when a believer gets caught up in a system not consistent with this, no Holy Spirit-produced conformity and spirituality is possible.

QUESTION #12 – What may we anticipate in our own lives when the Holy Spirit is producing and developing a real spirituality in our lives?

First, we must observe what we may not expect—we may not expect perfection. It is very evident that the most spiritual people who ever lived were people who did not reach a state of being perfect. For example, the Apostle Paul identified himself in the present tense not long before he died as being the “foremost” of sinners. In other words, as remarkable and as spiritual as Paul was, he was still a sinner and still had some moments of sinful failure. God made provision for a spirituality that is not perfect in I John 1:9. It is the will of God that believers remain spiritual even when sinful and the key is immediate confession. In other words, when a spiritual Christian sins, he will immediately go to God and confess it and maintain fellowship and communion with God. Such action is the mark of one spiritual.

The Christian life is metaphorically likened in the New Testament to a race (I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Tim. 2:5), a warfare (Ephesians 6:11-18; II Tim. 2:3-4), and a walk (Gal. 5:16). If we combine these pictures, we may conclude that when the Holy Spirit is producing a true spirituality in our lives we will see victory in our daily lives.

Now we know from the New Testament that we have three main enemies of which we are in constant conflict: 1) The world; 2) The flesh; and 3) The devil. All three present us with an unceasing and relentless conflict designed to pull us away from God and pull us into ways which are evil. When we are walking or living in the power of God's Spirit, that is a moment-by-moment dependency on Him, we can expect to realize victory over these foes.

Foe #1 - The world.

The word “world” literally in Greek is cosmos. The word is just the opposite of chaos because it refers to an ordered system. The term, when used in regard to the foe against us, refers to that organized system which includes education, philosophies and religions, which is governed by an evil mastermind called the “prince of this world”—Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). When one is being controlled by the Spirit, one will not be in a friendship with this world (James 4:4). This does not mean we do not live in the world or that we don't get along with people in the world or that we cannot have fun in the world; what it means is that we will be led by God's Spirit not to fall for or to love the empty and vain enticements—whether education, philosophies, religions or amusements which are inconsistent with the Word of God. Worldliness is not to be equated with enjoying life in the world. We have every right to enjoy life in this world. Dr. Chafer writes: “How misleading is the theory that to be spiritual one must abandon play, diversion and helpful amusement! Such a conception of spirituality is born of a morbid human conscience. It is foreign to the Word of God.

PNEUMATOLOGY (88)

It is a device of Satan to make the blessings of God seem abhorrent to young people who are overflowing with physical life and energy. It is to be regretted that there are those who in blindness are so emphasizing the negatives of Christian truth as to create the impression that spirituality is opposed to joy, liberty and naturalness of expression in thought and life when such are in the Spirit. Spirituality is not pious pose. It is not merely a 'Thou shalt not,' 'Thou Shalt.' It flings open the doors into eternal blessedness, energies and resources to God. It is a serious thing to remove the element of relaxation and play from any life. We cannot be normal physically, mentally or spiritually, if we neglect this vital factor of human life. God has provided so well that our joy can be full" (Vol. 6, p. 181).

When a believer is called "worldly," most times the people doing the calling don't even understand what they are talking about or the remedy which needs to be offered. By biblical standards, worldliness, as it relates to a believer, is one who is empty of true spirituality and is on a search for a life of meaning and fulfillment in one or more of the delusionary areas created in this world by the mastermind Satan. What has really happened to a "worldly Christian" is that the blessings and power of the Spirit have ceased flowing to and through that believer and frankly, that believer is absolutely miserable. When the believer is spiritual, victory will be experienced. One may get sidetracked for a moment, but not for long. God's Spirit will be so alive and vibrant in the spiritual believer's life that he will quickly spot the empty path and not only not love it, but hate it.

Foe #2 - The Flesh.

For sake of discussion, we may understand the term flesh as that part of our nature which is prone to sin. There is no human on earth that recognizes this reality more than the godly, spiritual believer. It is the spiritual believer who truly becomes aware of a fleshly nature, which he hates, which has a disposition to sin and do that which is evil. Perhaps the greatest text which deals with the fleshly sin nature in the life of a spiritual believer is Rom. 7:15-8:4. It is very evident that even the most spiritual of believers does not have the power, in and of himself, to gain victory over the flesh. But when we examine Galatians 5:16-17, we learn that victory over the flesh is only possible when we rely upon the Holy Spirit. This certainly coincides with what we seen in Romans. In Romans 7:25 we learn that in order for one to have victory over the flesh one must have the saving work of Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:2 we learn that in order for one to have victory over the flesh, one must have the Holy Spirit. From this context we observe five realities:

1. Every believer does have an old fleshly nature.
2. Every believer is called upon to wage a war against that old fleshly nature.
3. Every believer has received Christ, who died, meeting the required judgments against the flesh. (Gal. 5:24)
4. Every believer has the indwelling Spirit, equipping him with power to be victorious over the flesh.
5. Every believer who has victory will only do so by relying upon the Spirit and not his flesh.