

Approximately 30 minutes Topical



★ **BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT**

Understanding How God Created Us and How His Holy Spirit Works Within Us

Main Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Supporting Scriptures: Genesis 2:7; John 3:3-6; Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 5:16-23; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:8-9



Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating us and giving us life. As we open Your Word today, help us understand how You created us....body, soul, and spirit.

Lord, teach us especially how Your Holy Spirit works within us, guiding our

decisions, strengthening our faith, and helping us become more like Jesus.

Open our hearts to Your truth and help us apply it to our everyday lives.

In the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Introduction - There Is More to You Than What You See

  Have you ever looked in a mirror and considered what you are really looking at?

You see your face, your eyes, and perhaps a few gray hairs that were **not** there twenty years ago!

You see your physical body.

But that is **not** everything that makes you who you are.

  You have thoughts that nobody else can hear.

You experience love, fear, happiness, disappointment, and hope.

And deep within us, there is a spiritual dimension to human life.

God created us for more than simply living, working, growing older, and eventually dying. He created us to know Him!

The apostle Paul gives us an important picture of human life in...

  (NIV) **1 Thessalonians 5:23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹**

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Th 5:23.

Paul prays that God would sanctify believers completely and preserve their spirit, soul, and body blameless until the coming of Jesus Christ.

Notice those three words:

- **Body** - Our physical life and how we interact with the world.
- **Soul** - Our inner personal life, including thoughts, emotions, and desires.
- **Spirit** - The spiritual dimension of our lives, through which we can know and respond to God.

Now, Christians understand the relationship between soul and spirit somewhat differently. Some distinguish them, while others recognize that Scripture sometimes uses these words in overlapping ways.

But the essential truth is clear.

 **God is concerned with every part of who we are!**

Let us examine each one and then see how God's Holy Spirit transforms our lives.

★ 1. The Body - Our Connection to the Physical World

Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

  (NIV) ***Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.²***

Genesis tells us that God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him.

Our bodies are wonderfully designed.

- Our eyes allow us to see.
- Our ears allow us to hear.
- Our hands allow us to work,

² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ge 2:7.

- and our feet carry us through life.

Our bodies allow us to interact with the **physical world** God created.

  But here is something important.

 **Our bodies are not evil, nor are they unimportant to God.**

In **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**, Paul teaches that the bodies of believers are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we should honor God with our bodies.



(NIV)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ¹⁹ **Do**

you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.³

³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Co 6:19-20.

   That means what we do physically matters spiritually.

- What we say with our mouth's matters.
- How we treat people matters.
- How we use our bodies matters.

Everyday Application

Imagine driving down the highway when someone suddenly cuts you off.

- Your heart begins racing.
- Your muscles tighten,
- and your hand immediately reaches for the horn!

That's your body reacting.

  But what happens next?

Do you explode in anger, or do you exercise patience and self-control?

Our bodies often express the decisions taking place within us.

 **God wants our physical actions to reflect the character of Jesus Christ.**

  And remember, although our earthly bodies grow older and weaker, believers have the wonderful promise of resurrection and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

★ 2. The Soul - Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Desires

Psalm 42:5; Romans 12:2

  Now let's go a little deeper.

  (NIV) **Psalm 42:5 Why, my soul, are you downcast?**

Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God. ⁴

⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ps 42:5.

The Bible sometimes uses the word soul to describe the whole person or one's life.

👉 But it also helps us think about our inner personal life....

- our thoughts,
- emotions,
- desires,
- and decisions.

🤔💭 Consider this.

- You hear a familiar song, and suddenly memories come flooding back.
- Someone says something hurtful, and you feel anger.
- You receive wonderful news, and your heart fills with joy.

These experiences involve our **inner life**.

But here's something we need to understand.

   **Our feelings are real, but they are not always reliable guides to truth.**

One morning, we may wake up feeling joyful and encouraged.

The next morning, we may feel discouraged, worried, or overwhelmed.

- Same person.
- Same God.
- Same salvation.

 Different feelings!

Our Minds Need God's Truth

In **Romans 12:2**, Paul teaches that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

  (NIV) **Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and**

approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ⁵

That means we should not allow emotions or worldly thinking to control our lives.

Instead, we bring our thoughts under the truth of God's Word.

- When fear begins controlling our thinking, we remember God's promises.
- When bitterness takes root, we remember Christ's forgiveness.
- When we feel discouraged, we remember that God remains faithful.

 **The Holy Spirit works within believers to help transform our thoughts, desires, and decisions so they increasingly reflect Jesus Christ.**

⁵ [*The New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 12:2.

★ 🤔 🤔 Now here is a great question...

Where Does Sin Begin - In the Body, Soul, or Spirit?

Mark 7:20-23; James 1:14-15; Romans 7:18

🤔 🤔 Now, church, here is an important question.

If God created us with a body, soul, and spirit, where does sin actually begin?

- Does sin begin in our physical body?
- Does it begin in our soul, where we experience thoughts, emotions, and desires?
- Or does it begin in our spirit?

Jesus gives us a very important answer in **Mark 7:20-23**.

📖 + (NIV) **Mark 7:20-23 ²⁰ He went on: "What comes out of a person is what**

defiles them. ²¹ For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and defile a person.” ⁶

He explains that evil comes from within a person....from the “human heart”.

  Now, when the Bible speaks about the heart, it is **not** simply referring to the physical organ pumping blood through our bodies.

 **The heart represents the inner center of our thoughts, desires, intentions, and decisions.**

  Think about this.

⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 7:20-23.

- Before someone steals something with their hands, they first desire it in their heart.
- Before someone speaks hurtful words, they allow anger or bitterness to grow within them.
- Before someone commits adultery, sinful desires already have been welcomed into their thoughts.

👉 **Sin often begins inwardly before it is expressed outwardly!**

★ How Does Sin Develop?

James explains this in **James 1:14-15**.

  (NIV) ***James 1:14-15 ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin,***

when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.⁷

He describes how a person can be drawn away by sinful desire, which gives birth to sin, and how sin ultimately leads to death.

Notice the progression:

- **Desire** - Something sinful attracts our attention.
- **Temptation** - We face the choice of whether to entertain that desire.
- **Sin** - We surrender to that temptation in our thoughts, intentions, or actions.
- **Consequences** - Sin brings destruction and separates us from the life God desires for us.

💡 But understand something important.

Being tempted is not the same as committing sin!

⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jas 1:14-15.

Even Jesus was tempted, yet He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

  (NIV) ***Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.⁸***

The problem comes when we willingly embrace what God has forbidden.

★ **What About Our Physical Body?**

The apostle Paul speaks about the struggle with the *flesh* in **Romans 7:18**.

  (NIV) ***Romans 7:18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.⁹***

⁸ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:15.

⁹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 7:18.

  But flesh does not simply mean our physical bodies.

 It refers to our fallen, sinful human nature that resists God's will.

Our bodies are not evil. God created them!

However, sin can influence our desires, our decisions, and ultimately our physical actions.

And this brings us to a powerful truth.

Sin does not live exclusively in our body, soul, or spirit. Sin affects our entire fallen human nature!

- Our thoughts can become sinful.
- Our desires can become sinful.
- Our actions can become sinful.

   And sin damages our relationship with God.

★ Why We Need Jesus Christ

👉 🔥 Now here's the wonderful news!

Jesus did not come merely to make bad people behave better.

😬 🔓 🔑 **He came to save sinners and give us new life!**

- We cannot overcome our sinful nature simply through willpower, religious activity, or trying harder.
- We need God's forgiveness.
- We need a new heart.
- We need the transforming power of the Holy Spirit!

And that brings us to our next important question.

If sin affects us so deeply, how can we experience a new spiritual life and a restored relationship with God?

Jesus answered that very question when He spoke to a religious leader named Nicodemus.

He told him something that changed everything:

  **"You must be born again!"**

Let's look at what Jesus meant as we examine the human spirit and the wonderful work of God's Holy Spirit within us.

★ 3. The Human Spirit - Created to Know God

John 3:1-6; Romans 8:16

  (NIV) **John 3:1-6 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a**

teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

⁴ “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.¹⁰



(NIV)

Romans 8:14-16 ¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you

¹⁰ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 3:1-6.

received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.¹¹

Now this is where our message becomes especially important.

The Bible speaks about the human spirit, but it also speaks about the Holy Spirit.

 **They are not the same!**

Our human spirit is part of who we are as created human beings.

The Holy Spirit is God Himself, the third Person of the Trinity.

The human spirit is not a little piece of God inside us.

¹¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 8:14-16.

But God created us with the capacity to know Him, worship Him, and respond to His truth.

  However, sin has separated humanity from God.

And that's why Jesus taught that we must be born again.

  **Why Must We Be Born Again?**

In **John 3**, Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, a religious leader who knew the Scriptures.

Nicodemus was educated, respected, and religious.

Yet Jesus told him something that must have surprised him.

John 3:3 (NIV):

"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

Nicodemus didn't understand.

How could someone be born a second time?

Jesus wasn't talking about physical birth.

He was talking about spiritual birth!

Listen to **John 3:6 (NIV):**

"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

  Think about that!

Your parents gave you physical life.

But only God can give you new spiritual life through His Holy Spirit!

- You cannot earn this new life by going to church.
- You cannot receive it simply by being a good person.

👉 You must be born again through faith in Jesus Christ.

😬 🔓 🔑 When a person truly turns from sin and trusts Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives their sins and gives them new spiritual life.

The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within that believer.

And that changes everything!

★ 4. How God's Holy Spirit Works With Our Spirit

Romans 8:16

Now, church, this is one of the most beautiful truths in Scripture!

The apostle Paul tells us in **Romans 8:16 (NIV): "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."**

Notice something wonderful.

Paul mentions God's Spirit and our spirit.

💡 **The Holy Spirit establishes a personal relationship with believers and works within us to help us live for Jesus Christ.**

Let's consider four important ways He works.

A. The Holy Spirit Assures Us We Belong to God

😟💭 Have you ever wondered whether God still loves you after you've made a mistake?

Perhaps you've struggled with sin or gone through a season of discouragement.

The Holy Spirit reminds us of God's promises and points us back to Jesus Christ.

Our salvation does not depend upon how spiritual we feel on any particular day.

   **Our salvation rests upon Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross.**

The Spirit helps us approach God as our loving heavenly Father.

B. The Holy Spirit Helps Us Understand Scripture

  (NIV) ***1 Corinthians 2:12-14 ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. ¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and***

cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.¹²

  Have you ever read a passage of Scripture several times, and then one day its meaning became especially clear?

Maybe you were struggling to forgive someone.

Then you read what Jesus taught about forgiveness, and suddenly you realized that God was calling you to change your attitude.

The Holy Spirit helps believers understand and respond to God's truth.

   **He doesn't replace the Bible. He works through the Bible!**

 That's why spending time in Scripture is so important.

¹² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Co 2:12-14.

The more we understand God's Word, the better prepared we are to recognize His truth in everyday situations.

C. The Holy Spirit Convicts Us of Sin

  (NIV) ***John 16:8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:¹³***

  (NIV) ***Galatians 5:16-17¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.¹⁴***

  Imagine having an argument with your spouse.

¹³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 16:8.

¹⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 5:16-17.

You say something hurtful.

At first, you justify yourself.

You think, *"Well, they started it!"*

But later, you recognize that your words were wrong.

You remember what God teaches about patience, kindness, and forgiveness.

And you realize you need to apologize.

That can be an example of the Holy Spirit using God's truth to convict your heart.

Understand this important difference:

 **Conviction leads us toward repentance and restoration.**

The Holy Spirit does not expose our sin simply to make us miserable.

He works to turn us away from sin and draw us closer to Jesus.

D. The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray



(NIV)

Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.¹⁵

Have you ever been so overwhelmed that you didn't even know what to pray?

Maybe you've received bad news.

Maybe someone you love is suffering.

Maybe you're facing something completely beyond your control.

Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for God's people.

Even when we struggle to find the words, God has not abandoned us.

¹⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 8:26.

We can simply come before Him and say:

"Father, I don't know what to do, but I trust You."

   The power of prayer is not found in perfect words. It is found in the God who hears us.

★ 5. The Battle Between the Flesh and the Spirit

  (NIV) **Galatians 5:16-23** ¹⁶ **So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** ¹⁷ **For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.** ¹⁸ **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.¹⁶

Now let's talk about something every Christian experiences.

¹⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 5:16-23.

  The struggle between what we know is right and what we sometimes feel like doing!

In Galatians 5, Paul describes the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.

  The *flesh* here doesn't simply mean our physical bodies.

It refers to our sinful tendencies and desires that resist God's will.

An Everyday Example

Suppose someone insults you.

Your first reaction might be anger.

You begin thinking about exactly what you want to say in return.

But then you remember what Jesus taught about loving others and forgiving those who wrong us.

Now there is a decision.

🤔 Will you surrender to anger?

🤔 Or will you obey God's Word?

Walking by the Spirit means depending upon the Holy Spirit to help us choose obedience rather than surrendering to sinful desires.

👉 And this is where spiritual growth becomes visible.

The Fruit of the Spirit

📖 ✝️ (NIV) ***Galatians 5:22-23 ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.¹⁷***

Paul identifies the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in believers:

¹⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ga 5:22-23.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Notice that Paul calls these qualities *fruit*.

  Fruit grows over time.

An apple tree doesn't produce mature apples the day after it's planted!

 Likewise, Christians grow spiritually as they remain in Christ, study His Word, and depend upon His Spirit.

- Perhaps years ago you reacted to criticism with immediate anger.
 - But today you find yourself praying before responding.
- Maybe you used to hold grudges.
 - But now you're learning to forgive.

   **That's spiritual growth! That's the Holy Spirit working to make you more like Jesus Christ!**

★ An Invitation to Be Born Again

  (NIV) **John 3:3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”¹⁸ ;**

  (NIV) **Ephesians 2:8-9⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.¹⁹ ;**

  (NIV) **Romans 10:9-10⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.²⁰**

I want to speak personally to anyone listening who has never trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Today we've discussed the body, soul, and spirit.

But the most important question is this:

  **Have you been born again?**

¹⁸ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 3:3.

¹⁹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Eph 2:8-9.

²⁰ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 10:9-10.

Jesus did **not** tell Nicodemus that he needed more religion.

He told him he needed a new birth.

And that same truth applies to us today.

The Bible tells us that we have all sinned.

We cannot remove our own guilt through good works or religious activity.

👉 But God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us.

- Jesus lived a sinless life.
- He died upon the cross for our sins.
- And on the third day, He rose from the grave!

Jesus is alive, and He offers forgiveness and eternal life to everyone who places their faith in Him!

👉 Being born again means turning from sin and trusting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

And when you receive Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit gives you new spiritual life.

If you've never made that decision, I invite you to come to Jesus **today**.

You can express your faith in Him through a simple prayer.

Remember, the words themselves do not save you. **Jesus saves!**

Prayer of Salvation:

 Let us Pray

Lord Jesus, I come before You today recognizing that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness.....

I believe You are the Son of God, that You died on the cross for my sins, and that You rose again....

Lord, I turn from my sins and place my faith and trust in You as my Lord and Savior....

Forgive me, make me new, and fill my life with Your Holy Spirit....

Guide me, strengthen me, and teach me to follow You every day....

Thank You for loving me and giving me the gift of eternal life....

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Conclusion - Let Your Whole Life Belong to God

As we close, remember these important truths.

- **Your body** allows you to live and interact with the physical world.
- **Your soul** describes your inner personal life, including your thoughts, emotions, and desires.
- **Your spirit** is part of your spiritual life, and through the new birth the Holy Spirit

brings you into a living relationship with God.

But here's the greatest truth of today's message:

   **The Holy Spirit does “not” come into our lives simply to make us feel better. He comes to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ!**

- He teaches us.
- He convicts us.
- He strengthens us.
- He helps us pray.
- And He produces spiritual fruit in our lives.

So do **not** live each day relying only upon your own understanding and strength.

- Open God's Word.
- Seek Him in prayer.
- Trust His promises.
- And walk in obedience to His Holy Spirit.

 **Because the greatest life we can live is a life completely surrendered to Jesus Christ!**

 **Closing Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, thank You for the wonderful truths we've learned today.

Thank You for creating us and giving us life.

And thank You especially for the gift of Your Holy Spirit.

Lord, help us remember that You are concerned with every part of who we are....our bodies, our thoughts, our desires, and our spiritual lives.

Renew our minds through Your Word.

Strengthen us when we're weak.

Convict us when we sin, and help us walk in obedience to You.

Father, I pray for those who have placed their faith in Jesus today. Help them grow in their relationship with You.

And for those of us who have followed Christ for many years, continue transforming us into the image of Your Son.

May our lives bring honor and glory to You until the wonderful day when we stand in the presence of Jesus Christ.

In His mighty and precious name, we pray.

Amen.



Matthew 28:19-20