

Summary

- a) You already have everything you need to live a godly life. You already have everything you need to live by Christ's divine life. You already are a partaker of the divine nature in your spirit. You already have divine power working mightily within you. This means you can live the abiding life we looked at in the previous three sessions.
- b) However, if you have been born-again for a while, you know living by Christ's divine life is not always easy. Reading about it in a book and living it in the face of temptation, pressure, and adversity are two very different things.
- c) That's why this session and the next several sessions focus on hinderances to the abiding life.

Where We Are Going

- a) *Session 4* gives an overview of the hinderances to abiding, looking at the two life-sources in you: Christ's life in your spirit or self-life in your soul; two states of a believer—carnal or spiritual; the profile of a spiritual Christian; and the dividing of soul and spirit.
- b) *Session 5* focuses on five hinderances to abiding, which are: (1) natural strength; (2) self-reliance; (3) the rational mind; (4) emotions and experiences; and (5) the body.
- c) *Session 6* focuses on the carnal mind as a major hinderance to abiding.
- d) *Session 7* focuses on heart-beliefs rooted in lies as another major hinderance to abiding.

You Have Everything You Need

- e) 2 Pet. 1:3
- f) Notice he wrote *has granted*, meaning it has already been accomplished.
- g) This divine power, giving you everything for life and godliness, is already in you because Christ is in you.
- h) You already have everything you need to live a godly life. You already have everything you need to live by Christ's divine life. You already are a partaker of the divine nature in your spirit. You already have divine power working mightily within you.
- i) This means you can live the abiding life we looked at in the previous three sessions.

This Means You Can . . .

- a) Live fully by the indwelling life of Christ, organically producing abundant fruit that remains;
- b) Experience deep intimacy and communion with God;
- c) Know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in an ever-increasing way;
- d) Feast daily upon His Word and His voice, giving you spiritual sustenance more satisfying than the richest four-course meal;
- e) Live in peace when the world around you spins into chaos;
- f) Experience overflowing joy and overcoming faith when the nations splinter in hopeless despair;
- g) Express God's love to an enraged culture embittered by offense;

- h) Showcase the humility and meekness of Christ to a proud, humanistic, antichrist world.

A Bright Light to a Dark World

- a) You already have everything you need to live a Christlike life because the Holy Spirit has been grafted to your spirit.
- b) As you learn to draw from the life source of Christ within you, you will become a partaker of His divine nature in your heart and soul.
- c) “As He is,” wrote John, “so also are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).
- d) When you learn to draw from the life source of Christ within your spirit, you will showcase Christ to a world desperate for true love, peace, joy, and hope.

The Challenge

- a) If you have been born-again for a while, however, you know living by Christ’s divine life is not always easy.
- b) Reading about it in a book and living it in the face of temptation, pressure, and adversity are two very different things.
- c) You probably have experienced what Paul described in Romans 7:15: “For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.”

Two Life Sources Within You

- a) As you try to live by the indwelling life of Christ, you quickly discover you have two life sources within you:
 - (1) Christ’s life in your spirit, which always produces the fruit of Christ’s character and nature;
 - (2) self-life in your soul, which often results in a self-centered life of human wisdom, strong-willed independence, rebellion, hostility to God, and sin.
- d) Both of these life sources have an inherent nature with different instincts and character.
- e) Whatever life source you draw from will effortlessly produce the fruit of that life.
- f) When you live by Christ in your spirit, you will organically produce the fruit of the Spirit; overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; be governed by your spirit’s intuition, instincts, and nature; and commune deeply with God.
- g) When you live by the life source of self in your soul, you will organically produce the sins of the flesh; be defeated by the world, the flesh, and the devil; be governed by the mind, will, and emotions; be controlled by the five senses of the body; and be hindered from deep, intimate communion with the Lord.

Self-Life in the Soul

- a) Since you may be unfamiliar with the phrase “self-life in the soul,” let me briefly explain this concept from Scripture.

- b) Jesus said, “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his *soul*?” (Matt. 16:26, emphasis mine).
- c) Luke, recording the same statement, wrote, “What is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits *himself*?” (Luke 9:25, emphasis mine).
- d) Though these two verses state the same truth, Matthew used the word for soul whereas Luke used the word for self.
- e) This was not a mistake but by divine design to show the soul is the very life of a person. Soul-life is self-life. Or put another way, self-life resides in the soul.
- f) Speaking about soul-life, Watchman Nee said,

Many do not understand what the soul-life is. Simply put, the soul-life is what we commonly call the self-life. Many believers make the big mistake of not distinguishing sin from self. They think that sin and self are the same. However, they are different both in the teaching of the Bible and in spiritual experience. Sin is filthy, opposes God, and is utterly abominable. Self, however, may not necessarily be filthy, may not necessarily oppose God, and may not necessarily be abominable. On the contrary, many times self is quite honorable, wanting to help God.

- g) A Christian who lives by self-life in their soul is governed by human reasoning, emotions, and self-preference. What they think, feel, and want drives how they live.
- h) Even though sin and self are different, a self-centered life always leads to sin, for self-interests are exalted above Christ and God’s will.
- i) Often, a self-centered Christian will eventually be consumed by the cravings of their flesh.

Two States of Believers

- a) In 1 Corinthians 3:1, Paul revealed two possible states of born-again believers: carnal or spiritual.
- b) These two states are determined by the part of your being that leads, governs, and empowers your life.
- c) A carnal Christian is governed by the flesh—their unredeemed body coupled together with their unrenewed soul.
- d) Paul told the Corinthians,

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal? (1 Cor. 3:1-4 NKJV)

- e) The word translated carnal is *sarkikos*, derived from *sarx*, the word used to describe the flesh. *Sarkikos* means, therefore, “fleshly; having the nature of flesh, i.e. under the control of the animal appetites.”
- f) Based upon this passage, carnal Christians:
 - Are immature, or as Paul stated, “babes in Christ”;
 - Are unable to digest the solid meat of God’s Word and must be fed with milk, like a nursing baby;
 - Often produce the sins of the flesh, such as “envy, strife, and divisions”;

- Idolize spiritual leaders, claiming to be part of their tribe, rather than seeing they belong to the body of Christ;
 - Are dependent upon their favorite leader of the month for spiritual sustenance rather than Christ.
- g) In short, a carnal Christian lives like “mere men.” They live like natural, unregenerate people devoid of the Spirit.

A Soulful, Carnal Christian

- a) A carnal Christian can also be described as a *soulful* Christian.
- b) Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “But a *natural* man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14, emphasis mine).
- c) The word translated *natural* is *psychikos*, and if you notice carefully, you can see it is derived from the word *psychē*, the word we saw in session 1 that means soul.
- d) This is why *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines *psychikos* as “belonging to the psuche, soul.”
- e) Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines *psychikos* as “having the nature and characteristics of the psuche [soul]; governed by the psuche [soul].”
- f) Thus, 1 Corinthians 2:14 could read, “But a soulful man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”
- g) Even though the soulful person Paul described in this verse is likely unregenerate, a born-again believer can be soulful when they allow their soul to be the leader.
- h) This in mind, I like to use the term soulful—which Webster’s defines as “relating to, involving, or suggesting the soul”—to refer to carnal Christians who are governed by their mind, will, or emotions.
- i) Although soulful is not a common word today, it has really helped me distinguish between a Christian who is living by their flesh, producing the sins of the flesh, and a Christian who is living from their soul, not necessarily sinning in the flesh, perhaps even trying to serve the Lord in their own strength.
- j) In summary:
- A carnal Christian can describe a believer who is given over to the sins of the flesh.
 - Or, a carnal Christian can describe an immature, soulful believer who is governed by their mind, will, or emotions.

A Spiritual Christian

- a) A spiritual Christian, in contrast, is governed by their spirit in union with the indwelling Spirit.
- b) Paul told the Corinthians, “But he who is *spiritual* appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one” (1 Cor. 2:15, emphasis mine).
- c) A spiritual Christian is governed by their spirit empowered by the Holy Spirit and produces the fruit of the Spirit, as Paul detailed in Galatians 5:22-23.

- d) Often, a Christian will not be completely carnal or spiritual. Instead, their life will be characterized by a mixture of the body, the soul, and the spirit influencing and leading.
- e) As a born-again believer, you have the choice to live by Christ in your spirit or by your own strength in your soul.
- f) If you choose to live by Christ, you will become a spiritual Christian, ruled and governed by the indwelling Spirit.
- g) Vice versa, if you choose to live for yourself, you will become carnal, ruled and governed by your flesh.
- h) The life source you choose determines the type of fruit you produce. Living selfishly produces the fruit of the flesh. Living by Christ's life produces the fruit of the Spirit.
- i) Selfishness suppresses the Spirit while selflessness releases the Spirit.
- j) If you live by self-life in your soul, it will hinder Christ's life from flowing freely from your spirit to organically produce Christlike fruit.
- k) Now that I have defined carnal, soulish, and spiritual, let me give you some examples of what a spiritual Christian looks like.

The Profile of a Spiritual Christian

- a) The spiritual Christian understands their spirit was created by the Lord to be the leader. This means they live by God's prescribed order of spirit first, soul second, and body third.
- b) They yield wholly to the indwelling Spirit, actively waiting on Him in prayer to transmit His power, life, character, nature, victory, and authority to their spirit.
- c) They have learned to cease striving, let go, quiet their soul, and wait on the indwelling Spirit for new strength, fresh direction, and transformational revelation.
- d) As a result, their five senses, along with the mind, will, and emotions of their soul, are under the indwelling Spirit's control.
- e) Though still having their own thoughts, feelings, desires, and personality, these do not control or lead them. They have learned to separate the soul from the spirit and are quick to bring their soul under the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- f) The spiritual Christian is led, governed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit alone. Consequently, their soul is no longer the leader but the processor, the expressor, and the executor of the spirit's input.
- g) Their soul is ever ready to carry out the indwelling Spirit's revelations, promptings, impulses, directions, and instructions with swift obedience.
- h) In addition, their body, as the soul's servant, obeys whatever their will decides.
- i) The spiritual Christian allows the indwelling life of Christ to shine through their unique personality like a prism, expressing Christ's beautiful nature through their soul.
- j) The spiritual Christian, governed by the indwelling Spirit, lives the abiding life and produces an abundance of Christlike fruit.

The Division of Soul and Spirit

- a) To live from your spirit, you first have to see the distinction between your spirit and soul.

- b) Because your spirit and soul are so tightly interwoven, only God's living and active Word can surgically expose your soul's thoughts, emotions, and desires, which influence, suppress, and govern your spirit.
- c) Until God's two-edged sword of truth penetrates your heart, you can easily mistake your soulish impulses for the Spirit's leadership.
- d) If you are like me, you are often not even aware how frequently your thoughts, emotions, and desires masquerade as the Spirit's voice.
- e) Hebrews 4:12 states, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."
- f) The Lord, from whose mouth proceeds "a sharp two-edged sword," sometimes speaks sharp and cutting words to expose the mixture of flesh and soul with your spirit-to-Spirit union with Christ (see Rev. 1:16).
- g) His goal is to reveal the life source you draw from and live by, aiming to shift you from living selfishly to living by Christ's indwelling life in your spirit.
- h) Because of the Lord's great love for you, He is jealous to transform you into a spiritual person. This is why the Lord lovingly shows you where self-life is influencing and governing you.

Dividing Soul and Spirit Is a Process

- a) Like peeling layers of an onion, the Spirit works relentlessly, surgically exposing and removing the influence of your self-life.
- b) He aims to remove the mixture of flesh and soul that keeps you immature and self-oriented.
- c) He pinpoints every issue suppressing your spirit and hindering the free flow of Christ's indwelling life.
- d) If you want to be the spiritual Christian previously described, your spirit and soul must be divided.
- e) This allows you to see the distinction between:
 - Soul-life and the Spirit's life;
 - Soulish love and divine love;
 - Human compassion and Christlike kindness;
 - Self-centered happiness and Spirit-empowered joy;
 - Self-life and Christ's indwelling life.

Beware of Analysis Paralysis

- a) One word of caution before moving on. Some people get so focused on whether they are living from their spirit or their soul they suffer from *analysis paralysis*.
- b) They overanalyze whether a thought originated from their spirit or their soul and end up doing nothing.
- c) They become paralyzed by overthinking whether they are being led by their mind or emotions and struggle to move forward with a decision.
- d) They fear becoming soulish, so they do nothing.

- e) Having experienced this myself, here's some advice I learned from the apostle Paul: "For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:4).
- f) He wrote that we should wait on the Lord who will "bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives" of our hearts (1 Cor. 4:5).
- g) Even though this ultimately describes the judgment seat of Christ, the Lord also works this way now.
- h) Like Paul, we shouldn't focus on what's wrong with us or whether we are living from the soul or the spirit. Instead, you should set your gaze upon the Lord who dwells within you.
- i) Enjoy Him and trust Him. Wait on the Lord to shine light upon the life source from which you are living. Rely upon Him and His Word to divide your soul from your spirit, so you can see how self-life in the soul is leading, governing, and influencing you.

Application

- a) 2 Pet. 1:3 states you have everything you need for life and godliness. Write down what this means to you and how this should change the way you pray and live.
- b) In your own words, write down what self-life in the soul means to you and what it looks like in your life.
- c) Write down your profile of a spiritual Christian and use this as a vision of the type of person you want to become.
- d) Ask the Lord to divide your soul from your spirit so you can see more clearly the difference between these two parts of your being.