

Functions of the Spirit



What Is Man? (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

This week we're continuing with the theme that we commenced last week. Its title takes the form of a question: What Is Man? I've stated my conviction that the Bible is the only book which not only asks this question, but also provides a satisfying answer to it.

Last week I explained that the Bible serves as a mirror which shows us our inner nature. In a normal, physical mirror, we can look at our outward appearance, but the Bible is a spiritual mirror which shows us our inward nature. And this mirror reveals that man is a triune being created in the likeness of a triune God. The revelation of the triune God, which we receive in the same mirror of God's Word, is that God is Father, Son, and Spirit—three persons, one God, and that God created man in His likeness, and that man consists of three related elements, spirit, soul, and body. These came into being at creation when the Spirit of God, from above, was breathed into the body of clay below, and the union of spirit and clay, or spirit and body, produced a living soul.

However, man turned away from God in rebellion and this had a disastrous effect on every element of man's being. Man's spirit died—man became spiritually dead in sin. Man's soul was infected with rebellion, and man's body became subject to corruption, decay, sickness, old age, and ultimately, death. Thank God that God has provided a remedy for this terrible condition. God's remedy is regeneration—being reborn. Through faith in Jesus Christ, His atoning death and resurrection, man's spirit can be reunited to God and brought back to life. And man's soul can be saved from the penalty and the consequences of sin. Man's body also can be revitalized.

In my talks this week I'm going to deal with God's program for regenerated man, particularly the different functions of spirit, soul and body, and how they should relate to each other. This is a matter of great practical importance for every born-again believer—how God intends us to function in this new life.

Today I'm going to deal specifically with the highest element of man, that is, His Spirit.

The essential thing that happens through regeneration is that man's spirit is reunited with God and thus made alive again, thus able to receive again the spiritual life of which God is the only source. Paul describes this union of man's spirit with God, through faith, in 1 Corinthians 6:17:

> "But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (NASB)

That's one of the places where it's so important to understand the distinction between the spirit and the soul. It's not the soul that's united with God, it's the spirit, for the spirit was created for union with God and cannot live out of union with God. And as a result of regeneration, the spirit of the bornagain believer is able to be united with God.

Let me give you just three simple definitions of the functions of spirit, soul, and body in very simple terms, perhaps a little simplistic, but helpful. The spirit is God-conscious. The soul is self-conscious. The body is world-conscious. Through the spirit, we're conscious of God. In our soul, we're conscious of ourselves. And through our body and its senses, we relate to the world around us. Now, when man's spirit is reunited with God, that rekindled spirit becomes a lamp. Filled with the Holy Spirit, it illuminates the inward nature of man which was dark, and alienated from God up to that time. We need to remember that in Bible times, the fuel for every lamp was olive oil, and olive oil was always a type of the Holy Spirit.

In Proverbs 20, verse 27, the writer says this:

> "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being." (NASB)

So, when the spirit of man is brought back into union with God, and the Holy Spirit comes in and fills up that lamp, then that lamp inside man is illuminated and sheds light on his whole inner being. He's no longer in darkness. Furthermore, the reborn spirit becomes a channel through which the Holy Spirit can flow out into this world.

John 7:38 and 39, Jesus said this:

> "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, [capital 'S,' the Holy Spirit] whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (NASB)

So, after the Holy Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost, then the regenerated spirit of man becomes a channel, a riverbed, through which rivers of spiritual life can flow out into this world. That's a marvelous transformation because just before that, Jesus had said, "If any man is thirsty, let him come unto Me and drink." So this transformation of regeneration and the infilling of the Holy Spirit produces this marvelous change, that a man who was thirsty and did not even have enough for himself, through it, becomes a channel through which waters of spiritual life can flow out to the needy world around.

Now I want to speak of the three distinctive functions of the regenerated spirit. The first is worship. In John 4:23 and 24, Jesus says this:

> "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." (NASB)

Worship is a function of the regenerated spirit. Praise is a function of the soul. We'll see that later. But the spirit relates to God in worship. Worship is the attitude of the regenerated spirit in the immediate presence of God, and God is looking for those who will worship him in spirit and in truth. Until man's spirit is regenerated, he really does not know what worship is. Worship is the most intimate, the most beautiful, the most reverent attitude and relationship toward the living God. It's the response of man's spirit to the privilege of being united to God and knowing Him.

The second function of the regenerated spirit is fellowship—sharing with God, particularly sharing God's secrets. This is so precious to me. One of the ways in which the regenerated believer, filled with the Holy Spirit, is permitted to share God's secrets, is through worshiping in an unknown language which the Spirit gives, which first happened on the Day of Pentecost and is continued on through the New Testament record.

And in 1 Corinthians, chapter 14, Paul says certain things about the function of the spirit when it's communicating with God in an unknown tongue. In 1 Corinthians 14, verse 2, Paul says:

> "For one who speaks in a tongue [that's an unknown tongue] does not speak to men, but to God; for no one

> understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries." (NASB)

What a beautiful concept. The mind is inactive but the spirit in this blessed communion with God is sharing God's secrets.

It's a beautiful fact of psychology that a person never shares his secrets with his enemies, but only with his closest friends. And so, when we are permitted to share God's secrets through this method of communion with God, in an unknown tongue, we're enjoying the fullest expression of friendship with God.

And a little further on in 1 Corinthians 14, verse 14, Paul speaks about this again for he says:

> "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful." (NASB)

See again, it's so important to distinguish between the spirit and the soul. The mind is a function of the soul. There are times when the mind, as it were, were in neutral but the spirit is in direct living communion with God. But that's as the spirit prays and the mind is left inactive. Of course that's not the way we pray always. Many times we pray with our mind too.

The third function of the regenerated spirit is to receive revelation from God. Again we turn to the words of Paul, 1 Corinthians 2, 9 through 12:

> "However, as it is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him'—[there's no way to receive this revelation through the mind or through the senses, but only through the spirit. Paul goes on:] But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit [capital 'S']. The Spirit [that's the Spirit of God] searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? [See, that's the deepest, innermost part of us; the secret part of us.] In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us." (NIV)

So, God's Spirit, communicating directly with our spirit, gives us revelation. We enter into the understanding of things that we cannot apprehend with the mind, with the soul, that we cannot apprehend with the senses.

Let me just repeat those three, distinctive functions of the spirit: worship, fellowship, and revelation.

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R070-101-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

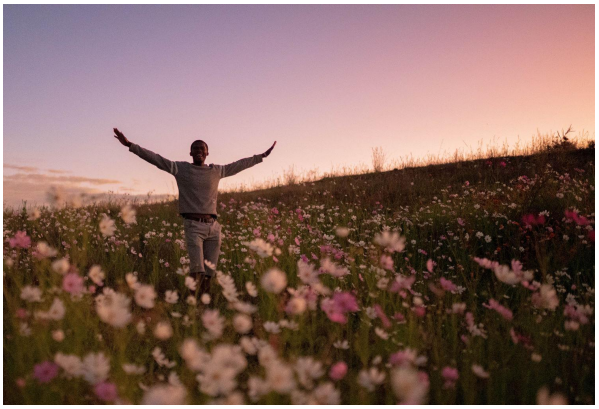


Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



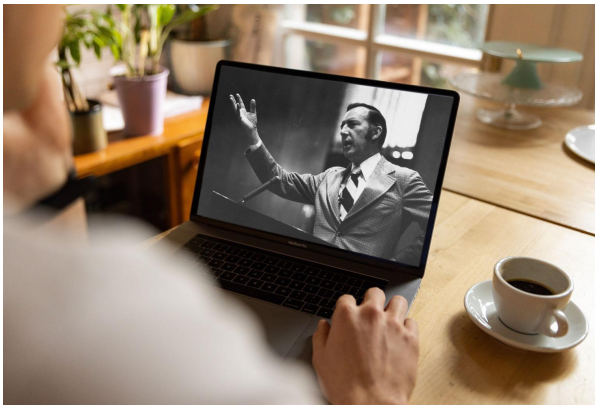
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries