

Session 1.4 – The Spiritual Self

Objectives:

1. to make the participants understand what it means to live according to the Spirit
2. to help the participants learn how to develop their spiritual life
3. to make the participants appreciate the importance of maintaining their spiritual growth

Scripture Passage: Romans 8.1-17

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

²For the law of the Spirit* of life in Christ Jesus has set you* free from the law of sin and of death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin,* he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit* set their minds on the things of the Spirit.* ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit* is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit,* since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit* is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ* from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through* his Spirit that dwells in you.

¹² So then, brothers and sisters,* we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!'^{*} ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness* with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Discussion Questions

1. Romans 8:1 tells Christians there is now "no condemnation." Why is it essential for Christians to take hold of the complete forgiveness we have in Christ Jesus?
2. Compare the sinful mind to the mind that is led by the Spirit? (List several attributes of each). What are some very practical ways for us to be sure that our minds are being led by the Holy Spirit? Can this work without a knowledge of the Scripture?
3. According to verses 9-11, and 16, how can a person know for sure whether or not he/she is a Christian? What encouragement do you receive from verse 11 regarding today and your future? How could you encourage someone else with the truth of this passage?
4. Why do you think we still need to work on our spiritual development? What are some of the ways you can follow to ensure that you are growing in your spiritual life?
5. How can we integrate our spiritual self within our whole self without making it a separate section of our life?
6. How can you tell if someone is really leading a spiritual life? How can you help someone else with his/her spiritual life?

Reflection

If you accept the resurrection, then the life and teaching of Jesus becomes authoritative. *What Would Jesus Do* really does become the critical question for Christian spirituality. It is a difficult thing for Christians to do. Fred Craddock, a retired professor of preaching, tells this story. ". . . I heard about a young man in his early twenties dying of that horrible, horrible, frightening, terrible AIDS in a hospital in Atlanta. He had no church connection, but someone said he had relatives who had been in the church, so they called a minister of that church, and the minister went to the hospital. The young man was almost dead, just gasping there, and the minister came to the hospital, stood out in the hall, and asked them to open the door. When they opened the door, he yelled a prayer. Another minister there in south Atlanta, down around Forest Park, heard about it and rushed to the hospital, hoping that he was still alive. She got to the hospital, went into the room, went over by the bed, and pulled a chair by the bed. This minister lifted his head and cradled it in her arm. She sang. She quoted scripture. She prayed. And he died. Some of the seminarians said, 'Weren't you scared? He had AIDS!' She said, 'Of course I was scared. I bet you I bathed sixty times.' 'Well then, why did you do it?' And she said, 'I just imagined if Jesus had gotten the call, what he would do. I had to go.'" (Fred Craddock, *Craddock Stories*, p. 86). That is the essence of the Christian spiritual life.