

THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN

jkroberts_us@yahoo.com

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I Corinthians 2:6-3:4

1. Many commentators use this passage of Scripture to try and explain how a person can claim to be born again while living a life that disputes that claim.
2. We are told that these people are carnal Christians.
3. The problem is that those we refer to as carnal Christians are often people who are uninvolved and unaffiliated with any group of Christian believers, while the carnal Christians Paul was writing to were actively involved in the life and ministry of the Corinthian Church.
4. I believe that from a positional standpoint before God we are either spiritual (saved) or natural (lost).
5. The natural man:
 - a. Is unrenewed, devoid of the Spirit.
 - b. May be intelligent, moral, and religious, but none the less dead in trespasses and sins.
 - c. Cannot understand the things of the Spirit apart from a divine work of grace upon his heart and mind. 2:14
6. From a practical perspective as Christians we are either spiritual (filled with and led by the Spirit) or carnal (ruled by the flesh and its appetites).
7. A carnal Christian:
 - a. Is born again and indwelt with the Holy Spirit but ruled by the flesh.
 - b. Is referred to “as a babe in Christ.”
 - ◆ Not growing spiritually.
 - ◆ Unable to receive or digest spiritual meat.
 - ◆ Subject to the flesh or what Paul refers to as the “law of sin” mentioned in Romans 7.
 - ◆ Unable to feed or care for himself.
8. Many Christians accept the carnal Christian life as the norm when in fact the life I am about to describe should be the norm.
9. We need to understand that Jesus died and rose again to deliver us from the penalty of sin and from the power of the law of sin.
 - a. “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?”
Romans 7:24
 - b. “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!...For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” Romans 7:25, 8:2
 - c. Most Christians are living at the wrong address and need to move from Romans 7 to Romans 8.
10. Four things are true about spiritual Christians.

I. They manifest spiritual integrity.

- A. They are not ruled by the flesh.
- B. They appropriate, by faith, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus leading to:
 - 1. A spiritual mind-set. Romans 8:5
 - 2. Spiritual life and peace. Romans 8:6-7
 - 3. Spiritual victory over sin. Romans 8:12-13
 - 4. Their being led by the Spirit. Romans 8:14 (more later)
- C. The fruit of the Spirit is evident in their lives. Galatians 5:22-23
-Read it this way: “But the fruit of the Spirit is the love of Christ, the joy of Christ, the peace of Christ, the patience of Christ, the kindness of Christ, the goodness of Christ, the faithfulness of Christ, the gentleness of Christ, and the self-control of Christ.”
- D. Who has the upper-hand in your life-the Holy Spirit or the flesh?

II. They possess spiritual insight or discernment.

- A. We have received the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God. I Corinthians 2:12 (see verses 6-11)
- B. We have received the Spirit who is from God that we might be able to communicate God’s word to others. 2:13-16
- C. The Word of God was authored by the Spirit of God and must be interpreted by the Spirit of God. II Peter 1:20-21
But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.
- D. Our attitude toward the inspired Word reveals whether we have any claim to being spiritual. I Corinthians 14:37-38
If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. 38 But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not (to be) recognized.
- E. Paul wrote the Colossians, “...we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Colossians 1:9
NOTE: We should pray this prayer for ourselves and others.
- F. Do you study the Bible on your own or does the Holy Spirit help you?
- G. Are you enabled by the Holy Spirit to use your spiritual knowledge and wisdom in your conversations with others?

III. They will be spiritual intercessors.

- A. We are to pray at all times in the Spirit. Ephesians 6:18
With all prayer and petition **pray at all times in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak

- B. The Holy Spirit is our Helper, and He will help us to pray. Romans 8:26-27
 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
- C. It is in the Holy Spirit that we have access to the Father. Ephesians 2:17-18
 AND HE (Jesus) CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one (by) Spirit to the Father.
 NOTE: The Amplified Bible adds, "so that we may be able to approach Him."
- D. Does the Holy Spirit constantly seek to involve you in prayer?

IV. They will be led by the Spirit (spiritual initiative).

- A. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."
 Romans 8:14
- B. Jesus said, "I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me (through the Spirit); He has not left Me along, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." John 8:28-29
 Note; We cannot say that this standard is too high for us because John wrote,
 "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**" I John 3:21-22
- C. A spiritual Christian is led by the Spirit and fits in to God's plan and purpose rather than inviting God to bless his or her plans and purposes.
- D. Who is the initiator in your life-the Spirit of God or your old sinful nature?

APPLICATION

1. How does one become spiritual?
 - a. Believe it to be possible.
 - b. Realize it is necessary.
 - c. Be willing to be given up to the Spirit.
 - d. Yield fully to His claims.
 - e. Ask to be filled.
2. May God awaken in each of us a deep yearning to be spiritual men and women.