

The Heart

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II Timothy 2:15)

Usually as we listen to preachers we can believe what they say; however, since no man is infallible, we need to make sure for ourselves that each teaching lines up with the 'Word of God. I'm telling you this because there was one teaching I accepted for years without checking it out for myself despite the fact that I would find scriptures which didn't line up with the traditional widely accepted teaching. The accepted teaching was that the words "heart" and "spirit" are interchangeable when found in scriptures. Whenever I found both words in the same verse, I reasoned that the repetition was there for emphasis. But then I came across scriptures where this not only wouldn't make sense but also made it seem as though a recreated spirit could have negative aspects. I knew this couldn't be true and began to pursue the question, "What is the heart?"

I began to meditate on it, read the Word, and discuss it with other ministers. Ironically, at this same time many fellow ministers were arriving at the same conclusions I was, and we spent many hours discussing this perplexing question.

As I searched to find the answer, I discovered that in the Greek there is one word for heart and another word of spirit. I asked myself, "Why didn't the Greeks use just one word since apparently both words mean exactly the same thing?" We have many examples in the Bible of one word being translated more than one way. The word "pneuma" is a good example.

When the Bible was being translated by the Westminster group and the Oxford group, one group translated "pneuma" as Holy Ghost while the other group translated it as Holy Spirit. Today it is commonly translated as Holy Spirit. But, either translation refers to only one Greek word, "pneuma".

However, in the case of heart and spirit, we have two different words which we assumed meant the same thing. Let's look at some scriptures that use heart and spirit

and see for ourselves if they are truly interchangeable. A good place to begin is with I Thessalonians 5:23, which tells us that the spirit is one of our three parts.

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 5:23)

After Paul says, "sanctify you wholly," he goes on to tell us what is meant by wholly—spirit, soul, and body. The order in which these parts are mentioned indicates that God works from the inside out beginning with the spirit.

When we are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our spirits. Actually, we are wall-to-wall spirits which have a soul and live in a body. Our bodies are the coverings for our spirits.

An Old Testament reference to spirit, soul, and body is found in Daniel 7:15, *Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.* Here he is saying that his spirit which is within his body troubled him over the visions of his head (his mind).

Next look at I Peter 1:23, *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*

As you know, the born-again experience takes place in your human spirit because the Holy Spirit comes to live there. Also, according to this scripture, we are born again of incorruptible seed which lives forever. Furthermore, this process is instantaneous and our spirits are made perfect with no capacity to sin.

Although our spirits are made perfect when we are born again, we still have imperfect souls and imperfect bodies. While salvation is instantaneous in the spirit, it is progressive in the soul. According to James 1:21, we must *receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.* This renewing of your soul (your mind) is never complete. You will still be learning things about the Lord if you live to be four thousand years old.

So far we have a perfected spirit (past), a perfecting soul (present), and in the future, at the Rapture, our bodies will be made perfect and incorruptible.

Next let's look at a verse that becomes clear now that we know we are three part beings with spirits born of incorruptible seed.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:9)

This does not mean that if you sin, you are not born again. Rather, this verse is talking about your spirit which cannot sin! If a believer is tempted to sin, this temptation does not come out of his spirit because of the incorruptible seed which lives and abides there.

As we mentioned, the Greeks have separate words for heart and spirit. We know that spirit comes from the word "pneuma". Heart comes from the word "kardia". We have derived cardiac (which refers to the human heart) from "kardia". However, when the word "kardia" appears in the Word of God, it is talking about the spiritual, not the natural.

The word "kardia" is used in Mark 11:23.

For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart (kardia), but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Let's look at the phrase, "shall not doubt in his heart". The fact that you can doubt in your heart implies that you can also believe in your heart. As I meditated on this, I realized that substituting spirit for heart does not work here. Remember, we said that when you are born again, your spirit is made perfect and it logically follows that this perfect spirit cannot doubt since doubt is a sin and your spirit cannot sin. So, spirit cannot take the place of heart in this scripture.

There are other scriptures which also refer to the positive and negative aspects

of the heart. For example, Psalm 12:2, warns us not to have a double heart. In Psalm 73:7, we are told that the heart can wish. According to Proverbs 6:18, the Lord hates, *an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations...* Can you imagine a God-filled spirit devising wicked imaginations? And then, Proverbs 15:28 says, *The heart of the righteous studieth to answer...Does the spirit need to study?*

An even more difficult scripture to try to substitute spirit for heart is Hosea 10:2. In speaking of Israel, God says, "Their heart is divided..." Can your spirit be divided?

The scripture that really threw me is Daniel 4:16, which says, *Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him...* If heart and spirit are interchangeable, then according to this verse animals have spirits. However, the Word only tells us of mankind's being created in God's image. Since God is a spirit, we too are created as spirits which makes us unique among God's creation.

In Mark 2:8, we find both heart and spirit in the same verse. *And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto thee. Why reason ye these things in your hearts?* According to this verse, you perceive in your spirit (pneuma), but you reason in your heart (kardia).

I was beginning to think that maybe we had a fourth part—body, soul, spirit, and heart, but we have already seen, both the Old and the New Testament explicitly refer to only three parts.

When I came to Hebrews 3:12, which refers to an evil heart of unbelief, "I said, "Lord this is too complicated!" But then I finally found I Peter 3:4, which says, *But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God a great price.* Glory to God! Scriptures I had never understood fell into place with this revelation. The spirit which is the hidden man isn't the whole heart. The hidden man (spirit) is only part of the heart.

No wonder Israel had a divided heart. The souls of the people were going away from God while their spirits were drawn towards God!

No wonder Proverbs 3:5, exhorts us to, *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;*

and lean not unto thine own understanding. If I substituted spirit here, this would indicate that I could trust the Lord with only part of my spirit and that doesn't seem reasonable. However, reading it with the idea that we must trust the Lord with our spirits and our souls does make sense. We need to line up our minds with our spirits and we can do this by heeding Romans 12:2, *...be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...* We are also told to be *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God...*(2 Corinthians 10:5). Philippians 4:8, admonishes us to think only on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Isaiah 26:3, promises us that, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Why does the Word put so much emphasis on the mind? This is where the devil can attack you. He cannot get hold of your spirit because once you are born-again it is recreated by God. But, if Satan can get your mind going contrary to the Word, your spirit is powerless. You can have the faith to move mountains, but if your soul is out of fellowship with the Lord, your spirit will not work. The devil is fighting to get hold of your soul. This is why we are constantly admonished to stay in the Word and renew our minds. When your mind agrees with your spirit, there is power!

Sin is caused when your soul and body come into agreement and you are carnal. But, spiritual-mindedness (spirit and soul lined up) is life. The crux of this is—the soul (mind) is the hinge which connects the body and the spirit.

When Hosea said that Israel had a divided heart, he meant that the people were listening to God with the spirit part of their heart and to the world with the soul part of the heart.

This takes us back to Mark 11:23, *...and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe..* True believing is lining up the soul with the spirit. But, doubting comes from the Greek word which means "to differ". We are not to doubt God's Word, because when we do, we are halted by a mind which is trying to listen to the spirit, but which listens to the world at the same time. If you are trying to go two directions at the same time, you won't get anywhere. This is why James 1:8 says, *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

We may have doubts arise in our minds, but we don't have to entertain them, we are to cast them down. As we do this and renew our minds to line up with our spirits, we move from the good to the acceptable, to the perfect will of God. Faith is a growing process, but the growth takes place in our minds, not in our God-created spirits which are already perfected.

As we mentioned in our last issue, the only thing that can tell what is from your spirit and what is from your soul is the Word. *...the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* (Hebrews 4:12)

Joints and Marrow take on a special significance here, for joints are compared to the soul and marrow to the spirit. As you know, joints hinge bones together and enable the body to move. Remember, the soul hinges the body to the spirit. If the Lord prompts you in your spirit to go witness to a certain person, what gets the message to your body to get moving? The soul, the mind, the hinge!

Next, marrow is compared to the spirit. Marrow in your bones produces the blood in your body and blood is life. Likewise, your everlasting life emanates from your spirit. Just as your marrow continually produces new blood cells, your spirit continues to produce life.

This verse also calls the Word a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Your thoughts come from your soul, but your intents come from your spirit. Thus, if the thoughts and intents are both of the heart, the soul and spirit must be parts of the heart.

Another way of putting this is, the heart in the complete inner man—his soul and his spirit. The Bible often refers to the inner man and the outer man, a two-part being. At first this may seem contrary to scriptures which refer to body, soul, and spirit—a three-part being. However, when we understand that the inner man is composed of soul and spirit, we can see how these scriptures are complementary.

Another interesting thing about Hebrews 4:12, is that the Word which divides also reunites. Let me give you an example. When you were a sinner, your spirit and soul were in line with each other. Both were walking the same direction—towards sin. Then, when you accepted Jesus, the Word of God split your spirit from your soul. Your spirit followed after God even though your soul was trying to go the other way. This caused an internal warfare that can be stopped only by reuniting the soul and the spirit. How can this be done? By renewing of your mind (soul) with the Word.

Once your soul is renewed by the Word of God and comes more and more in line with your recreated spirit, what happens to the body? The body is just like a glove. It doesn't do anything of its own accord, it only works as what is inside it works. So, when you get the soul and the spirit (the inner man) working together, the outer man (the body) has to follow them.

Just think of the power you have when you get your soul and body lined up with your spirit!

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