

Functions of Our Spirit

Key Scriptures

- It is the Spirit who gives **life**; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are **life** (John 6:63).
- And I brethren could not speak to you as to **spiritual men**, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ... For you are still **fleshly**. ... For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not **fleshly**, and are you not walking like mere man (*lit., according to man*) (1 Cor 3:1, 3)?
- 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 (Heb 4:12).
- Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the **treasure** which has been entrusted to you (2 Tim 1:14).
- Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might **know** the things freely given to us by God (1 Cor 2:12).
- ... attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of **understanding**, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the **treasures** of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2b-3).

Key Words

Life

Spiritual

Fleshly

Revelation

Treasure

Know

Understanding

We Are To Follow After The Spirit of Life

Potential to function as spiritual people—Ralph Nault

“Once we are born from above, we have the potential to become fully what God created us to be – man and spirit combined into one new being. This one new being happens as soon as we

have that new birth or conversion experience, but we don't come into the fullness of that until many years later – it is not something that happens overnight!

“We can now function at the natural level with everyone in the world around us, and now we also have the potential to function as spiritual men or women, in touch with spiritual things, and in touch with God. We are able to see God, hear God, see spiritual things, hear spiritual things, experience spiritual things.

“Before, we did not have those abilities and were unable to see the Kingdom of God; we were unable to enter into it because that Kingdom is spirit. But now we are new creations, we have the abilities for both, and then it hinges upon how responsive we are to the Holy Spirit who is there to help us.

“The Holy Spirit is sent to us to help us develop fully into being that new creation. This is his work and purpose. We cannot come into a place of spiritual maturity without the Holy Spirit. We have to have the Holy Spirit there to usher us into it. It is the Spirit alone who can make us live and change – not our cleverness, education, charisma, or personal power.

- Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives **life** (2 Cor. 3:6).

“The Holy Spirit does the work. He is the teacher, the guide; He reveals Jesus Christ in us and guides us into the truth. He teaches us how to begin to see spiritually, how to begin to hear spiritually, how to begin to speak spiritually, and how to begin to respond spiritually to the things of God.

“No one can guide a person into a place of spiritual maturity. Someone can point to the way, but it is the Holy Spirit who must teach us and guide us into the fullness of whatever the Lord has for us. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. We must go to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to teach us.”

Defining Life (Zoe)

- In the Greek, *life* is defined as a principle; in the absolute sense, life as God has it. In the dictionary, life is defined as vigor, liveliness, animation, vivacity; the source of vigor or liveliness.
- ❖ Some people think that eternal life is the life they will have when they get to heaven, but eternal life is the life of God. It is the God-kind of life. Eternal life is the nature of God, which comes into our spirit to recreate us and make us a new creature: to change our nature – Kenneth E. Hagin.

Walking by the Holy Spirit

Living the Christian life, the Bible way, means that our daily task is to walk by, follow after, the Holy Spirit. To do this well, we must understand what it means to be spiritual, the division of the soul and spirit, the spiritual senses, and the various functions of our spirit.

- And I brethren could not speak to you as to **spiritual men**, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ... For you are still **fleshly**. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not **fleshly**, and are you not walking like mere man (lit., according to man) (1 Cor. 3:1, 3)?

Walking after the Spirit means that our human spirit has become the highest organ of our whole person. Note: our aim is to be a spiritual person, not to be a spirit. A spiritual person retains his or her soul and body.

- ❖ Our spirit is not material, and yet it exists independently in our body – Nee.

Defining Spiritual & Fleshly

- In the Greek, spiritual refers to a current of air, breathe: non-carnal.
- In the Greek, fleshly (root word *sarx*) has to do with the outer layer, the body as opposed to the soul or spirit; i.e., the symbol of what is external.

Apostle Paul instructed believers to follow after the Spirit

- But I say, walk by (*follow after*) the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law (Galatians 5:16-18).
- So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body you will live (Romans 8:12-13).

We are to use our spiritual senses

Following after the Holy Spirit means we will walk according to the guidance coming to us through our spiritual senses. The Holy Spirit expresses His feeling through our spirit's delicate senses.

The things God has for us to do must first be revealed to us in our intuition, not our fleshly desires or reasoning and analytical minds. Our intuition expresses the thought of the Spirit which in turn expresses the mind of God.

- ❖ We come to know truth with our heart or spirit, rather than with our mind. God reveals things that our natural eyes and ears could never sense, through His Spirit speaking directly to our spirit – Dr. Bruce L. Morgan.

Difference between knowing and understanding—W. Nee

“The spirit *knows* while the mind *understands*. A believer *knows* the things of God by the intuition of his spirit. Strictly speaking, the mind can merely understand; it can never know.

“*Knowing* is the work of intuition; *understanding*, the task of the mind. The Holy Spirit enables our spirit to know; our spirit instructs the mind to understand.”

- Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might **know** the things freely given to us by God (1 Cor 2:12).

There may be times when we say we know the mind of the Holy Spirit in our spirit, but our mind may still fail to understand what the meaning of it all is.

In spiritual matters it is possible for us to *know* something without understanding.

Defining Know (Eido)

In the Greek, *know* is defined as to see (lit. or fig.); by implication to know, perceive, be sure.

Defining Understanding (Sunesis)

In the Greek, *understanding* is defined as a mental putting together.

Requires reliance on the Holy Spirit

Ralph Nault reminds us: “To walk after the Spirit requires we cultivate a heart of reliance upon Him. Remember whatever we do or can do without trusting, seeking, and waiting upon God is or will be done in the flesh. With fear and trembling we must rely upon God for guidance springing from our inner depths.”

“We must come to the place where we put no confidence in our flesh. We confess we can originate no good idea and acknowledge that that we possess no power to fulfill the Holy Spirit’s work apart from Him. We must not initiate anything before receiving God’s order nor attempt to execute God’s command in self-reliance.”

Requires faith in God

Faith is the opposite of sight and feeling. People who choose to follow the Spirit live by faith in their heart, not by sight. They do not depend upon themselves, but put their trust in God and His unseen power more than in their own visible power.

- For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love (Gal 5:5-6)

Because we have the Spirit of God within us, we can recognize the moving of the Holy Spirit in our spirit, the witness of the Holy Spirit in our spirit. We can follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. And we can know the will of God through revelation in our intuition, avoiding the mistake of bringing our own strength to the work we are trying to for God and His kingdom.

- For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (Rom 8:14).

The blessings of following after the Spirit

- For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death... in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:2, 4)
- For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:6).
- But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you (Romans 8:10-11).
- In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should,... 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 (Romans 8:26-27).
- For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:10-11).

Isaiah 30:18-26

Recently Mary O. (from our USA e-group) sent me this scripture from Isaiah. I pray it will bless you like it has me. Here is a bit of it:

“Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. And your ears will hear a word behind you saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’ – whenever you turn to the right or to the left.” (v. 20-21).

Your Response

- What are the blessings you will enjoy because of following after the Holy Spirit?
- Read Isaiah 30:18-27, opening your heart to its words.
- Have you made the Holy Spirit your teacher?

Using Our Spiritual Abilities

Developing our spiritual senses – Watchman Nee

Nee encourages us when he says: “It is while a Christian lives spiritually that his **spiritual** senses develop fully. Before he experiences the dividing of soul and spirit and union with the Lord in one spirit, his spiritual sense is rather dull.

- Consider him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing... But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Heb 5:11, 14).

“But once he has the power of the Holy Spirit poured into his spirit, his inner man is strengthened and it possesses the sense of the matured. Only then can he fathom the various senses of his spirit.

“This spiritual sensing is called *intuition*, for it impinges (*touches us*) directly without reason or cause. It comes forth in a *straight* manner. Man’s ordinary sensing is caused or brought out by people or things or events. We rejoice when there is reason to rejoice, grieve if there a reason to do so. Each of these senses were triggered in response to something going on around us; hence we cannot conclude them to be expressions of intuition or direct sense. Spiritual sense, on the other hand, does not require any outside cause but emerges directly from within man.

“Great similarities do exist between the soul and the spirit. But believers should not walk according to the soul; that is, they should not follow its thoughts, feelings, and desires. The way God ordains for His children is a walk after the spirit; all other paths belong to the old creation and hence possess no spiritual value. But how to walk after the spirit? It is living by its intuition because the latter expresses the thought of the spirit which in turn expresses the mind of God.

Oftentimes we think of a certain thing we have good reason to do and our heart delights in it and finally our will decides to execute it; yet somehow, in the inner sanctuary of our being there seems to arise an unuttered and soundless voice strongly opposing what our mind, emotion, or will has entertained, felt, or decided. Other times we may sense in the inner depths that same wordless and noiseless monitor greatly urging, moving and constraining us to perform a certain thing which we view as highly unreasonable, as contrary to what we usually do or desire, and as something which we do not like to do.”

Our spirit has many senses

According to the Scriptures, our spirit has many different senses: it can rejoice, grieve, anticipate, love, fear, approve, condemn, decide, discern. These motions are sensed in our spirit and are quite distinct from those expressed by the soul through the body.

- The spirit indeed is *willing* (Matt 26:41 RSV).
 - *Perceiving* in his spirit (Mark 2:8 RSV).
 - He *sighed deeply* in his spirit (Mark 8:12 RSV).
 - My spirit *rejoices* in God my Savior (Luke 1:47 RSV)
 - The true worshippers will *worship* the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:23 RSV).
 - He was deeply *moved* in spirit and *troubled* (John 11:33 RSV).
 - When Jesus had thus spoken, he was *troubled* in spirit (John 13:21 RSV).
 - His spirit was *provoked* within him as he saw that the city was full of idols (Acts 17:16 RSV).
 - Being *fervent* in spirit (Acts 18:25; Rom 12:11, RSV).
 - Paul *purposed* in his spirit (Acts 19:21, AVS).
 - I go *bound* in the spirit unto Jerusalem (Acts 20:22, ASV).
 - For what person *knows* a man’s thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him (1 Cor 2:11 RSV).
 - I will *sing* with the spirit (1 Cor. 14:15 RSV).
 - If you *bless* with the spirit (1 Cor 14:16 RSV).
 - We have the same spirit of *faith* (2 Cor 4:13 V).
 - A spirit of *wisdom* and of *revelation* (Eph 1:17).
 - Your *love* in the spirit (Col 1:8 NASB).
- ❖ In many places in the Bible, it is impossible to determine whether the word “spirit” indicates our human spirit or God’s Spirit. Romans 8 uses the word “spirit” most frequently. But no one has been able to discern when it is referring to the human spirit or God’s Spirit. In some translations, it is capitalized, others not – Nee.

Division between our soul & spirit – Ralph Nault

“To function spiritually, using our spiritual senses, we need to be able to recognize the difference between our soul and our spirit, because they are very similar in their nature and activities. The Scriptures show us this:

- 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 (Heb 4:12).

“Our spirit has all the spiritual abilities to function in the spiritual realm. It is the same with our soul. It too has all the abilities to think and function in the natural and physical realm.

“So we can experience both natural thoughts *and* spiritual thoughts, natural emotions *and* spiritual emotions, natural hearing *and* spiritual hearing, and natural speech *and* spiritual speech. They may seem the same to us, but it is imperative that we come to the place where we can distinguish between them.”

- ❖ When we were born again or regenerated, we received a new spirit. This new spirit serves as the basis for our new life.

Need to be broken and divided – Watchman Nee¹

Watchman Nee says, “In refining us, God deals with two things: 1) He deals with our soul life (the outer man/the natural man), breaking down its hard outer shell, so that it no longer pollutes or is entangled with the activities of our spiritual life (inner man/hidden man of the heart); 2) He brings about a division between our soul and our spirit so that we can recognize the difference between them.

“The first is done through the discipline of the Holy Spirit; the second is done through the Spirit’s revelation. Revelation enables us to see what God sees.”

We must come to the point where we *see* what St. Paul saw, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh (my outer man) ... For I joyfully occur with the law of God concerning the inner man (Romans 7:18-22).

- ❖ Let us look to God for His grace to enable us to place ourselves under His light. To cry out, Lord, be merciful to me – Nee.

We need revelation – pray for revelation

Again I encourage you to memorize and pray often Paul’s prayer for the believers in Ephesians 1:16-20! It begins like this:

- That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of **revelation** in the full knowledge of Him (Eph 1:17).

¹ *The Release of the Spirit*, Chapter VII: “Dividing and Revelation,” p 67-74.

Scriptures on revelation

- For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a **revelation** of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12).
- For to us God **revealed** them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10).
- But I will go on to visions and **revelations** of the Lord (2 Cor 12:1).
- And it was because of a **revelation** that I went up [to Jerusalem] (Gal 2:2).
- ... God will **reveal** that also to you (Philippians 3:15).

Defining Revelation (Apokalupsis)

➤ In the Greek, *revelation* is defined as disclosure, to take off the cover.

How does the word of God divide soul & spirit? – Nee

The Scripture tells us the *living word* can do the job, for it is sharper than any two-edged sword. God's Word is living, operative, and able to penetrate and divide. It is the soul and spirit of man which are thus penetrated and divided.

“Note the analogy: the two-edged sword *against* joints & marrow and the Word of God *against* soul & spirit. Joints and marrow are embedded deeply in the human body. To separate the joints is to cut across the bones; to divide the marrow is to crack open the bones.”

“Only two things are harder to be divided than the joints & marrow: the soul & spirit. No sword, however sharp, can divide them.”

Because it is both living & operative

“The first thing to notice is that the Word of God is *living*. His Word is sure to be living when we *see* it. For if we do not find it *living*, we simply have failed to *see* the Word. We may have read over the words of the Bible, but if we do not touch something *living*, we do not see God's Word. When we actually *see* the Word of God, we sense a response inside us.

“The second thing to understand is that the *living* Word is *operative*; *i.e.*, running, active, working, effective, and operational. God's Word cannot return void; it will prevail and accomplish its purpose. It is not *mere* word, but a word that is so powerful that it will produce results.”

Jesus Christ understood this, so did the Apostle Paul:

- It is the Spirit who gives **life**; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are **life** (John 6:63).
- And my word and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God (1 Cor 2:4).
- ❖ *Living* points to its nature, while *operative* applies to its ability to fulfill its work in us – Nee

Because it reveals our inner thoughts & motivations

Did you notice in Hebrews 4:12 that the Word of God also is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of your heart? *Thoughts* refer to what you are thinking about hidden down inside your heart. *Intentions* is referring to your motivations that are underlying your thoughts.

Then the writer tells us that everything we think about—even our hidden motives—is open to the eyes of God.

- And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (Heb 4:13).

The Bible tells us that we do not know our own heart. But when God's Living Word shines upon us, we immediately *see*. We see how self-centered our thoughts are, seeking our own gratification, glory, and prestige. We see how selfish our intentions are. When the Lord has laid bare to our eyes our service to our self, our corrupted old nature, we will fall on our face and worship Him.

- The secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God (1 Cor 14:25).
- ❖ When God opens our eyes that we may know the intentions of our heart and the deepest thought within us in the measure that Himself knows us—this is revelation (W. Nee)

“What the Lord does is to pierce into our inner man with a penetrating light. It may happen while we are listening to a message, or praying by ourselves, or fellowshiping with others, or even walking alone.”

In my own life, I experienced this penetrating light in dreams in the night,² as I wrote in my journal, and when someone boldly spoke a truth to me about me. Remember, we don't like truth that shines a light on our motives and attitudes or in some way puts us in bad light.

Nee writes about the difficulty of explaining this matter of dividing the natural from the spiritual, the outer from the inner: “Only as there is **revelation** is the problem solved. Whenever you are enabled to discern the thoughts and intentions of your heart, you can be sure your spirit and soul are being divided.”

“Thus the dividing of spirit and soul depends upon enlightenment (revelation); that is, we are able to see as God sees. Just what does God see? He sees what we do not see. We are blind to what is of ourselves, thinking it is of God while actually it is not. Such a seeing delivers you from the dead weight of self. Seeing is His dealing. The Word of God is effective, for it enlightens you to the casting off of the outward of the outer man. As soon as the light strikes the flesh is dead. No flesh can live in that light.”

- ❖ I do not swallow whole anything that I learn from a commentary or any other book until I have submitted it to the X-ray light of God's Holy Spirit (Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Gifts of the Spirit*, 1966).

² See Daniel 2:30: “that you may know the thoughts of your heart”

The importance of brokenness

According to the Scriptures, we have a treasure in the earthen vessel, but if the earthen vessel is not broken, who can see the treasure within us?

- But we have this **treasure** in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves (2 Cor 4:7).
- The kingdom of heaven is like a **treasure** hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field (Mt 13:44).
- Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the **treasure** which has been entrusted to you (2 Tim 1:14).

Nee asks, “What is the final objective of the Lord’s working in our lives? It is to break this earthen vessel, to break our alabaster box, to crack open our shell. Why?”

Nee explains, it is because the Lord longs to find a way to bless the world through those who belong to him. “Brokenness is the way of blessing, the way of fruitfulness.”

Defining Treasure (*Thesaurus*)

- In the Greek, *treasure* is defined as a deposit, wealth (lit. or fig.)

What is this treasure?

Ponder these Scriptures, and ask the Lord, *what is this treasure?* As a child of God, we need something more than doctrine; we need to experience the reality of these truths – through revelation from the Spirit of God – if we want to be a blessing.

- To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27).
- ... attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the *treasures* of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2-3).
- My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you (Gal 4:19).
- And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your heart (2 Pet 2:19).

Your Response

- Ask God to show you the various kinds of intuitive, spiritual experiences you have had with Him in your life.
- Draw a picture of that which will express what happened to you.
- Have you experienced the reality of the treasure?
- Recall the revelations you have received from God.

Developing Your Spirit Nature

Kenneth E. Hagin (*The Human Spirit, Volume 2*), says we spend millions to develop our physical body and intellectual processes, but little to develop our spirit. Our spirit must be trained and built up just as we build up our body so we can walk after the Spirit.

The Word of God has been given to us by the Holy Spirit to develop our spirit nature – the new man on the inside. Once we are born anew in our spirit, we can begin to understand the Bible and learn spiritual things, so our minds also will be renewed and our souls restored too.

How to read the Bible

Nee suggests when reading the Bible we must enter into the author's thoughts. We allow our thought to begin where his thought begins and develop as his thought develops. Allow yourself to reason as he reasoned and to exhort as he exhorts. We must let go of our thoughts and gear our thought to the thought of the author.

This will allow the Spirit to give us its real meaning. But this requires us to cease from our subjective thinking and to gradually begin to touch the mind of the Lord and follow the trend of thought of the author.

Then we need to recognize that the Bible is more than just words, ideas and thoughts. There is a spirit in God's Word, and that spirit can be released – our spirit must enter into the spirit of the Bible. When our spirit can come out and touch the spirit of the Bible, we will understand what it is saying; it has come to life for us, no longer a dead book in our hand.³

- ❖ Agnes Sanford suggests we read the Bible slowly in a spirit of prayer, saying, “Lord, I have done all I can with my conscious mind. Now please show me the deeper meaning of these words. And from the inner being there often flows a light illuminating the words as a flashlight illumines a path through a dark woods” (*The Healing Gifts of the Spirit*, p. 48).

Building up our spirit is a daily task

Hagin notes that the process of training the spirit – of building it up in spiritual things – is a daily task:

- Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day (2 Cor 4:16).

He suggests the following four things that will help us build our spirit up:

³ *The Release of the Spirit*, p 51-52.

1) Meditate on the Word of God

Hagin says, “Our spiritual development hinges on the Word of God, because the Word has been given to build up our spirit nature.” The Bible tells us that God has magnified His Word above His name (Ps 138:2). Thus the first step is to take time to meditate in His Word.

- This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it (Joshua 1:8)
- How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked... But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night (Ps. 1:1-2)

2) Practice the Word of God

When we have God’s Word firmly in our heart and mind, then we must act on it, put it into practice in our daily lives. We are to walk in the light of the New Covenant, becoming doers of the word (James 1:21-24). The Bible tells us that God watches over His Word to do it, to make it good.

According to Hagin, “If we don’t act on God’s Word – if we don’t practice God’s Word – He doesn’t have anything to watch over to fulfill. But if will stand by God’s Word, He will stand by us.”

Here are a few things that I am practicing:

- Loving others.
- Forgiving others.
- Casting my cares on him.
- Counting it all joy when I fall into tests or trials.
- Placing everything in the hands of God.

3) Give first place to the Word of God

Once we know what the Word of God says and we act upon it, Hagin urges us put God’s Word first in our lives: “No matter what situation arises, the first thing that comes to our mind is the Word of God – because it has become a part of our inward nature. The Word will rise up, giving us illumination to our minds and direction to our spirits.”

In other words, we are to put God’s Word first, not our circumstances.

4) Obey the voice of our spirit

The fourth thing Hagin urges in the development of our spirit is to “instantly obey the voice of the spirit.” Remember the Bible says that God speaks to our spirit, not our intellectual or reasoning capabilities.

- The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord... (Proverbs 20:27).

Our spirit has a voice. We call it the inward voice, intuitive knowings or perception, inner nudges, or conscience.

- ❖ Once we have been born again, our spirit has been made new, with the life and nature of God in it. And if we have meditated on God’s Word and practiced it, putting it first in our live—then our conscience, the voice of our spirit, will be a safe guide and will become the voice of God speaking us – Hagin.

Hagin suggests we begin each day with the consciousness that we have the Holy Spirit as a Guide within us.

- He will guide you into all the truth... and He will disclose to you things to come (John 16:13).

Because of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are not left alone in this world. He will speak to us and show us some things to come in our personal lives. He might show us some things we can change or what we can do to reverse something. And He promises to show us what we are to say and do, or what we are not to say or do.

Your Response

- Recall times when you obeyed the voice of the Spirit.
- Can you recall times when you disobeyed the Spirit?

Appendix A: Functions of the Human Spirit

In *The Spiritual Man*, Watchman Nee explains, “To understand more clearly what the spiritual life is, we must analyze the spirit explicitly and assimilate all its laws. Only after we are really acquainted with its different functions are we able to know the laws which govern them; only after we become familiar with those laws can we walk accordingly to the laws of the spirit. This is indispensable for experiencing the spiritual life” (Volume II, Part Five, *An Analysis of the Spirit*, p. 67)

Nee encourages us to learn all we can about the human spirit, but warns us not neglect identifying our spirit in actual experience – not only doctrinal agreement! He conceives of the human spirit as an integrative unity consisting of different functions – intuition, communion, and conscience – but suggests these may not be the only ones.

In this appendix, we develop in more detail these three major functions of the human spirit: 1) Intuition; 2) Communion; 3) Conscience.

1. The function of intuition in our spirit

In our book on dreams⁴ we write: “Intuition is key in understanding the voice of God in our spirit. The root word for intuition is *intuitus* (Latin) and means *to look at*. *The Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (2003) says ‘intuition is the direct perception of truth, independent of any reasoning process.’

Watchman Nee describes the main functions of the spirit as intuition, communion, and conscience. He says intuition is similar to the law of God hidden in the ark, because it reveals God and His will to us.

Jewish scholar Abraham Heschel, quoting Maimonides, says ‘the source of our knowledge of God is the inner eye, the eye of the heart, a medieval name for intuition.’⁵ It is through the eyes of the heart that we perceive or see God.

The spirit man or inner man has its own senses, spiritual senses with which it can speak and see. Through the eye of the spirit, we see visions, spontaneous images and pictures. Through the inner voice of the spirit, we receive intuitive knowing, inner guidance, or inward witness. We receive the thoughts from God through our intuition. Thus God comes to us directly through our spirit and heart with dreams, visions, and prophecies.

Intuition is spiritual perception via the unconscious or deep heart. Similar to prophesy, intuition bubbles up from within, giving us the understanding of what the Spirit is saying to us. It may feel like an unuttered, soundless voice or a wordless, noiseless monitor that urges, moves, confirms, or constrains us in some way.”

⁴ Judith & Gerald Doctor, *Dream Treasure: Learning the Language of Heaven*, 287.

⁵ Abraham Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, 148.

- ❖ Through insight, we receive revelation from Him, and He illumines Scripture to us. Through intuition, we sense the promptings of the Holy Spirit and the voice of God. Direct inner experiences with the Lord bring healing to the spirit, soul, and body.

Intuition can grow

According to Nee, our intuition can grow and grow. “It knows no bounds. Its development means the development of our entire spiritual life” (p. 105).

More thoughts on intuition

1. Intuition has to do with the insights that come from within ourselves, giving us knowledge of information without conscious processing – hunches to act, impressions to pray, flashes of insight.
2. The immediate knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning.
3. Direct perception of truth, fact, etc., independent of any reasoning process; immediate apprehension (www.dictionary.com).
4. The power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference (<https://www.merriam-webster.com>).

The anointing of God

Lee suggests the anointing of God operates in our spirit in order to enable our intuitive faculty to know God’s thoughts. The intuition is the locus where the anointing that teaches us occurs. He says the following scriptures explain where and how the anointing of the Holy Spirit teaches us:

- But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know (1 John 2:20).
- And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him remains in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you remain in Him (1 John 2:27).

We must become intuitive people – Ralph Nault

The Spirit often uses man’s intuition and the still voice of man’s own spirit, although not many are aware of the differences between man’s soul and spirit. When we cannot discern the difference between our soul and spirit, we are unable to function at this level with God’s Spirit. And yet, I believe this is where the Holy Spirit is manifested the most – in man’s spirit. We suffer great loss in this area both as an individual and as the body of Christ.

The spiritual man functions at a different level than the natural man. The natural man functions at the level of the reasoning mind, the laws of nature. The spiritual man functions intuitively, in a spiritual realm, where the natural reasoning and laws don’t work. I would choose to call it the fourth dimension.

- ❖ To learn more about intuition and its function in your spirit—discernment, dealing with people, revelation, God’s way of guiding— see *The Spiritual Man*, Volume 2, pgs. 68-85.

2. The function of communion in our spirit

Communion is the second function or capacity of our spirit. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, God has given us direct **communion** with Himself. We hear His voice within our hearts. We are led by the Spirit. We have inner subjective experiences.

Defining communion (Koinonia)

➤ In the Greek, *communion* is defined as partnership; i.e., participation or intercourse.

Here are some thoughts from Nee on communion: “We communicate with the material world through the body. We communicate with the spiritual world through the spirit. This communication with the spiritual is not carried on by means of the mind or emotion but through the spirit of its intuitive faculty.

“In order to worship and fellowship with God, man must possess a nature similar to His. ‘God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth’ (John 4:24). There can be no communication between different natures; hence both the unregenerate whose spirit obviously has not been quickened and the regenerated who does not use his spirit to worship are equally unqualified to have genuine fellowship with God.

“Our fellowship with Him is experienced in the deepest place of our entire being, deeper than our thought, feeling and will, even in the intuition of our spirit.”

2 Corinthians 2:9-3:3

Nee suggests 2 Corinthians 2:9-3:3 gives us a clear view of how we can communicate with God and how we can know the realities of God through the spirit’s intuition.

- 2:9: but just as it is written: “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the human heart, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.”
- 2:10: For to us God **revealed** them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
- 2:11: For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? For even so the thoughts of God no one knows, except the Spirit of God.
- 2:12: Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.
- 2:13: Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words (or interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men).
- 2:14: But a **natural** (unspiritual, soulical) 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 (discerned).
- 2:15: But he who is **spiritual** appraises (discerns) all things, yet he himself is appraised (discerned) by no one.
- 2:16: For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.
- 3:1: And I brethren could not speak to you as to **spiritual men**, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.
- 3:2: I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.

- 3:3: For you are still **fleshly**. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere man (lit., according to man)?

Defining Natural, Carnal

- Natural (*psuchikos*): sensitive; natural, sensual; i.e., soulical, from the rational or lower nature.
- Carnal (*sarkikos*): pertaining to flesh; body-ruled.

W. Nee's verse-by-verse reflection on 1 Corinthians 2:9-3:3

2.9: What God has prepared cannot be seen or heard by our outward body nor conceived by our inward heart. Thus whoever desires to know God and commune with Him cannot depend solely upon their thoughts.

2.10: But the Holy Spirit does know the depths of God – He knows what we do not know. By His intuition the Spirit searches everything, and God is thus able to reveal through Him what our heart has never conceived. This revealing is not acquired after much thinking! It is revelation; it does not require the help of our thought.

2.11-12: It is both our spirit and God's Spirit that can understand things directly – through the faculty of intuition. We can know the things of God by our spirit. The Holy Spirit unfolds to our spirit what He knows intuitively so that we too may know intuitively. This is the sole place in us which can *know* these things. It is in our regenerated (quicken) spirit.

Because we enjoy free will, we have authority to decide our own matters. Because of ignorance or our foolishness, we do not yield the rightful position to our spirit and its intuition. Instead we continue to walk by our mind or emotion (logical thoughts/ impulsive ideas), ignoring the voice of intuition.

Sometimes we may be willing to hear the voice of intuition, but failing to keep our feelings quiet, we find that voice blurred and confused. Walking after the spirit consequently becomes an occasional affair instead of forming a daily continuous experience in our life.

2.13: Nee raises the question, how are we going to impart to others the things of God which we have discerned in our spirit's intuition? See p. 89-91 for his thoughts.

2.14: Because they have not yet been born anew, their minds are locked out of the things of God; it is foolishness to them. They are unable to take in what God reveals exclusively to a man's spirit.

2.15: The spiritual person is one whose spirit dominates and who has a highly sensitive intuition. The developed intuition is qualified to perform its functions because its quietness is undisturbed by the mind, emotion, and will of the soul. The spiritual person can judge all matters, because his intuition leans on the Holy Spirit for its knowledge.

3:1-3: In other words, their bodies, through their unrenewed minds, were ruling their spirits – even though they were new creatures in Christ. They had never developed spiritually.

- ❖ See *The Spiritual Man*, Volume II, pp. 86-105 to learn more about the function of communion in your spirit, especially his discussion of the soulical and spiritual, the spiritual and the fleshly, and the spirit of wisdom and revelation to help us know what is of God and what is of ourselves.

3. The function of conscience in our spirit

Do you have a conscience? Being true to our conscience is the current value placed on the table of politics or religion. So we must ask ourselves, what is my conscience?

We think of our conscience as our ethical guidance system that informs us of what is right, just, and fair. However, for most people, the conscience they are following is what is known as the superego: “one of the three divisions of the psyche that is only partly conscious, represents internalization of parental conscience and the rules of society, and functions to reward and punish through a system of moral attitudes, conscience, and a sense of guilt.”

Development of a conscience – play stage (3-5 years old)

According to psychologists, as we grow up, we go through different developmental stages. It is during the Play Stage (3-5 yrs.) that we develop a sense of conscience. As it develops, we are socialized to behave in certain ways by our parents, the people who cared for us.

We internalize their standards of rightness, morality, and goodness that were enforced by the people around us. These standards will take on the character of our idealized image of what we think we ought to be. So our conscience consists of an idealized standard of perfection, an ideal.

This developing conscience creates a capacity for guilt within us. At this age, we have an extreme sensitivity to guilt, making us vulnerable to criticism, humiliation, and punishment. We feel totally responsible and guilty for things we had nothing or little to do with.

In simple words, the conscience is the system of *dos* and *don'ts* that were instilled into you, the things your parents and culture taught or programmed you with.

- ❖ In my experience, the conscience (superego?) can be a hard taskmaster, and is not to be trusted.

The work of conscience, located in our spirit – W. Nee

Where is the conscience located? In your mind? No, Nee says that it is located in our spirit.

“Besides the functions of intuition and communion, our spirit performs still another important task – that of correcting and reprimanding so as to render us uneasy when we fall short of the glory of God. Conscience is where God expresses His holiness. If we desire to follow the spirit (and since we never reach a stage of infallibility), we must heed what our inward monitor tells us regarding both inclination and action.

“We realize that even before we take any step – while we are still considering our way – our conscience together with our intuition will protest immediately and make us uneasy at any thought or inclination which is displeasing to the Holy Spirit.”

The voice of our conscience

- And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone (John 8:9, KJV).
- In that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them (Rom 2:15).

- I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit (Rom 9:1).
- For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you (2 Cor 1:12).

Defining Conscience

In the Greek, *conscience* is defined as seeing completely, with *knowing*. It is “the place I *know* with.” Through our conscience, we can know and make good decisions.

Kenneth E. Hagin notes: “The conscience of an unsaved (unregenerate) person is an unsafe guide, because if he or she have had any “religious” training, they often will be dominated by it. And if they haven’t, their conscience will permit them to do many things that are wrong.”

Condition of our conscience

What is the condition of your conscience? Is it Evil? Seared? Defiled? Weak? Cleansed? Clear?

An evil conscience

- Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb 10:22).

A seared conscience

- But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron (1 Tim 4:1-2).

A weak conscience

- However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled (1 Cor 8:7).
- But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? (1 Cor 8:8-10).

A wounded conscience

- And thus by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ (1 Cor 8:12).

A defiled conscience

- To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled (Titus 1:15).

A good/clear conscience

- Looking intently at the Council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life with an entirely good conscience before God up to this day” (Acts 23:1).
- But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith (1 Tim 1:5).

- I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day (2 Tim 1:3).

A conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ – Nee

“To commune with God and serve Him, we must have our conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ. The following Scriptures affirm that a sprinkled conscience is the basis for communion with God intuitively.”

- While the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, ... How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:9,14).
- Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? (Heb 10:2).
- Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb 10:22).

“A conscience tinged with offense is under constant accusation and affects our approach to God, even paralyzing its normal function. How necessary it is to have a ‘true heart in full assurance of faith.’ When our conscience is unclear, our approach to God becomes forced and is not true, because we cannot fully believe that God is for us and has nothing against us.

“Such fear and doubt undermine the normal function of intuition, depriving it of the liberty to fellowship freely with God. As Christians, we must not have the slightest accusation in our conscience; we must be assured that our every sin is entirely atoned by the blood of Christ and that now there is no charge against us. A single offence on our conscience may suppress and suspend the normal function of intuition in communing with God, for as soon as we are conscious of sin, our spirit gathers all its powers to eliminate that particular sin and leaves no strength to ascend heavenward.”

Praying for a good conscience

St. Peter tell us to ask God for a good conscience. Why do you think we need to pray for a good conscience?

- Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him (1 Pet 3:21-22).
- Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things (Heb 13:8)

Because we need our conscience to testify to us

To keep us from being shipwrecked

- Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith (1 Tim 1:19).

To keep us from being shamed

- And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who disparage your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame (1 Pet 3:16).
- But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in trickery nor distorting the word of God, but by the open proclamation of the truth, commending ourselves to every person's conscience in the sight of God (2 Cor 4:2).
- Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade people, but we are well known to God; and I hope that we are also well known in your consciences (2 Cor 5:11).

To enables us to endure unjust suffering

- For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person endures grief when suffering unjustly (1 Pet 2:19).

Your Response

- What is the purpose of our conscience?
 - How clear or clean is your conscience?
 - On a scale of 0 to 10, how guilty do you feel? (0, absolutely none; 10, very guilty)
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- ❖ Most of the ideas in this series on the Holy Spirit are drawn from Kenneth E. Hagin, Ralph Nault, Watchman Nee, and my own wealth of spiritual experiences.

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