

TRUE SPIRITUALITY

True spirituality is spirit answering to spirit, not spirit to mind.

1 Corinthians 2:13 (Literal Translation) - ***“When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human intellect. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths.”***

Too many Christians are confused or misguided regarding their spirituality. The need to experience the supernatural (to be “spiritual”) often causes people to get involved in practices that are not authentic and do not agree with God’s word. Note, human intellect and spirituality just don’t mix. False spirituality is one of the most dangerous traditions in church life today, mainly because it can effect so many people.

However, when it comes to spirituality, we all face the same problem. We are spiritual *positionally*, but we are not always spiritual *practically*. The Spirit of God lives in us, yet we find it difficult to maintain our spirituality. Why? Because we’re imprisoned in unredeemed flesh. A good illustration of this is the apostle Peter.

In **Matthew 16** Peter recognised Jesus as the Christ (the Son of the living God), and the Lord responded by saying, *“Blessed are you, Simon, and now I am going to change your name to Peter (which meant rock). You are going to be a new person: you are going to be solid as a rock.”* But in **John 21**, some time after Peter had already denied Jesus three times, they met on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and Peter was still not “Mr Rock” - even after the resurrection.

When Jesus was arrested Peter was in a state of denial; after the resurrection he was in a state of rebellion. A disillusioned Peter had gone back to fishing, so Jesus confronts him and asks, “Do you love Me?” But the Lord didn’t call him Peter; he said “Simon! Simon, Simon, Simon!” Why did He do that? After all, Peter had been given a new name, “Mr Rock.” I’ll tell you why Jesus did it, because he wasn’t acting like a rock; he was acting like Simon. He wasn’t acting like a transformed man; he was acting just like the guy he used to be. When ever Peter acted like the person he used to be, Jesus called him by his old name, which should be a vivid reminder to all of us.

What Peter had done is what we all do from time to time, and that is, temporarily cease from being the person God created him to be (*Mr Rock, the spiritual person*). Even after Pentecost Peter continued to struggle with his true identity. In **Galatians 2: 11-12**; the apostle Paul had to confront Peter because he was acting in a carnal way. And Paul did this publicly, which must have embarrassed the man. What’s more, this incident even got a mention in the Bible; (as if Peter didn’t have enough “bad press” in the Gospels, he now shows up in the Epistles). Peter must have been labelled *“the guy who can’t get his act together.”* Are there any Peters here today?

For us, there must be some measure of comfort in this story - knowing that one of the chief apostles “stumbled” his way around, both before and after Pentecost. And it’s fortunate for us that he did fail (after the resurrection and the Holy Spirit’s arrival). Why? Because we all do the same thing; we are new creations yet we often act in a fleshy way.

Spirituality is not a permanent state we enter into the minute we get saved! We are spiritual **positionally**, but *practically* we never enter into a permanent spiritual state. We don't get 'zapped' and suddenly become spiritual! **True spirituality** is; receiving the Living Word, letting it dwell in you richly, and then living it out. It is walking by the Spirit! The word "walk" is a very important word in the New Testament. It means "*moment by moment conduct*." It's a choice word - you walk one step at a time. Paul said in **Galatians 5:25**, "*Since we live by the Spirit, (since we are spiritual), let us take one step at a time in the power of the Spirit. Being obedient to the Word which dwells in us richly.*" **Walking** signifies a measured pace, one step at a time, and that's how true spirituality functions - one day at a time; one step at a time; one moment at a time.

The ultimate objective of the spiritual man is to be like Christ and have Christ manifest in our mortal bodies. *Positionally* we are all spiritual beings, but as we've heard, this does not always stack up! I believe **true spirituality** is when **Positional Truth** (*who we are in Christ*) is manifesting in our natural existence. However, this can only be Holy Spirit led - *spirit to spirit*. For it's the only way we can maintain our spirituality. We must be "*continually led by the Spirit of God to be called sons of God*" (spiritual offspring) - **Romans 8:14**.

According to **Philippines 3:12-14** the prize is Christlikeness and the goal is Christlikeness! Paul said, "*I am not there yet; I haven't attained it; but I'm pressing towards it.*" Many Charismaniacs insist that once you get the Baptism of the Spirit - true spirituality is automatically yours! Unfortunately it doesn't work that way. So what happens?

Such people live under a false assumption concerning their true spiritual condition. They are experience led! When the glow of one experience fades they are forced to find another experience, and then another. Often they find that a second work of the "supernatural" is not enough. So there's a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, and so on. But these "experience seekers" will have diminishing returns, because in their effort to seek something *more* they will unwittingly abandon God's Word. And when they have strayed from the true path of **spirituality**, their carnality will increase accordingly.

If the prize is Christlikeness and the goal is Christlikeness then let us examine "the Christ". "***The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to... Bring the good news of salvation to the poor... Heal the broken-hearted... Proclaim liberty to sin's captives... Set free those who are bound...***" (Isaiah 61:1). Jesus quoted this verse in the synagogue (**Luke 4:17-20**), and in doing so, affirmed that this was the essence of His ministry. But it also describes the process by which every believer has the ability to act in a manner that is as "spiritual" as the Lord Himself.

Observe, the sole purpose of the Holy Spirit being on Jesus was to "anoint" Him (set Him apart) for ministry - in order to use Him as a channel through which people's needs can be met. And as you can see, the ministry of Jesus was very specific. **True spirituality** is centred around this one truth, "*The Holy Spirit comes on believers in order to set them apart and equip them to meet a specific need at any given time.*" **Acts 1:8**, "***You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.***"

There are many distinct views and various different beliefs regarding what *true spirituality* is and how it should manifest. Those religions outside of Christianity that are based on philosophical convictions or intellectual assumptions all work on the same premise; that we can become spiritual by our own efforts (through either meditation, visualisation or willpower). But genuine spirituality has to do exclusively and entirely with the Holy Spirit. Without Him our spirituality, however appealing and impressive it may seem, is totally futile. **“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).**

When you were ‘saved’ - by faith in His redeeming work on the cross - **positionally**, you became spiritual. And the newness of life you received was an authentic spiritual experience. **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).** This new creature in Christ has a totally new nature, a nature that responds to “truth.” The old heart of stone was replaced with a sensitive and tender heart of flesh (**Ezekiel 11:19**). A heart that discerns the truth and responds to the truth. The Holy Spirit is the **Spirit of Truth** and it is His words that the new heart longs to hear.

True spirituality is spirit answering to spirit, not spirit to mind. The Holy Spirit only interprets spiritual things to a spiritual man. **“... The Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to Him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:13,14).**

The expression **“comparing spiritual things with spiritual”** can be explained in several ways. It may mean (a) *teaching spiritual truths with Spirit-given words*; (b) *communicating spiritual truths to spiritual men*; or (c) *comparing, spiritual truths with one another*. However, *“presenting spiritual truths in spiritual words”* is the explanation that fits best in this context. So remember, you can only learn spiritual truths by receiving inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Unaided, the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him. He cannot possibly understand them because they can only be distinguished spiritually. That is, through spiritual eyes or ears. It would be like trying to describe a sunset to a blind man, or explaining nuclear physics to a stone statue. Yet some people still try!

True spirituality is birthed through total dependence on the **Holy Spirit** - *spirit answering to Spirit*. Therefore, the degree of spirituality that you demonstrate (or operate in) is governed by the degree of sensitivity you have toward the Holy Spirit and His promptings. When ever you are acting “spiritual” you can’t grieve the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:30**), or quench the Spirit’s move (**1 Thessalonians 5:19**). Instead, you should be continually led by the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:14**), allowing Him to freely operate His gifts through you - *“as He wills.”*

“Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Corinthians 12:1). God doesn’t want you to be ignorant concerning spiritual matters. He wants you to understand His **spiritual principles** so that you can operate in it more effectively. The process is this - *spirit to spirit* (spirituality), then *spirit to mind* (spiritual practicality).

Trying to fake it never works. It's only the light that is shining from your heart that can renew your mind. And your mind needs to be renewed for you to act spiritual (be Christ-like). When who you are *positionally*, permeates into every area of your life - you are then truly spiritual!

The Holy Spirit interprets spiritual things to *spiritual people*, but He also manifests spiritual gifts through *spiritual vessels*. **“For we have this great treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7)**. Therefore, if the demonstration of God's power brings attention to you, it is not Spirit led! The Holy Spirit is here to glorify Jesus Christ and no one else! So stop seeking supernatural experiences and start seeking the **super-powerful Spirit!** He is the only one who can help you to be spiritual, and maintain your spirituality.