***The Role of the Holy Spirit in your Life  
  
Colossians 1:3-8  
  
COL-058***

Our subject today is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," number 36 in this series, and our Scripture is Colossians 1:3-8.

**Human Viewpoint**

There are two ways of thinking in the world, and consequently, of acting in every area of life. It is very important that everybody understands these two ways. One we describe as human viewpoint, which is Satan's way of thinking. Unsaved people and carnal Christians, led by their old sin natures, think and act human viewpoint. Human viewpoint to these people seems to be the course of wisdom, but it is, in fact, the way of destruction in their lives. This is pointed out to us in the book of Proverbs 14:12, where God says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." That is the nature of human viewpoint. People who think the world system's way of thinking, which is guided by Satan, believe that they're actually very wise and very much on target.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18-19, the apostle Paul says, "For the word of the cross to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise (the human viewpoint of the wise), and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." So, it is clear that God recognizes that Satan has flooded the world with a point of view which is an antagonism to His point of view. That is what people think; that is, human viewpoint, and it is not really wisdom. Satan controls the world, and therefore human viewpoint dominates the ways of mankind. This is considered the sophisticated way of thinking.

**Divine Viewpoint**

There is another way of thinking, and we call that divine viewpoint, simply because it is God's way. Saved people, who are in temporal fellowship, and thereby led by the Holy Spirit, think and act divine viewpoint. Divine viewpoint proves to be true wisdom, and it is the way of real blessing in one's life. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, the apostle Paul says, "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature: a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. But we speak God's wisdom in the mystery: the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory." So, it is clear that God has a wisdom. Where is that wisdom be found is to be found in the Word of God. It is to be found in the Bible. It is doctrine. And the wisdom that people rush to in their human viewpoint, such that they praise the people who give them that human viewpoint wisdom – they're going to pass off the scene. They're a lost cause. They're going to disappear. But the wisdom that God gives you, and the consequent life that you will follow, will go on forever.

It is very important, if you are going to have children, that you be a parent who is filled with divine viewpoint. Otherwise your children will take over your control. And we see that all the time. Parents don't dare stand up to their kids, because those parents have permitted the children to accept the human viewpoint of the world system. Therefore, they have taken charge. Therefore, they have set themselves on a course of action which cheapens them; coarsens them; degrades them; and, denies them their princely role in the family of God. Instead of being a princess, they turn out to be frogs.

So, this is no small thing. It's not just to say, "Oh, yeah. Sure, you're right. There is human viewpoint, and there is divine viewpoint." It is very important which viewpoint you operate on as a parent, and which viewpoint you insist that your children will operate on. If you do not, they'll become friendly with the world system. And the worst place to get friendly is the religious world. That is the most destructive area in all of life. And the devil has done a splendid job of deceiving parents to think that if it's the religious world, all will be well. But that religious world is often the one that is most out of touch with the Word of God and with the ways of God.

James 4:4 puts it very plainly: "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." And if you are a friend of human viewpoint, you are an enemy of God. The people who are friends of God operate on divine viewpoint. They're the people who know the Word, and they obey it.

Now, following a human viewpoint or a divine viewpoint way of life is determined by whether Jesus Christ is Lord in one's life or not. This is a very big subject. In fact, it may be that it's a subject that you have had a lot of personal discussion about, and thought about. Every now and then, somebody says, "You must have a listening device at our house. We were just talking about this. And we come to church, and you're answering all the questions, and bringing up all the issues that we just discussed." Well, that's known as the leading of the Holy Spirit. And you should consider yourself fortunate to have come to this service. There are a lot of people who should be here right now, because of the subject that we're going to deal with, because I happen to know that this is a problem in their lives. And what does the devil do? That's the service he keeps them out of.

However, be that as it may, this business of human viewpoint or divine viewpoint is a matter of whether Christ is the Lord of your life or not. And the Lordship of Jesus Christ is no small thing. But I cannot believe how many big-time, good, Bible-oriented preachers on TV have botched up the subject of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And they're all names that you would know – household words, and they cannot get the thing straight.

**The Lordship of Jesus Christ**

Now, this is a serious matter. So, let's take a look at it. First of all, to begin with, the God-Man, Jesus Christ, is addressed as "Lord." This the way the word looks in the Greek Bible: "kurios" (koo'-ree-os) K U R I O S. The Greek word is "kurios." And kurios basically means "master." In Luke 6:46, for example, Jesus says to the people that He's speaking to, "And why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' ('master, master')? And do not do what I say." Now, a master is someone who has authority over the people. He is to exercise that authority, and he is to be obeyed because he is the master. This is the way that Jesus was addressed by His disciples. This is the way that people spoke to Him. Sometimes they call Him "Rabbi," which is "teacher." And very often they would address him as "kurios" ("master"). We translate this as "Lord." It means "the one who is in the authority as master."

Now, after the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples used this term "Lord" in a very distinctively different way. And after the resurrection, whatever lingering doubts they may have had about Who Jesus was, and His claims, which weren't very much in the way of doubt – but it was clear that nobody could refute that He was God. He was a God-Man. He was the Messiah that He claimed to be. Therefore, the resurrection of Christ, which they saw clearly happen proved to them that only God could raise this man from the dead, and He would not have raised this man from the dead if His claims had been false. He claimed be God. He claimed to be paying for their sins. He claimed that through Him they could have eternal life in heaven. If that was false, He would never have been raised from the dead, because resurrection proves that He was telling the truth. Therefore, after the resurrection, they never used this term "kurios" on a human level. People used it on a human level. They would come to a king, and they would call him "kurios" ("Lord". It was a recognition of authority. But they now added what was fundamentally behind this word after His resurrection – that He was deity. So, the word "kurios" means "deity." And after the resurrection, they never used this word for anybody except God the Father and God the Son. He was deity, and therefore He was Lord.

In John 20, this is pointedly brought out in the case of Thomas, who doubted that Jesus was alive. In John 20:28, when Thomas saw Jesus alive, the first week after Easter, when they were all gathered in that room, Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God:" "my 'kurios' and my 'theos'" (theh'-os). And those two are combined as an indication that the word "Lord" now has the implications of deity.

Jude 4 (just before the book of the Revelation): "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation: ungodly persons who turned the grace of our God into licentiousness, and deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ." There you have this combining of "master" and "Lord," indicating that He is Christ, the divine one – the authority.

Also, please notice, in Jude 1:4, that he says, "I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord (there it is God the Father of the Old Testament – deity), after saving the people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe." Here you have clearly the word "Lord" being used in the sense of deity. It is referring to God the Father, Whom we know freed the Jews from their enslavement in Egypt.

So, Jesus Christ is very clearly, in Scripture, identified as deity by this word "Lord." Ephesians 1:2 indicates that when Paul says, "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

So, first of all, we're going to talk about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are referring to the fact that he has divine authority. The word "Lord" has to do with His being deity. And that is the issue that we are dealing with in the lives of believers. Just how much is Jesus Christ treated as deity? How much is He viewed as the final authority in your life? Or are you all sopped up with a lot of human viewpoint that permeates your thinking, that you've picked up off the nightly news, or you've picked up from your friends; from your neighbors; or, from your disoriented religious relatives? This is the decision, you have to understand – that when you're dealing with Jesus Christ, you're dealing with deity.

Now, concerning the Lordship of Jesus Christ, here are some things to begin with. He is the Lord over all creation, and over all humanity positionally. People talk about making Him Lord. We have to start with the fact that He is already the Lord. You're not going to make Him Lord over humanity. He is Lord over humanity. You're not going to make Him Lord over creation. He is that already. Acts 10:36: "The word which he sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all." The key phrase of Acts 10:36 is: "He is Lord of all." This is speaking, of course, positionally. Positionally, how is He Lord over the unsaved? He is Lord by the authority that He is the Creator – the authority that He holds as being the Creator.

Colossians 1:16: "For by Him all things were created (referring to Jesus Christ), both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities. All things have been created by Him and for Him." So it is clearly stated in the Scripture that He is Lord by virtue of the fact that He is the Creator.

Also, in 1 Corinthians 8:6, this is indicated: "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from Whom are all things, and we exist for Him, and one "kurios" (one Lord), Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him." So, Christ is Lord over the unsaved by virtue of the fact that He is the Creator. That's positionally.

Now, positionally, He is also Lord over believers by His authority as their Savior. Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He is Lord over believers because He is the Savior. Jesus Christ, thus, is described as "Lord and Savior" of believers positionally. He is Lord and Savior over believers. He is Savior in actuality. He is positionally their Lord.

2 Peter 1:11: "For in this way, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." Because they are born-again, He is their Lord. That's positionally. When we say positionally, that means that that might not be in experience. You might be a born-again person, and Christ, thereby, as Savior, is your Lord. But He is not that in the functioning of your life. That's not the way you live. You don't live where He is recognized as your master. So, understand that this making Him Lord has a very specific meaning. We'll look at that a little more in a moment.

Philippians 3:20 is also indicative of describing Him in His position. Philippians 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly await for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." And there it is put in the proper order that He is your Savior, and then He is your Lord. He can be your Lord. He is Lord over you by creation. He is your Savior by your act of faith in Him. And thus He becomes your Lord positionally.

**Lordship Salvation**

However, there is something else. Jesus Christ is Lord in experience over only certain individual Christians – those who are in a status of temporal fellowship. And that's the issue of making him your Lord. What I'm trying to do is to help you to understand the great and terrible confusion that is being imposed upon Christians, such that, when they are saved, if they do not commit themselves and make certain promises to God of how they're going to live, and behave themselves, and act, then it's indicated that they're not saved. That is not true. You are saved. He becomes your Savior. He is that positionally over you. He is that in actuality over you. Then He is your Lord positionally. But whether you make Him your master – that depends on something else. And actually we've been studying the grace of God. And it is the grace of God that brings us salvation, and it is the grace of God that enables you to make Him the master. That's what we're talking about. First, He must be your Savior by an act of faith – an act of appropriation, before He can become your Lord in daily experience.

Now, don't be looking around. Don't be having your eyes glazed. Don't be having your brain sidetracked. Get this straight. First He becomes your Savior by an act of faith. You trust Him that He has covered your sins on the cross. He paid the penalty of death for you. Secondly, you can now make Him actually your master. He is your master by virtue of the fact that He is now your Savior. But whether He is actually your master, that is something else. But you are already saved. We're talking about what is actually your experience over against what is your position. You are already in Christ. You could not be anywhere else but saved. Now, will you live accordingly? That depends on whether you're functioning on human viewpoint or divine viewpoint.

If you are a human viewpoint parent, I can tell you that you can just forget it. You're not anywhere close to leading your children. If you're a divine viewpoint parent, you'll be right on target. If you are a divine viewpoint young person, you will act in a way that honors Jesus Christ. If you're a human viewpoint young person, you're going to be out of it. You're going to be nothing but part of the crowd. You will do exactly what everybody else does all around you in your peer group. And what they're doing is the low-life of the human viewpoint system.

So, He becomes your Savior by an act of appropriating Christ. You take the gift which is offered. Act 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." Ephesians 2:8-9 are even more explicitly clear: "For by grace (as a gift) you have been saved through faith, and the salvation – that's not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast." No human good works; no religious rituals; and, no commitment intentions are involved in receiving Jesus Christ as one's Savior.

People who try to say that you cannot be saved if you have not made Jesus your Lord are introducing a promise. That's a human work. That's an action of man for salvation. But what does Titus 3:4-7 say? "But when the kindness of God our Savior." And by the way, there's the core meaning of grace: kindness. That's what grace is. It's kindness: "When the kindness of the grace of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us – not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (getting a live human spirit) whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

All of this comes when He is your Savior: "He poured out upon you richly the Spirit of God because He is your Savior" – not because you have made Him your Lord: "That being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Now, I hope that it is not too complicated for you to understand the difference between positional truth and experiential truth. Positional truth is your position in Christ. That's your status. Experiential truth is how you live; how you act; and, what your experience is. That is the big problem. Most people in the Christian community manage to get the gospel, and they get saved. But not many of them ever understand that they can go from being in Christ, in their position, to finding Christ functioning in the experience of their lives. They don't know how to make Him Lord. And the people who sound off most about the Lordship salvation are the ones who have the least to say, and are least capable of instructing people on how to make Him Lord. That is our purpose today.

Salvation is instantaneous, and it is a permanent experience. It brings a believer into eternal fellowship with God. That is pointed out to us in John 10:27-29. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Who are His sheep? Those who are born-again. "And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish. And no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My father who has given them to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

Do you understand what he's saying? Here you are, Christian. This is you. Jesus Christ puts his hand around you, and then God the Father puts His hand over Christ. Who's going to take you out of there? It's a dramatic illustration that salvation is permanent. So, you have salvation. But, following salvation, Jesus Christ is made one's Lord by maintaining the status of temporal fellowship through the confession of known sins. And that, as you well know, is the point of 1 John 1:9. 1 John 1:9 is speaking to us as Christians: "If we (Christians) confess our sins (because we are capable of sinning – we have the sin nature yet), He (God the Father) is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanses from all unrighteousness." Christ has paid for our sins. When we confess, we receive our restoration to our fellowship with Christ. Christ is the Lord of the believer, then, when the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the condition of being controlled by the Holy Spirit, and thus you are a spiritual Christian.

It looks like this. We're in the process of revising some of our illustrations. We've done some dramatic changes this week. And we are going to get these to you, so don't fret yourself about having to copy all this. This is, after all, a seminar. Every service here at Berean church is a seminar. You pay for it at the offering box when you leave, and, of course, you are entitled to certain handouts that you take home with you.

**Retroactive Positional Truth**

Here is the illustration on the filling of the Holy Spirit. We've referred to this as retroactive positional truth. God rejected human good. We've just read that, didn't we? Ephesians 2:8-9, "You're not saved by works. You're saved by an act of God's grace."

Christ bore our sins. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "He bore them in His own body on the cross." He bore your sins. Everything is paid for. If you believe that, you have placed faith in Jesus Christ, and as John 3:16 says, "God gave His son to pay the price that so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life." Now, that's not whoever invites Jesus into his heart. It's not whoever asks Jesus to take over his life. It is not whoever promises to do better. It's not whoever gives all these cutesy pop-Christianity phrases. The word is "believe" in Jesus Christ.

Here's what happens when you believe in Jesus Christ. Imagine there are two concentric circles. The large outer circle represents eternal fellowship. This is a relationship with God that you enter. You are declared, then, to be "in Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 says you are "in Christ:" "For by one Spirit (this is the Holy Spirit) we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free. We have all been made to drink of one Spirit." Here you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which takes place at the point of your salvation. This is how you are placed in Christ.

Paul, in Romans 8:9, says, "He who does not have the Spirit of God is none of Christ." You are indwelt immediately by God the Holy Spirit at the point of your salvation. You are placed into Christ, so you are in Christ. You now have an eternal circle of fellowship that surrounds you. But along with that, 2 Corinthians 5:17 indicates how dramatic the difference is: "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things passed away. Behold, new things have come." What were the old things? You were dead in Adam – dead in the old Adam. What are the new things? You are alive in Christ.

Now, here's what has happened. You have accepted the gospel. You have heard it; you have believed it; and, you have entered an eternal relationship. This is your current position. And you are in Christ. And you are there permanently.

Now, at the point of your salvation, you also enter an inner circle. This is a circle in which the Holy Spirit is in full control of your life. This is referred to in Ephesians 5:18: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit." This is the area where you are filled with the Spirit and this is the area (the condition) under which you are a spiritual Christian.

1 Corinthians 3:1, "And I, brethren," Paul says. Christians in Corinth who were terribly out of line with the Word of God and Christ. "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babe in Christ:" "And I, brethren." Aha, he's talking to Christians, or he wouldn't call them brothers: "I couldn't speak to you as spiritual people," because you're not in the inner circle. You're out of fellowship with God the Father because you are men of flesh. You're men of the sin nature. The word "flesh" is another term for the sin nature.

So, now you have been saved. You have entered the inner circle where you are controlled at that moment by the Spirit of God. You are a spiritual Christian. Maturity? Practically zilch. All you know is the gospel. That's as far as you've gotten in maturity. You have very little strength. You have just enough faith to believe God and accept the gospel. There's where you are. You're a spiritual Christian.

Now, when you sin, what happens is that you step out of this inner circle. You can't step out of the outer one as we already have seen. You are always saved. But you step out into this outer circle. This is the area which is controlled by the old sin nature. Romans 6:13 refers to that, "And do not go on presenting the members of your bodies to sin (singular – to the sin nature), as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

Now, what kind of a verse is that? If lordship salvation means that you have committed yourself to live a godly life, how in the world can Paul be telling us that you shouldn't be giving your body for sinful purposes? You wouldn't do that if you were a born-again person under the Lordship salvation idea. The Bible makes it very clear: yes, you do. Why? Because you have this thing called the old sin nature (the flesh). It is there. And when you step out in here, now you are still saved, but you are out of touch with God the Spirit.

Now, Christ is not your Lord. This is the area where He is Lord – when you are controlled by the Holy Spirit. This is where you are obedient to the Word of God, and where you are living by His leading. 1 Corinthians 3:1 again is referring to those people. He could not speak to them as spiritual, but as men of the flesh (as men of the old sin nature). In 1 Corinthians 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 men?."

Now, what kind of a Christian is that? Jealousy, strife, walking like unsaved people. Oh, you betcha. A Christian can really become a pig and a dog type just like that. All you have to do is move among people who are like that. All you have to do is to be shot through with human viewpoint, and say, "It's okay." But a divine viewpoint-minded person is going to recoil when they find that they have stepped out of line, because when you've stepped out of this inner circle, what happens is that you start producing human good works and sins. Isaiah 64:6 says that it's all "filthy rags" with God – all of your human good works. Your sins: Mark 7:21-23 lists a terrible list of sins that the old sin natures is capable of producing. Human good works and sins that are called evil. And you make correction for this by confessing those known sins (1 John 1:9). And when you admit you're out of line, you pop back into the inner circle. Then you are capable of producing divine good works. You're capable of living a godly life (Ephesians 2:10, 1 Timothy 4:1).

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." God has a life of good works (very specific) that you should do. Not any kind of good works, but those specifically designed for you. So that's what you're producing.

1 Timothy 4:7: "But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." So, when you are in this inner circle, your life is counting. You're not wasting your life. You're storing treasures in heaven. You're living a life of godliness. You're not getting hurt by Satan. You're not getting hurt by your sin nature. You're not getting injured by the world system of Satan that is so deceptive.

Now, this is the principle of the filling of the Holy Spirit. And this is how Christ becomes Lord of your life. It's the only way it can be done. First, you are saved. Then you are related to Him through the Word of God. And when you step out of line: you make correction; you come back in; you forget it; and, you move on.

The status of spirituality then is the basis for growth in the knowledge of doctrine, and this is done by means of the grace system of perception which we have been studying. 2 Peter 3:18 says, "Grow in this knowledge." The grace system of perception is also the means for building a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. That's the basis for Christ becoming Lord of your life. Making Christ the Lord of one's life is an instantaneous experience, but it is negated by unrepented and unconfessed evil. And the loss of the filling of the Holy Spirit occurs when you're out of temporal fellowship. And when you are out of this inner circle, He is not Lord.

So, keep the order straight, and don't let anybody deceive you. You trust in Christ; and, He becomes your Savior. He is already your Lord by the fact that He has saved you. But to be Lord in your experience – that requires your being in this inner circle of fellowship where God the Holy Spirit is running your life, and not the sin nature.

The maintenance of the Lordship of Christ by the believer enables him to grow in spiritual maturity in the form of a spiritual maturity structure to the point of Super grace status (James 4:6). Now, if you don't understand some of this, it is because you've not been here in church, and I can't go over this territory again. But if you have been, then all of this is glowingly clear to you. You see exactly how it fits in with the building the spiritual maturity structure in your soul.

**The Role of the Holy Spirit in your Life**

So the question comes down to this: how am I going to be a spiritual Christian? If I'm not that, I'm not anything. If I am a spiritual Christian, then Christ is the Lord of my life every moment, all day long, everywhere I go – He is there as the Lord of my life. Now who of you ever come to a place in your life where you don't need that? First of all, in being a spiritual Christian, you have to understand certain things about God the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer. This is one of the most misunderstood areas of doctrine, and yet is the critical one for every human being to live by. Please be sure your children understand the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

1. **God the Holy Spirit Indwells Each Christian**

First of all, God, the Holy Spirit, in the age of the church (the age of grace) indwells each Christian at the point of salvation (John 14:16, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19). We don't have time to read the verses. We leave that with you. But those verses tell us that the Spirit of God permanently indwells in each Christian.

1. **Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ**

The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian in order to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through the believer (John 16:12-14). He is there to honor Christ – to glorify Christ. That's why He's in there, in you, using your body as His temple.

1. **The Fruit of the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by producing the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian. This is the character of Christ described in Galatians 5:22-23. Salvation is by grace, but the spiritual life is also by grace. It's an act of God that enables you to produce these nine segments of the fruit of the Spirit.

1. **A Spiritual Christian (Filled with the Spirit)**

The indwelling Holy Spirit is able to glorify Christ through the life of the believer when he is in control of that life. That is what is meant by being filled with the Spirit. That is what is meant by being a spiritual Christian. That is what is meant by Christ being your Lord. He is able, through the Spirit of God, to direct your life.

Now, the Bible contrasts the two states in which a Christian may live at any moment. As we have seen in 1 Corinthians 3:1, those are described as fleshly (or carnal), or spiritual. Since these states are going to be determined by who controls: whether the old sin nature is controlling, or the Holy Spirit is controlling. They are absolutes. The Christian is one or the other at any point in time. That's important to understand. You're either a carnal Christian, or you're a Spiritual Christian.

The Holy Spirit is absolute righteousness. Therefore, He never shares authority in a Christian's life with the sin nature. He is absolute righteousness. Either the Holy Spirit is in charge, or Satan is in charge through the sin nature.

How are you rearing your children? Are you rearing them for the Holy Spirit to control their lives? Do they know enough doctrine? Are they getting enough instruction in the Word of God? Or are they getting fluffed off with inspirational talks that are degrading the significance of doctrine? It's not only bad if you don't get doctrine. It's even worse if you get cheap doctrine – imitation doctrine. That causes you to blow it off. The Holy Spirit will not share a life with the sin nature. These two possible controls and are illustrated in Romans 8:1. These are mutually exclusive. What I'm trying to tell you is that you're not part spiritual and part carnal. You're not part in charge of the Spirit of God and part in charge of the old sin nature. Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." "In Christ Jesus" means that you're a born-again Christian. You are in Christ. You are a saved person. He is your Savior.

**The Law of Sin and Death**

Then in Romans 8:2-4, we have two laws of the spiritual life. The first one is called "the law of sin and death." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death." "The law of sin and death" refers to the law given by God to Moses for the Israelites. What God gave in the Law was only to show them how sinful they were. The expression of the absolute righteousness of God is contained in the Mosaic Law (Romans 7:12). But the old sin nature keeps man from following the standard of absolute righteousness. And what it does is that it condemns the person to eternal death.

Notice Romans 8:7-8: "Because the mindset of the flesh (or the old sin nature) is hostile toward God, for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so. And those who are in the sin nature cannot please God." That is the law of sin and death.

**The Law of the Spirit of Life**

There is the other law in Romans 8:2 called the "law of the Spirit of life." It is this law which enables a Christian to live indeed a supernatural level of life, free of sin, free of human good. Both those are evil with God.

I only momentarily wanted to remind you of this. Here's a way to think about the old sin nature. The sin nature has an area of weakness which produces sins. It has an area of strength which produces human good. But both are evil, because they all come from the sin nature. The old sin nature has an area of making a good image of itself: legalism; and, aestheticism. Some people's old sin nature is just determined to be as evil as it can be. And it tends to lasciviousness; sensual immorality; and, a wicked image. And at any moment, this sin nature is kicking in, trying to control. What is it is going to do? It's going to make you look good, for one thing, by how you live. And people look at you on the outside, and say, "Oh, what a wonderful person." But you're shot through with mental attitude sins. Or, if you're a hell raiser, people know what you are, and they have no trouble identifying you. But neither one of these is any different: whether you present a good image; or, a wicked image from the sin nature. You have your sins – these areas of weaknesses that are described here in Scripture; and, the area of strength – your human good. The human good is rejected at the cross, and the sins were born by Christ at the cross. The sin nature has nothing good to provide. And when I tell you that you are living as a carnal Christian, where Christ is not Lord, that means that the sin nature is running your life. This horrible thing is in charge.

Now, this is what is meant – that you cannot keep the absolute righteous standard of God, because it's a grace operation. This law of the Spirit of life means that you are filled with the Spirit so that you control the old sin nature. When you control the old sin nature, Christ is Lord.

Notice Romans 8:3-4. The person in Christ, through regeneration, can live under the control of the old sin nature or the Holy Spirit. You're a Christian, but you can live either way. Romans 8:3-4 says, "For what the Law could not do (the Law of Moses – that standard of absolute righteousness that it expressed), weak as it was through the sin nature." There's nothing wrong with the law (its righteous standard), but the sin nature was weak. God sent His Own Son into the likeness of sinful flesh. He looked like a human being, but He was not with a sin nature. And as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the sin nature, but according to the Spirit. We are saved by an act of God. Our sins are actually forgiven. And we can walk in a way that is under the contrast of the sin nature and the Spirit of God.

Contrast the phrases there. Let me go back into Romans 8:5: "Those who do not walk according to the flesh" (who do not walk according to the sin nature). Contrast that with Romans 8:5: "But those who walk according to the Spirit of God." My point is that you're one or the other. They're mutually exclusive. You either are walking according to the sin nature, or you're walking according to the Spirit of God. The contrast is very clear.

Take a look at Romans 8:5. Notice the mutually exclusive controls here: "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh." Contrast that with: "But those who are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Here you have one or the other.

Notice Romans 8:6: "The mind which is set on the flesh is death, but the mind which is set on the Spirit is life and peace." You're not part of one, and part of the other. You're one or the other.

Now how can you do that? Well, you have a choice to make: whether to live by the Spirit of God; or, to live by the sin nature. Here's the sequence by which you step down from being controlled by the Spirit of God, and from going to be a carnal Christian instead of a spiritual Christian. The sequence of rejecting Christ as Lord – here it is: He may be Christ your Lord in your experience, and then you may kick Him out and neutralize Him.

Here's a Christian. He's in the state of spirituality. The Holy Spirit is controlling his life. He's in temporal fellowship with the Father, and life is terrific. This Christian is tempted from some source: either the world system; the sin nature; or, the devil – three sources of sin. The Christian goes negative to the Holy Spirit's guidance at some point, and decides to respond positively to the temptation from the world; the sin nature; or, the devil. Therefore, he does evil. Instantly, the old sin nature takes control of the life from the Holy Spirit. The Christian is now in a state of carnality, and he is out of temporal fellowship with the Father. Christ now is no longer Lord. Do you see how the steps went? He was Lord. Temptation came. He should have said, "No, I can't do that. I'm a follower Jesus Christ, and I'm loyal to him. And I know that He forbids that. That would hurt me to do that. I can't do that." Instead, he says, "Well, okay. I'll go along with it." Zip! The Spirit of God is now closed off, and the sin nature is riding high in the life. And boy, will you discover the consequences very quickly?

1 John 1:6-7 says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him (God the Father), and yet walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth." So, don't go around saying, "Christ is my Lord" when the sin nature is running your life. You're lying.

Romans 8:7-8: "But if we walk in the light (that is, in the light of doctrine, as He Himself (Christ) is the light), we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sins." Who are the people that you have most fellowship with on the human level? They are Christians. And among the Christians, who are those that are closest to you, and that ennoble you? It is Christians who are spiritual people – not the carnal crowd. These are the people who are faithful to the Lord.

When you are now in this terrible state where the sin nature is in charge, here's what has happened. All of your Christian service is human good. You're producing nothing for heavenly rewards. You're wasting your life. All divine guidance has stopped. All of your praying is useless. Nobody listens, and nobody's going to answer. And all of those rewards that you could be accumulating in heaven have now been sidetracked, neutralized, and stopped. And that's what the Bible means in Mark 8:36), when it says, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his life?" And this is how you lose your life, because you are in a status of the old sin nature carnality. Satan is in charge, and he's leading you on a fun game.

Please remember: sinning is such fun. Please remember that you can break the laws not only of God, but of good judgment. Doctrine has very specifics: "Do this. Don't do this." But it also has implications. And that's where those whom we have under our spiritual charge, we have to guide them about these implications. This implies that it is unwise for you, at this point in life, to have this relationship; or, to be in this activity.

Now, the sequence to return is to recognize that you're out of fellowship (what the sin nature is doing to you), and you decide to go back to Holy Spirit leadership. So, you confess, as per 1 John 1:9, and you come right back into relationship with the Spirit of God. Sin is always against God, so that confession is always made to Him. A Christian is immediately forgiven for the evil he has done when he confesses it. And he is cleansed, as 1 John 1:9 says, from all unrighteousness – even the stuff that maybe you don't realize was out of line. Instantly, when you confess, Christ once more becomes your Lord. The Spirit of God takes control of the life. The sin nature is pushed back and imprisoned once more. The believer is restored to temporal fellowship. Life now becomes terrific. Is it always easy? No. Does it mean that you have no problems? No. Does it mean that you have no disasters? No. But in the midst of a storm, you will have the peace of a little birdie sitting in the nest covered by its mother's wings, while the rain and the lightning is crashing all about them. There will be peace. And there will be care, because you're under the hand of God. And whatever comes, gradually He will lead you out of the disaster.

Instantly the Holy Spirit is back in charge. Now you are in a state of being a spiritual Christian. Your service is divine good. The Holy Spirit is leading you in life. He's taking doctrine and funneling it, and cycling it up to your mind, to guide you. Your prayers are heard; rewards are being accumulated in heaven. You're able to store doctrine in your human spirit for future use. Christ is your Lord.

Do you see the difference? He is your Savior by an act of faith in Christ. He is your Lord by maintaining yourself in temporal fellowship with the Spirit of God. He is your Savior by an act of trust in Christ that gives you an eternal fellowship. He becomes your Lord by maintaining your relationship to the Spirit of God where He can lead you.

**Spirituality (or Lordship)**

Very specifically, here's the description of spirituality in the Word of God. And this is why you are so fortunate to have had the good sense to be here today. Anybody who is not here is going to be poorer for it. There are three requirements for spirituality or lordship.

1. **Do not Quench the Spirit**

The first one is stated in 1 Thessalonians 5:19. I'm not making this up, so I'll read it to you from the Scriptures. There are two negative things that you are told in order to be a spiritual Christian, and for Christ to be the Lord. There is one positive. Here is the first negative. 1 Thessalonians 5:19: "Do not quench the Spirit." The word "quench" looks like this in the Greek Bible: S B E N N U M I "sbennumi" (sben'-noo-mee). This happens to be a command in the Greek language. God's not asking you. He's not inviting you. He's telling you: "Don't do this." What does the word "quench" mean then? The word "quench" means "to neutralize something." Here, it is neutralizing the control of the Holy Spirit in your soul. Quenching results from disobedience to the Word of God to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Quenching does not involve moral issues. It does not involve ethical issues. It has nothing to do with stealing. It has nothing to do with fornication. It has nothing to do with lying. It has nothing to do with the moral code. Quenching is resorting to human good production from the area of strength from your old sin nature. Quenching has to do with saying "No" to what God is leading you to do. Human good will soothe your conscience so that the Holy Spirit remains quenched, and you remain out of fellowship. When you quench the Spirit of God by refusing to obey Him in what He's leading you to do, you are quenching Him.

He may be calling upon you to do something that is so staggering to you that you cannot believe that He would ask you to do this. He's asking you to put yourself out on a limb, and to commit yourself to some service to Him that simply blows your mind, and you can't believe that He would ask you to do that. Quenching has to do with saying "No" when the Spirit of God is burdening your heart. When that happens, you are out of temporal fellowship. You zip right out of the inner circle. Christ is no longer your Lord. You are a carnal Christian.

1. **Do not Grieve the Holy Spirit**

The second negative is to be found in Ephesians 4:30: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." So, you are losing your lordship when you grieve the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for "grieve" looks like this: "lepeo" (loo-peh'-o), L E P E O. This also is a command in the Greek. It's not an invitation. It is a command. Grieve means to cause distress. Grieving results from sin in the life of the believer. Grieving involves moral ethical issues – like stealing; adultery; lying; and, mental attitude sins. Boy, how the Lordship salvation people hate that when you say that they have mental attitude sins, because that puts them in the same category as the guy who does these things outwardly where we can all see it. But grieving the Holy Spirit is sin in the life of the believer. It is producing sins in the area of weakness from the old sin nature. Grieving is choosing evil in place of righteousness. Grieving takes the Christian out of temporal fellowship, and it terminates the lordship of Christ in that life.

1. **Walk by the Spirit**

The third step to being a spiritual Christian, and to have Christ as Lord in your life is a positive command. This one is Galatians 5:16: "But I say walk by means of the Holy Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the old sin nature." So, it is a matter of walking by the Holy Spirit. The word in the Greek looks like this: P E R I P A T E O, "peripateo" (per-ee-pat-eh'-o). "Peripateo" is a command here again, and it means to live your life in dependence on God the Holy Spirit – not in dependence upon your old sin nature with all its self-will. It means to use the techniques of the Christian life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: the technique of confessing sins; the technique of faith rest; the technique of Bible study; the technique of spirituality; the technique of thinking divine viewpoint; and, the technique of prayer. All of those that we call the techniques of the Christian life – that's walking by means of the Holy Spirit. And the consequence will be the supernatural power of God enabling you to maintain Christ as Lord in your life. You will be a spiritual Christian.

A Christian will is tempted instead to depend on his own willpower and his sincere intentions to carry him through life. Walking by means of the Spirit is appropriating His divine power through doctrine in the soul. This is a grace provision. You cannot walk by means of the Holy Spirit if you do not know doctrine. So, just blow it off, and every time you are absent from a church service, like any service here (which is always instructional in doctrine), you have undermined your ability to walk by means of the Holy Spirit. And you should reach out to everybody around you and say, "Hey, stop going to where you're going. What you belong in is Berean church, where you will learn the doctrines of Scripture. Do not hazard your life by undermining your ability to walk by means of the Spirit of God. If you do not have doctrine in that human spirit, that cannot be illuminated and brought to your mind.

So these three commands to every Christian, relative to the Holy Spirit indwelling him, are evidence that personal sins, in the form of human good and sins are the evil – that's the hindrance to spirituality (to the filling of the Holy Spirit). The solution for quenching, grieving, and not walking by means of the Spirit is to confess, and to get back on target. Get back into the Word of God. And the way you solve this is not by: coming forward in a meeting; promising to do better; repenting; being sorry; or, doing penance. That's not going to change you. It is only when you have decided that you're going to go back to the Word of God, and you're going to give yourself a chance to rise.

What is the issue in spirituality? It is to imitate God (Ephesians 5:1-6). It is to not imitate the unbeliever (1 John 1:6, 1 Corinthians 3:3). And only the Holy Spirit can do this for you – to make Christ your Lord, where you are imitating God, and you're not imitating Satan.

Now, make your choice. Every one of us has to do it every moment of our life. But a spiritual Christian does not quench the Spirit of God. He doesn't say "No" to what God directs us to do. He does not grieve by having moral breakdowns (disobedience in our lives). And he walks by means to the guidance of the Spirit of God through doctrine. If you do that, you'll be a spiritual Christian. And you will have at least a chance in life.

Our Father, we thank You for this, Your Word, and we pray that You will help us to incorporate it into our experience. We thank You that when we take the promises of God, and we mix them with our faith, they become usable to us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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