***The Technique of Spirituality, No. 2

Techniques of the Christian Life

TL08-02***

We are now studying the technique of spirituality and this is the second increment in that study. The question of spirituality deals with what makes a Christian a spiritual person. Is it an experience which some can achieve to a greater degree than others? The answer is "No." Is it some stimulating feeling which produces an ecstatic response of some kind, so that we may say that we are spiritual? The answer is "No." Is it the imitation of the life patterns of some Christian who is effective in the Lord's work? And the answer again is "No." Spirituality in the church age is a relationship to God the Holy Spirit, and that's why, as a matter of fact, this technique is named after Him. It is called the technique of spirituality because it has to do with being related to God the Holy Spirit.

We have learned thus far that the business of being a spiritual person is open to every Christian in the same way that salvation is open to every person in the human race. However, spirituality is a state of being. Therefore there are no degrees of spirituality. One person cannot be more spiritual than another. You are either spiritual or you are not spiritual. Spirituality is the state of being filled or controlled by God the Holy Spirit. A Christian who is not controlled by God the Holy Spirit is controlled by the only other alternative, which is the old sin nature which Satan works upon. That Christian is said to be in a state of carnality.

Therefore at any particular moment of our lives we are either spiritual, where God the Holy Spirit is guiding and we are responding, or we are carnal, where Satan is influencing us through the old sin nature and we are responding to that at any point. We are one or the other. You are not part spiritual and part carnal. When the old sin nature controls, you are producing sins and human good, and that's all you can produce. In the case of the unbeliever, he can't ever do anything else but sin or human good. But a Christian can do this only if he's in a state of carnality. When a Christian is in a place where God the Holy Spirit is leading his life, he can only produce obedience to the will of God or divine good production. It is sin that takes you out of the state of spirituality and puts you into the state of carnality. That has to begin with an act of the mind that goes negative toward some aspect of the leading of the Spirit of God. You have to come to a place where you are moving along with the Spirit of God and suddenly you buck him. When you do, your fellowship is lost. You're out of spirituality and into carnality.

If you are a carnal Christian, you can see what this implies for believers as a whole. How many believers can we expect in the average church congregation who even understand the issues that are involved so that they can spend most of their lives in the state of spirituality? Instead most, because they are oblivious to this, spend their time in the status of carnality. Can you imagine what a shock it's going to be when you get to heaven and rewards are going to be passed out on the basis of how much time you have accumulated in a spiritual state? That's the time in which you, in effect, bought time that you could use in behalf of the Lord's service. Can you imagine what a shock it's going to be when people are going to see rewards distributed; when they're going to see within their own being the glory of God reflected because of the spiritual maturity they developed in the status of being spiritual, over against the vast number of church people who spend most of their lives in the status of carnality? They're going to be dull clods when it comes to reflecting the Lord's glory. That's surely going to be a disappointment. But when we are spiritual, we have the happy experience of being obedient to the Lord and producing divine good. 1 John 3:9 tells us about that. The result is that we walk along in a way that is honoring to the Lord.

In other words, the Holy Spirit does not share control of your life with the old sin nature. If any aspect of your life is placed under the old sin nature's rule, then the Holy Spirit steps out of the picture. He will not share the rule and the control of your life with the old sin nature. He has absolute righteousness whereas the old sin nature is relative righteousness, so they are mutually exclusive.

Spiritualty is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit and it is not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Those things simply provide us the ground with being spiritual. A status spirituality is achieved by giving God the Holy Spirit control of your life, which is achieved by confessing all known sins. We learned that from the state of spirituality evolves spiritual growth. I hope you have these two distinguished in your mind. Spirituality has no degrees. However, when you get to spiritual maturity, you do have degrees. Some people are more spiritually mature than others. One Christian has gone farther ahead in the learning of doctrine and his response to it than have other believers. However, at any level of spiritual maturity, you may be a carnal Christian or a spiritual Christian. Spiritual maturity is maintained or advanced while you are filled with the Spirit. When you are under control of the old sin nature, your spiritual maturity goes in reverse. It never stands still.

We pointed out that the Bible is very clear that we are to be both (spiritual, and spiritually mature). Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be spiritual. It is a command. We have no option. God says do it. The Bible also tells us in 2 Peter 3:18 to grow in spiritual maturity. Again we have no option. We are told to do it.

I think all of you perhaps are well acquainted with the diagram of concentric circles. We can show a large circle with a small circle within the large one. At the point that you come to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Christ by faith as Savior, you are immediately plunged into this inner circle. This outer circle has to do with eternal fellowship. That is to be placed in Christ. That is salvation. This inner circle has to do with temporal fellowship, your walk with the Lord in time. When you are born again, all of your sins are forgiven: past, present, and future. As far as your eternal relationship to God is concerned, you are immediately walking with the Lord in perfect fellowship. When you receive Christ as Savior, God the Holy Spirit controls you in time. Now it's questionable, and debatable, something we wouldn't know, as to how long you stay in the inner circle. In any case, the moment you sin, out you go from the inner circle, but you do not go out of salvation. That's the crucial thing. The carnal Christian exists inside the outer circle, but outside of the inner circle. The spiritual Christian is inside both circles. It's just as simple as that. Now the question, of course, is how do I return? We're going to go into this in more detail. How do I return back to the status of spirituality? The answer to that is to confess. If you'll get that straight, this will clarify the issues for you. It will help you to understand how this works.

You, as a Christian, enter this Christian life with the old sin nature fully intact. You take it right into the Christian life, and the old nature can express itself at any point. That's what's happening. The old sin nature has been permitted to express itself and that's why you're out of fellowship with God the Father in time. When you are out of fellowship, what's happening in your life? Two things: sins or human good. Those are the only two things that can take place in your life as a Christian. The technique of spirituality is at the heart of everything that has to do with our Christian life.

The Bible tells us that spirituality is being in the light while carnality is being in darkness. Just as light and darkness are mutually exclusive, so these two are mutually exclusive: carnality and spirituality. That's why the Bible uses this analogy. A Christian who is walking in the light is reflecting the fact that he is in Christ. The Christian who is walking in darkness is reflecting the fact that he has lost contact with the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. The old sin nature controls him. In that case, he is just like an unbeliever. There is no difference (1 John 1:6). A spiritual Christian imitates God (Ephesians 5:1). A carnal Christian imitates the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 3:3).

You can see that it takes an act of your volition to get out of fellowship. You have to decide to go with the old sin nature. It also takes an act of volition to get back into fellowship. You have to decide to come to the position where you are again filled with the spirit. This position of spirituality is also being filled with the Holy Spirit, or it is walking in the light. All of these are terms for the same thing.

The need for spirituality is very great, but the means to attaining it is very confusing. Nowhere is it more confusing than when we come to singing hymns. It would be disastrous to good doctrine to sing number 134 in our hymn book. I just want to read you these verses. The title of this hymn is "Fill Me Now," and it has to do with the subject of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Before we read it, get things reviewed in your mind. If someone says, "How can I be filled with the spirit?" What would you say to him? You would say, "Confess all known sins to God the Father, and immediately you will be in a state of spirituality. You will be filled with the spirit. You will be controlled by God the Holy Spirit. If someone comes up and says, "Is that important?" You would say, "It's very important. It is absolutely crucial." "Well, do I have to do it?" "Yes. God has commanded you to do it." So it is not unthinkable that someone should write a hymn concerning something that God says we must do if we are to hope to go on in any way with Him, if we are to be in any way different from the unbeliever in our life, in its production, in its happiness, and so on.

Notice what this hymn says: "Hover over me Holy Spirit. Bathe my trembling heart and brow. Fill me with thy hallowed presence. Come, oh come, and fill me now." We must view this in terms of an appeal, and thus in terms of a prayer. Here we have spirituality suggested by praying, by asking God the Holy Spirit to come and fill you. Yet we know from the Bible that you will never be filled with the spirit, no matter how much you ask him for that.

Verse 2: "Thou canst fill me gracious spirit though I cannot tell thee how." You can tell him how. The writer of this hymn couldn't tell him how. God has told us how. But this poor fellow who wrote the lyrics didn't know how. But that doesn't mean that you don't know because you do know how. 1 John 1:9 very clearly tells you how. Places like Romans chapter 8 very definitely spell out the absolute difference between being in the light and in the darkness, walking according to the flesh vs. walking according to the spirit. "Thou canst fill me gracious spirit." That's true. "Though I cannot tell you how." That's true in his case. "But I need thee, greatly need thee." That's true. "Come oh come and fill me now." That is not true.

Verse 3: "I am weakness, full of weakness." That's for sure. "At thy sacred feet I bow. Blessed divine eternal spirit, fill with power and fill me now." Again, this is the appeal of a prayer to be filled. "Cleanse and comfort, bless, and save me." Now there's a big error. It's not bad enough that he's confusing how to be filled with the Spirit. Now he has slipped in that old cliché, as perhaps when you have heard somebody called upon to pray in public. So they pray to the Lord, and near the end of their prayer they tack on the little phrase, "and save us at last." This is a believer asking God to be sure that He gets them into heaven, which shows that he does not understand the doctrine of being in Christ at all. Otherwise he'd know that that's one thing he does not have to ask God, "to save him at last." That is a certainty. Because our writer here is confused on the Holy Spirit, he prays for cleansing, he prays for comfort, he prays for blessing, and he prays for salvation. "Bathe, o bathe, my heart and brow. Thou art comforting and saving, thou art sweetly filling now." Well, if he is sweetly filling now, it isn't because of all that he has asked here. It is because he finally got around to confessing his sins. This is an example of the problems of theology that we face just in the very hymns we sing.

The business of spirituality is very crucial. We need it. Human ability, your talents, your IQ, or your personality are no substitutes for spirituality. Many times we consider these things to be spiritual. Somebody with a winsome personality around the church is viewed as a spiritual person. Somebody who has great talents that he's willing to hustle and use is viewed as a spiritual person. You and I as believers cannot please God when we are carnal, but we can do many wonderful things while we are carnal. Don't ever forget that. We cannot please God. All we can produce is sins and human good, but we can produce some really magnificent human good. There are plenty of Christians who are running around, and they've got a lot of other Christians conned that they are doing some very great wonderful spiritual things. However, they can only do that in a church where people do not understand spirituality. So I hope that the next person that comes along with a winsome personality around here will not be equated with being a spiritual person. The next person that wows you with their human capacities and abilities and their willingness to use them for the Lord will not impress you as being a spiritual person. The next brainy person that walks in here, I hope you'll not be impressed with his high IQ. That high IQ may even be devoted to Bible study, but that doesn't necessarily reflect that he is a very spiritual person. You and I as Christians cannot work to become spiritual, but preachers are guilty of giving people the impression that they can they give people the impression that if they work, they will be spiritual.

With the opening of our 21st year in Berean Academy imminently before us, and with classrooms to be put in shape and buildings to be painted, I had a beautiful opportunity to give you the impression that your spirituality would be greatly advanced if you would work with a paintbrush around here, or with your carpenter's tools, or something else. Not so. You cannot work yourself into a state of spirituality. You need to walk by means of the Holy Spirit, not do something. When churches give you programs, they are substitutes for a right relationship to the spirit of God, trying to make people happy without the Word of God. Human dynamics is no substitute for Holy Spirit dynamics. Nothing can substitute for His controlling power. That's God's way of spirituality.

**False Ideas about Spirituality**

Let's take a look at the Biblical basis of spirituality. There are many false ideas about spirituality. Maybe if we eliminate the false ones, we can get more accurately and more definitively to those that are the basis of spirituality.

**Praying for Spirituality**

First of all, you cannot pray for spirituality. That's what our hymn writer was trying to do. This is the idea that I can ask God the Holy Spirit to fill me. The filling of the Holy Spirit comes through confession of known sins (1 John 1:9). You cannot secure temporal forgiveness for sins by praying for it. You can only secure it by confessing sins. That means that you cannot ask God to forgive you your sins and secure spirituality. This is another favorite trick. I'm going to pray to God that he will forgive me my sins. The requirement is to admit your sins, namely to name them, to God the Father. That's how you secure forgiveness, and that's how you secure spirituality. It is actually useless for you to be praying to God to fill you or to control you. Obviously, the Holy Spirit is very eager to do that. But he has a very definite basis upon which he will do that. Oh He'll fill you. He'll control you. He'll guide you. All you have to do is meet the requirement of the confession of sins. Don't let somebody come to you and tell you that the way to be spiritual is by praying through. The way is by confessing.

**Judging Spirituality by Experience**

There is another misconception and that is that you can judge spirituality by experience. We have some genuine experiences, and we mislabel these as signifying spirituality. We misinterpret the source of an experience. We might have a very wonderful experience. We might feel that we have had a very deeply moving spiritual experience. I want to tell you right now that Satan can give you exactly that. Satan can give you an experience that you are ready to attribute to God. If you don't believe it, just check Matthew 7:22-23, and you'll see how easily this is accomplished. Just because you've had some very wonderful experiences does not signify that the Spirit of God has control of your life.

**Spirituality by Physical Reactions**

You cannot determine spirituality by physical reactions. Some people feel that if they have a sad face, they are demonstrating how spiritual they are. They are taking God seriously. One of the favorite stunts of songs leaders is that you should have a smiley face, especially during the song service. They want to see everybody with a mouthful of teeth. They equate this with spirituality. You may be very tired. As a matter of fact, you may be enough of a fanatic that you don't feel too well and still go out to church. You're not going to feel very happy and you're not going to look very happy. Does that mean you're non-spiritual? Not at all. A sad face is not a sign of spirituality nor is a smiley one. Spirituality is on the inside, and it may have outward expression. However, you do not determine spirituality on the basis of physical outward reflections.

**Spirituality by Emotions**

Here's a favorite one: You cannot determine spirituality by your emotions. "I'm spiritual because I can just feel it," which means that if I feel good, I'm spiritual; and, if I feel depressed, I'm carnal. Yet emotions vary widely among Christians, and they may all be in the state of spirituality. It isn't because some Christians are more spiritual than others because some Christians are more emotional. Some of you cry at the drop of a hat because it's your temperament. You cry because you're happy. You cry because you're sad. You cry when you've got nothing else to do. You're the emotional type. That's OK. That's fine. Just don't try to connect that with spirituality. How you feel does not determine spirituality.

There is a certain order that always has to be (just as with salvation): The facts of doctrine come first, number one; then, comes faith in that doctrine--believing what God has given; and, then comes feeling. If you keep it in that order, doctrine (facts) are always directing feeling, you will not be mistaken and you will not be confused by Satan. You couldn't be saved by feeling. You had to be saved by facts that you have acted upon in faith. Now you may have a variety of reactions to your salvation. You could react with a great emotional expression, or you could be completely deadpan. The same thing is true with spirituality. In other words, what I'm saying is that crying Christians are not the most spiritual, devoted, honest, or sincere. They're just the most emotional of the group. However, emotions are legitimate. I hope I don't have to tell you that. But I've discovered that the minute you start speaking about emotions and warning people not to equate this with God's blessing, they think you're bad-mouthing emotions and trying to tell people that they should not be emotional. You will be emotional but you will be emotional as a result of legitimate motivations.

**Spirituality by External Results**

Another one is external results. That's a great one. How can I prove that I am spiritual by the results? If you're a preacher and you have a large congregation, that means that your pastor is a spiritual giant. But the truth of the matter is it doesn't even prove spiritual. It may simply prove that he's smooth; that he does not offend; that he knows how to preach in loopholes; and, that he knows how to be a good public relations promoter. The unsaved world can also build great organizations, and nobody is suggesting that they're doing this because they're spiritual. Even performing miracles is no sign of spirituality because Satan can do that. You cannot judge by external results. If you have enough money in a congregation, does that mean you're spiritual? No, it does not. You cannot judge by external results. The ones who have the great crowds and the great money are implying to people that "God is with us. God is not with those people over there. They don't have the crowds and they don't have the money." But you cannot judge spirituality on external results. Now when spirituality is there, it will affect external results. But again, you cannot determine that by looking at those results.

**Spirituality by Comparison**

You cannot determine spirituality by the technique of comparison. This is a very natural way, for us to compare ourselves to other Christians. You match yourself to some supposed spiritual giant because you attended a spiritual life conference someplace. The next time a great spiritual life conference comes along, you go and you watch these men who are brought in to speak because they are spiritual giants. So you pick up their ways; you begin imitating them; and, thus you think that you can compare yourself to them and become a spiritual person. You follow some victorious life pattern.

When was the last time you decided how spiritual your family is? The last time you read a book by somebody on family life? There they outline that a father in a Christian family is this. Beautiful. The mother is this. Even more beautiful. And the children are this. Out of this world. You look at your husband. Boy are we in trouble. Take a look at your wife. Oh man. It's hopeless. And your kids. You shouldn't have even brought the subject up. Pretty soon you're real blue because you've got such a non-spiritual family. It's really tiresome listening to these professionals who write these books and give these messages about the beauties of the Christian family. The most beautiful Christian family is where one kid wraps the other one in the mouth, especially when he uses bad words around the place. So don't be carried away by this business of comparing yourself to other Christians. It will do one or two things. If you find a bunch of really nice people, it will discourage you. If you're smart, and you want to estimate your spirituality by comparing yourself with others, you'll get a bunch of clods and then you'll feel great. Get yourself the murderers; the philanderers; the gossips; the people who observe Lent; and, all of the do-gooders, and match yourself up against them and you look pretty good. You'll have yourself believing that you're a really spiritual person.

**Spirituality by Tradition**

You cannot secure spirituality, or test it, by tradition, or by the fact that you follow traditional orders of some kind. For example, in a traditional church service, does it make you feel spiritual because you have recited the Lord's Prayer at church, or the Apostles Creed? I once knew of a very large church in Dallas, and they were having a candidate for the pulpit, looking for a new pastor. They had a candidate who was an excellent man. I happened to know him. They would have been greatly blessed to have had that man in their pulpit. The congregation turned him down. Do you know why? Because at the end of his sermon he didn't pray. The previous pastor that was viewed as a very spiritual godly man always prayed at the close of the sermon. They literally voted against him because they felt this reflected a spiritual weakness that when he finished his sermon he didn't pray. It may have been that the previous pastor had such poor sermons that he always needed to pray at the end of the sermon. It may have been for that reason. Maybe because he didn't pray enough beforehand. In any case, you cannot achieve spirituality because you follow certain traditions.

**Spirituality by Legalism**

Nor can you secure spirituality (and this is a favorite) by observing what may be called taboos or legalisms. There are certain acts that people inevitably consider improper for Christians. May I preface my remarks right now on this? I am not telling you to go out and see how loose you can live. I know that you can do a good job at that. Every time you try to warn people that there are certain things that we view as very bad for Christians to do, these things are equated with being spiritual if you don't do them, and non-spiritual if you do. Some of these taboos include drinking, dancing, going to movies, playing cards, smiling at girls, or any number of things. It varies in different parts of the country.

In our part of the country here, it has not been uncommon for me to have preachers really shocked by the fact that our youth club sometimes will have what they call "mixed bathing." As a matter of fact, we're going to have a splash party as a kickoff for this year's Berean youth club event. These preachers would be horrified at something like that. All these boys and girls are going to be out there, down at the lake all at the same time--in the same lake. And they'll say something to me like, "Brother, don't you feel that that is out of order? This matter of mixed bathing?" I usually say, "Yes, I agree with you. I'm opposed to 'mixed bathing.' Mixed swimming I don't mind. But that 'mixed bathing,' I draw the line on that." I'm just trying to convey how idiotic and inane that is. But in different parts of the country, you have your different little twists. There is the impression that if you don't do these things, that you will be spiritual. Now, I grant you that when you are a spiritual Christian, when you are led by God the Holy Spirit it will affect your conduct, and it will affect your thinking. There will be certain things that you won't do.

For example, one man told me one time that when he came here to Berean Memorial Church and he began to learn what it was to be a spiritual person, that is to walk with God the Holy Spirit, he said, "One of the first things I did was cancel my subscription to Playboy magazine. Now don't go out canceling your subscription because you want to be spiritual. There are better reasons for doing it, but it will evolve if you are a spiritual person. That's exactly what you probably will come around to doing. We're not suggesting that Christians should have such freedom that loose living is acceptable. I know that there are always some dumbbells out there who hear this caution who are equating what we say with it being alright to do things that in themselves indeed may be sin. The point is we're talking about the motivation by which these things evolve.

When you walk with the spirit of God, it will change a lot of things in your life. Then they will stay changed. If you change things because somebody put pressure on you, you will do it just as long as nobody's around to see you. Then you will fall right back into what your old sin nature really wants to do. Legalisms in a Christian life do not indicate spirituality. You will discover that the Christian who really promotes this, who is the most vocal about these legalisms, is the Christian who usually criticizes the most; who is the one who worries the most; he complains and gripes the most; he slanders people; and, he is the one who roots around most in the privacy and the business of other people. Yet he's the one who will be most horrified because Christians do certain things that he considers non-spiritual. Don't fall for that mistake.

You are not spiritual because of things you do or don't do. Yet there are many things which we should not do. The meanest Christians in a church are the legalists. They are also the ones who smile the most. If you fail to keep their taboos, they feel that they are spiritually superior. Yet they don't keep some taboos that Christians in other parts of the country hold to. They may be the most vocal, but they can't get away with that unless they're in a congregation where people just don't understand spirituality. So, they can be impressive. Once Christians understand that God the Holy Spirit will change your patterns, but it is a matter of being yielded to Him through the confession of sins, then people like that will not impress you.

**Spirituality by Self-Crucifixion**

You can't secure spirituality by self-crucifixion. This also is one of the favorites--to crucify yourself. Now what does this mean? Well, this is an attempt to neutralize your old sin nature by trying harder--self to cancel out self, and it won't work. You'll produce a kind of a pseudo spirituality but it won't be the real thing. The self-life should be canceled, but it can only be canceled by God the Holy Spirit who is given charge in place of that life. But it is very popular, particularly in home-fellowship circles. This is a very popular approach for people to be spiritual. In a group like that you've got frustrations, you've got discouragements, you've got defeats, and one of the ways for people to meet those things is to crucify themselves. You can also carry this to literal extremes and some people do. There are some places in Latin America where they have people who, at certain times of the year like on Good Friday, will literally crucify themselves on a cross. They literally whip themselves in order to cut up their flesh, and they are literally seeking to crucify themselves in order to be spiritual. For what? So God can lead them. But you cannot secure spirituality by self-crucifixion.

**Spirituality by Being Yielded**

Nor can you secure it by being yielded. If you have problems in your life, you are often told to yield to God. However, yielding is accomplished by confession of sin. That's how you yield. That's how God the Holy Spirit can take over. Any other appeal is contrary to the Word of God. Yieldedness is being in that inner circle. You get into that inner circle by confession of sins. It is an act of faith. It is not some work on your part that you seek to express. This is just another appeal to the old sin nature.

**Spirituality by Asceticism**

Another way is by asceticism. Asceticism has to do with inflicting self-denials upon yourself. Here's where the fasting crowd comes in. One of the great ways of showing that you are humble before God is not to eat; or to live in miserable conditions; or to deny yourself food and fun and friends. It is a program of extreme self-denial. This, of course, can also be done by unbelievers. As a matter of fact, it has been done by unbelievers. The whole British Empire was brought to its knees in India through the asceticism of Gandhi, a revered leader in India. He just decided to go on a fast until the British Empire agreed to certain demands--he would quit eating. Of course, if he died in that condition, a martyr would have arisen that would have brought rebellion everywhere on the hands of the British. Gandhi was very effective in what he called his non-violent resistance to the authority of the British Empire, and he did it through asceticism. Any unbeliever can do that, but do you think he was a spiritual man because he did that? Not at all. They called him a holy man, but he was no such thing--not in Scriptural terms. Spirituality is not something you can secure by some work like self-denial. It's a thing that comes by grace.

**Spirituality by Self-Discipline**

Nor can you achieve it by self-discipline. Again, nobody is saying that self-discipline is not necessary in the Christian life. Self-discipline is important, but this is the idea that you are going to force yourself to be something. For example, you are going to wake up one morning and say I'm going to love everybody. I'm going to love just everybody down the line. I'm going to love the leaders of Russia and China. I'm going to love our president. Everybody I'm going to love. That is the idea of self-discipline. It is the doing the unpleasant tasks. For example, setting up some rigid system. I'm going to get up at 5:30 every morning to study the Bible and to pray. You have this rigid system. Is it bad to get up at 5:30 and study the Bible and pray? Fine, if you want to do it. But if you think that's going to make you spiritual you're mistaken. Self-discipline does not gain spirituality. That's just another expression of the strength of your will. As long as your will is strong enough you can keep it up. It is not a means of spirituality.

All of these ways are attempts at spirituality by human works and human effort. We can't do it that way. You could perhaps think of some others, but these are some of the favorites, and they're very commonplace among Christians. These are not unusual, but it is a pattern which just does not work because every one of these is the old sin nature expressing itself in some way, and the Lord does not honor the old sin nature.

**Ephesians 5:14-18**

Now just to tie us up, let's look at Ephesians 5 in order to just to lay some groundwork for the detailed explanation of how to be spiritual. Ephesians 5 gives us the admonition to be spiritual, and I want you to notice something in verses 14 through 18. In Ephesians 5:1-13, the Apostle tells us about a supernatural way of life that a Christian can live. The Christian is called to live a life which is beyond human capacities. So in verse 14 he says, "Wherefore he says, awake you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." There are three things to notice. Who is to awake? This is speaking to Christians. It tells them to wake up. Awake to what? Awake to the supernatural life. Verse 13 takes note that it takes light to see the things that the Holy Spirit does not approve. So he says, "But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light. For everything that becomes visible is light." So it takes the light of the Holy Spirit to show us what is displeasing to the Lord--in other words, for our guidance.

He says, first of all, "Awake." Who is to awake? This is speaking to Christians. "Awake you who sleep." This is a reference to the Christian who is ignorant of the Word of God. He is sleeping. He is unaware of what the Word of God has to say. He is unaware of Bible doctrine. There is a way to awake and to get back into fellowship. But, first of all, he says, "Awake you who sleep, and arise from the dead."

The second thing it says is to arise. What this is referring to is not physical death. This is speaking to Christians and it is referring to that temporal death; that is, to be out of the inner circle. He is telling these Christians who are sleeping, are not taking in doctrine and thus are walking in carnality, to arise from temporal death.

When they do, it says that "Christ shall give you light." The third thing to come is the light, and that will come from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. He illumines and controls us so that the character of Jesus Christ is actually produced within the believer and he is able to live the supernatural life.

Verse 14: "Wherefore he said (to the believer who is out of fellowship), "awake you who sleep" (and because he is out of fellowship he is ignorant of doctrine). Arise from the dead (he is in temporal death), and Christ shall give you light." He arises by the confession of sin.

Verse 15 says, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." A Christian can walk as a fool or he can walk as a wise person. He walks as a wise person if he is in a state of spirituality. He is wise because he is operating on the power of the Holy Spirit. He walks as a fool if he is in the status of carnality because so much is lost in carnality. He is a fool because he is operating on the old sin nature. What can the Holy Spirit produce? Only obedience to the Word of God and divine good. What can the old sin nature produce? Only sins and human good. Who would not be a fool to be operating on the old sin nature when that's all that can come out of it? Spirituality is the greatest issue in your life after salvation. It is related here to wisdom: "See then that you walk circumspectly." That is, that you walk in a status of spirituality. "Not as fools, but as wise."

Then verse 16 says, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil." The idea of redeeming here means to be buying up time--time in which you can store eternal treasures. How can you buy up time? There's only one way--by confession, to be in spirituality. If you are not in a status of spirituality you are wasting time. Every day of your life that goes by is a wasted day. Every day you're in carnality is lost time in relationship to eternal rewards.

In verse 17 he says, "Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." What is the will of the Lord? Verse 18 gives it to us, "Be not drunk with wine in which is excess but be filled with the Spirit." It says stop being drunk with wine because being drunk with wine changes your outward actions and it changes your pattern of thinking. It changes your behavior patterns when you're drunk with wine. It says to change your behavior patterns by being under the control of God the Holy Spirit. Indeed there will be certain things that as a Christian you will no longer do that you felt free to do as an unbeliever. There are certain things as a carnal Christian that you will do which as a spiritual Christian you will not do. This is because of the fact that you are filled with the Spirit and your patterns are being changed. "To be filled" is present tense. Constantly you are to do it. It is imperative. It is a command. It is to be what God expects you to do.

You and I live in very evil days. The light of the Holy Spirit in us is either on, guiding us, or it's off, not guiding us. That is the point of the use of this technique. There is nothing so disastrous as being carnal. No loss can be imagined that is greater than for us to walk along as carnal people. Unless you use this technique, you have squandered your time. You have not taken your time and nurtured it and converted it into reward. You have actually used up the days of your life and you have squandered them. That's how you have to think about this. God is saying to you that He is giving you a certain amount of time for living, and that that time can be converted to eternal rewards, or it can just be loss. If you lose it, He says you're a fool. If you conserve it and convert it to reward, He says you are wise. It is all done by waking up from temporal death (which is being out of temporal fellowship), and restoring yourself by confession to spirituality. You will redeem the time and therefore you will understand what the will of the Lord is, which is to walk by means of the Spirit.

There is one other thing that we have not yet done. We have not actually laid out in detail how to go about it. We've given the general prescription, but we have not laid out in detail how to go about being filled with the Spirit and that's what's coming up next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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