***The Technique of Spirituality, No. 3

Techniques of the Christian Life

TL09-01***

We continue our study of the technique of spirituality. This is the third part in that series. As you know, the old sin nature in every believer challenges the will of the Holy Spirit who indwells each of us. The old sin nature has had its total control over the life of every believer broken at the cross. When Satan was defeated by the death of Christ on the cross as he bore the sins of the world, the old sin nature's control over the human mind and over the life of an individual was broken forever. The volition of the Christian however is still operational, and it is possible for you to throw the switch from control over your life in the hands of God the Holy Spirit, and switch over to control of the old sin nature which is within you. For this reason, we can be either spiritual or carnal. When you do throw the switch and turn controls over to the old sin nature, you are in a state of carnality.

For this reason, Ephesians 5:18 says to us, "Be not drunk with wine which is excess but be filled with the Spirit." The word "filled of the Spirit" does not mean that you're going to get more of God the Holy Spirit. He is a person. He draws you, and the word filling is to be equated with the concept of control. It means to let the Holy Spirit have control of your life. He either does or he doesn't. The word "filled" is the Greek "pleroo." "Pleroo" is in the present tense which means that you are constantly to be filled with the spirit, or to be spiritual. This is the divine ideal. It is not the intent of the Lord that you should move through life in a carnal position. It is God's purpose for you to be spiritual. Therefore, you are constantly to be spiritual. Furthermore, it is in the passive voice which means that this is something that you cannot achieve on your own through something you do. You will be spiritual when certain requirements have been met. When you meet the requirements you are automatically spiritual. It is important to recognize this passive voice. This is something that happens to you, not something that you do to yourself or that someone else does to you. Finally, it is imperative which means it is a command. God is telling you to be spiritual. This is a very important verse. This is why this technique is crucial. Everything else in your life as a believer is hinged to this reality of spirituality.

The purpose of being filled with the Spirit, or spiritual, is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by developing a spiritual maturity in our souls because the spiritual maturity structure reflects the glory of Christ. As the Holy Spirit is able to build a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified. You cannot judge whether you are filled with the Spirit on the basis of outward reactions. I hope we have now established that. You cannot judge it by how you feel because emotions vary among believers. Some people are emotional. Some people are not emotional.

Consider the normal expressions that we associate with godly living, such as a basis of morality (moral conduct). This cannot be viewed as being filled with the Spirit because an unbeliever can also be moral, and a carnal Christian can produce all of the things that we would associate with godly living. He can imitate it merely in human flesh capacity. This is clearly evident in many of the cults and many of the false religions where you meet people of exemplary character. People mistake that exemplary character with either salvation or spirituality. It is clear that unbelievers and carnal Christians can imitate what would normally flow from the life of a Spirit-filled believer. Therefore, you cannot judge spirituality on these outward expressions. You can't secure the spiritual state by any human effort. It is something that God gives you by grace. It is entirely a grace function. When you meet the requirements, you have it.

**Our Bodies**

Our interest is to answer the question of how to be a spiritual Christian. I think we should begin with reviewing for a moment the role of the Holy Spirit. Please remember that the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation promised to take up his residence within your body. Your body literally becomes His temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

Now this is in fulfillment of what the Lord himself promised. Speaking to the disciples in the Upper Room in John 14:16 He said, And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever." This is one of the distinctions of the age of grace in contrast to the age of the law. People in the Old Testament were not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Some were. Most were not. Some were temporarily indwelt. However, in the age of the church this is one of the distinctives, that God the Holy Spirit indwells us permanently.

Now His purpose for doing this is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is living in you. Your body is His temple in order that he may glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 16:12 the Lord said, "I have yet many things to say unto you but you cannot bear them now. Nevertheless, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatever He shall hear that shall He speak and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." So God the Holy Spirit has come into your body at the point of salvation to indwell you forever. He is there to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through you.

He does this by producing what the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit. We have this described in that well-known passage of Galatians 5:22-23. The fruit of the Spirit has nine facets to it and it reflects the character of Christ. The indwelling Holy Spirit is able to produce the character of Christ in you only, obviously, as He is able to control your life; as He is able to direct your thinking; as He is able to direct your choices; as He is able to direct your feelings; as He is able to direct all of your overt actions; and, as He is able to direct all that you say. Unless He is able to control that which means to fill you, He cannot produce that for which He is indwelling you; that is, to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through you.

**Spirituality vs. Carnality**

The Bible contrasts two states in which a Christian may live at any moment. These two states are declared in 1 Corinthians 3:1 as being either carnal or spiritual. A Christian may be one or the other. Are we sure that these states are absolutely mutually exclusive? Can't you be carnal a little bit and mostly spiritual? Can't you at least be a little spiritual and mostly carnal? You have to understand these terms in the way the Bible uses them. When the Bible talks about being spiritual it means God the Holy Spirit controls. If it talks about being carnal it means the old sin nature controls. Now the point you have to remember is that the Holy Spirit is God. The essence of God reveals to us that the Holy Spirit as God is absolute righteousness. Therefore, He cannot have control over a life which is mostly in the hands of the old sin nature. He will not share control of a life. He is absolute righteousness. He is absolutely in control, or He is not in control. Now he will not leave you. He indwells you permanently. We shall see what the condition is of how He lives with you when you turn your life over to the old sin nature that creates a problem. He will not leave you but he cannot share control with the old sin nature. Therefore, we have these passages of Scripture which speak in such a way that these states are mutually exclusive. They are absolutes. A Christian is one or the other. The Holy Spirit, because he is absolute righteousness, will not share the direction of your life with the old sin nature.

We have shown in the Word of God, for example in Romans chapter 8, this contrast is very pointedly and very clearly made. The contrasts are such as to indicate again that you are one or the other. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Now the term "in Christ Jesus" is a technical term which means born again. It is the way Christians are described in the age of grace. As a believer, at a point in time, you told God, in one way or another, that you were now ready to take His Son and the salvation His Son has provided for your personal use. You have received him as Savior. At the moment you said that to God, one of the things that happened to you was that God the Holy Spirit swooped in upon you and baptized you. Bing. Just like that. What it means to be baptized by God the Holy Spirit is to be placed in Christ. You were baptized into the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that everyone who is a believer has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At the point of salvation you are placed in Christ. That's what this term means.

**The Law**

We're talking here about Christians. Paul in Romans 8 is speaking to believers. Therefore, there is no condemnation under any condition for those who are in Christ Jesus. Then look at verse two. This gives us a contrast between two laws of the spiritual life: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Notice it refers first of all here to a law which God gave. It calls it "the law of sin and death" in the latter part of verse 2. The law of sin and death here is the law which was given to Moses. We call it the Mosaic Law. It applied to the believers of the Old Testament, and in this law we found an absolute expression of the righteousness of God. As you read through the Old Testament law this is reflected in the ritual which they were given. As you read for, example, the moral code of the Ten Commandments, you have an excellent, very clear, definitive summary as to what constitutes the absolute righteousness of God.

Now the law itself was just that. For this reason, Romans 7:12 says, "Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good." This means that it reflects the absolute righteousness of God. While you and I in this age of grace are not related to the law, we are not under the law, nevertheless, the law does reflect for us what you are going to have to face as a sinful human being. It is the standard of absolute righteousness that is shown in the law which you must meet to go to heaven. And nobody meets it. Everybody falls short of that standard. And for that reason it is called here in Romans chapter 8 "the law of sin and death" because it leads to eternal death.

Now the old sin nature keeps us from obeying this standard of absolute righteousness. Consequently, it condemns us to a condition of eternal death. Look at verses 7 and 8: "Because the carnal mind (the old sin nature mind) is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." There is no way you can obey the absolute standards of righteousness of the law. "So then they that are in the flesh (those who are operating on the basis of the old sin nature), cannot please God." Now that's one side. You have the law of sin and death and it is this law, reflected in the standard of absolute righteousness in the system of the Mosaic Law, that places condemnation upon every human being because nobody through the old sin nature can reach the standard that God requires for entrance into His heaven.

However, there is another law in verse 2, and it is called "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This law enables a believer to live the supernatural level of life free of sins and free of human good production. You can't do this by keeping the elements of the "law of sin and death." This is again a grace operation. God in grace enables you to be a spiritual Christian when you meet certain specific requirements. This "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" refers to being filled or controlled by that indwelling Holy Spirit which enables you to live free of all expressions of the old sin nature--both in sins and in human good.

Verses 3 and 4 tell us that the person who is in Christ through regeneration can live under the control of the old sin nature or under the control of the Holy Spirit. It says it in such a way as again to point out that you are one or the other--not part one and part the other. Notice verse 3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in a likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." That is one side--out, done, and the old sin nature is condemned. The other side is that the righteousness of the law, that absolute standard of God's righteousness, can be fulfilled in the believer. How? By walking not after the old sin nature on the one hand, but absolutely, on the other hand, to walk after the Spirit. As you read in Scripture, you always have this contrast--walking by the old sin nature or walking by the Spirit--never an overlap, never crossing over, and never a mixture.

"Walk not after the flesh" is contrasted with "walk after the Spirit." It's one or the other. Verse 5 says, "They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh." This is placed against, in contrast, "they that are after the spirit mind the things of the spirit." Verse 6 makes the contrast carnally-minded against spiritually-minded. The contrasts are very definitive--one or the other.

The choice of which one you're going to be under, either "the law of sin and death" or "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is up to you. It is up to the volition of the Christian. Here's how it goes. Let's put it in a sequence, and let's assume that right now everybody reading this is a spiritual Christian. You're all filled with the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is controlling you. He is guiding your thinking. He is guiding your responses as you read this exposition of the Word. He is guiding your interests, and you're a spiritual Christian. You are doing your best. As a matter of fact, you look like a spiritual Christian. You're smiling and looking pleasant. You're nodding your head. You are a spiritual Christian. In this state, God the Holy Spirit controls your life. You are in temporal fellowship with God the Father.

Now temptation comes to you. You're sitting right there, then after a while, you get a really juicy thought. There is nothing wrong yet. All that has happened is that you've been tempted. Satan has approached you with a fiery missile. He has shot it toward your mentality. You are now confronted with making a choice. Your old sin nature has brought something up as a temptation; or, the other source of sin besides Satan and the old sin nature is the world system. Some thought pattern has come to you from the world and you are tempted. At this point, you have to make a choice.

Let's assume you go negative to the Holy Spirit's leading, and you decide to respond to that temptation. You go positive, in other words, to sin. Now, in that instant, the old sin nature has taken control of your life. The Holy Spirit has been moved out of control, off the throne of your life, so to speak. This is true even if you sit there and you sin in some way that you don't know you're sinning. You are not even aware that you are being tempted. It is still true that once you sin, knowingly or unknowingly, God the Holy Spirit loses the grasp and control upon your life. You are now in a state of carnality and you are out of temporal fellowship.

In 1 John 1:6-7 it is described in this way: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him (God the Father) and we walk in darkness (in negative volition toward the truth), we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light (positive volition toward doctrine, as He is in the light) we have fellowship one with another as believers, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." So the contrast here again is very definite. You have now decided by our own will to walk in darkness. You have rejected the appeal of the Holy Spirit to walk in the light. Now you are in carnality. In this state, all of your Christian service may continue. You may be doing wonderful Christian service which, up to now, has indeed been the production of divine good. However, in the moment that you are out of fellowship, that same thing you do now becomes human good. There is no reward for it. All of your accumulation of reward stops; guidance of the Holy Spirit stops; and, all your prayer life is useless. You become a sitting duck for every evil desire within your being. You have lost control of being able to walk in a way that reflects the Spirit of life. Now you are going to walk in a pattern that reflects the spirit of sin and death.

If you die physically in this state of carnality you go right into heaven. Let's understand that. You may be in the depths of carnality. The longer you stay in carnality, the deeper you get into it, the more insensitive you become to the condition in which you find yourself. When you are a spiritual Christian, you will find that when you step into sin, you immediately are shocked by it. You are immediately distressed by it. You're humiliated. You're repulsed. You hate what you've done. Just read Romans 7 and you'll see how Paul describes all the things he hated that he was doing. But this comes to you immediately. The more you stay in carnality the less sensitive you are to what is outside of the leading of the Holy Spirit; and, the more acclimated you become to the sin, until you go spiritually insane and you've lost all perspective as to what you you're doing, the choices you are making, and that which is a blessing in your life. You will take the very things that bring grief into your life. If you die in this state, in that kind of depth of carnality, you still go to heaven.

Here's the sequence of return: The time comes finally when you recognize that you're out of temporal fellowship because of sins. Your prayer life is not functioning. You cannot enter into a learning of the Word of God. As a matter of fact you are downright bored by it. You find that your Christian service is a chore that you're trying to talk yourself into doing. You recognize that all of this is because of sins in your life. Then you decide to go on positive response to God the Holy Spirit who all this time has been appealing to you and pleading with you as a child of God to return home. He has been, so to speak, putting the light in the window, appealing for the prodigal to come home. Finally you decide to come back. You know that sin is what has broken your fellowship, and sin is the problem. Since you know from 1 John 1:9 that the way to handle it is to admit that sin to God the Father, you proceed, and you confess that sin.

**Confession to God**

Sin is always (I remind you again) against God. Therefore, the confession is made to Him only. Now I realize that there are a lot of people that just cringe when they hear. It just gives them all kinds of panic feelings on the inside to think that God says, "I call upon you to confess your sins to Me because your sin is always against Me". I want to show you how true that is that sin is always against God no matter how many people may be involved. Whatever you may want to say to people is up to you, relative to your guidance in reference to Christian relationships with other believers; to that which is good judgment on your part; or, to your own sensitiveness that you want to make things right with people that you have injured, and so on. However, that is not a requirement for your personal forgiveness relative to temporal fellowship. Your sin is against God and God deals with it as being against Himself.

**Genesis 20:1-7**

There is an interesting illustration of this in Genesis 20. (Let me digress a little bit.) This is the situation where Abraham is confronted with facing the king of Gerar, Abimelech. He was afraid that when the king saw his wife Sarah (who was apparently quite a beautiful woman) that the King would want to take her into his harem. If he presented himself as Sarah's husband, the king would have no problem solving his problem to get Sarah into his harem. All he would have done is to have Abraham knocked off. Consequently, she would be a widow and nothing would stand in her way to entering the harem. Therefore, Abraham says to Sarah, "When we get to Abimelech, I'm going to tell him you're my sister, then he won't try to kill me." Well, this bothered Abraham to lie. You know how he justified it, because she was his half-sister. So he was not really telling exactly an untruth. So let's read this because I want you to notice something about Abimelech and the sin that he almost entered of taking Sarah into his harem as his wife.

"And Abraham journeyed from there toward Negev and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned to Gerar. Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' And Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, 'Behold you are a dead man for the woman you have taken is a man's wife.' But Abimelech had not come near her. And he said, 'Lord, will you slay also a righteous nation?'" Judgment upon the King would have brought judgment also upon his nation which he led. The principle here is if you are married to someone else, you cannot divorce that person and marry another person. You must wait until one or the other partner has died before you are free to marry.

Here is Abimelech. He does not even know that Sarah is Abraham's wife. God comes to him in a vision and informs him, and Abimelech says, "I didn't know it. And will you not only judge me but even my nation?" Verse 5: "Said he not unto me she is my sister and she even she herself said he is my brother. (Sarah went along with the deception.) In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this." Get that. This man even having taken Sarah into his harem had committed an act of sin. His intention was sin, as mental adultery is just as much sin with God as overt adultery. Mental hatred is just as much murder with God as overt murder. This man had an intention in complete innocency. He didn't even know he was sinning. Nevertheless, notice verse 5: "And God said unto him in the dream, 'Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. I also withheld you from sinning against Me." "Sinning against Me." Well you might have said. "Well, I kept you from sinning against Abraham whose wife she is. I kept you from sinning against all of the people of the nation who would suffer with you if you went through with this, and even to the point that you did go into this." "You have sinned against me therefore I allowed you not to touch her. Therefore, restore the man his wife for he is a prophet and he shall pray for you and you will live; and, if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die--you and all that are yours."

God said, "I act in justice. I'm a God of justice. You did this in innocency." Furthermore, notice that God stepped in and kept this man who was sinning unknowingly from going through with the sin. Had he gone through, it would have been sin. Now he says, "You know now you ought to act accordingly." Also I want you to notice something else. Those of you who may have a little doubt about this technique of prayer, notice that he says to him that Abraham is a prophet. He's a man of God. He has contacts with me. He is a spiritual believer and he will pray for you and you shall live." Here, God is already telling Abimelech if he restores Sarah to Abraham, if he backs out of this deal now that he is going to live. But how will he live? As the result of Abraham praying for him. Of course God knows what you need. Of course God knows what he is going to do in his sovereignty. Of course God has laid out the care for us that we need. However, we enter into his blessing and provision through prayer. That's why you cannot discredit and be negligent of prayer without great personal loss to yourself. I just want you to notice that this man was acting in innocency. God says, "I'm going to step in and keep you from sinning even though you don't know you're sinning. Nevertheless, whether you knew it or not, the sin was against God." He says, "It is against Me that this sin was about to be committed." God kept the innocent one from sinning whose volition was not negative to the Word.

So now as a believer, you have recognized the sin. So you make confession as per 1 John 1:9. This means that to God and God alone you name the sin that you committed. When you have confessed this, we are told in 1 John 1:9 that He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. This means it covers the sins you may have committed that you're not aware of. Instantly that you do that, the Holy Spirit takes control of the life again, and the old sin nature is shoved off of the control unit. The believer is restored at that point to temple fellowship again with God the Father. A Christian who is not in a state of spirituality cannot be productive of divine good. Now that you have returned to spirituality, your Christian service is again divine good. The Holy Spirit is guiding your life. Your prayer is heard. Rewards are being accumulated.

You may be going on doing the same things without having broken stride at all. But you switch relationships to the Holy Spirit from where He was running things (and thus you were spiritual), to where the old sin nature was running things (and thus you were carnal). Now if you die physically in the state of spirituality, the same thing happens as if you had died in the state of carnality. You go right to heaven. Having died in the state of spirituality you will go with a good deal more reward and a good deal more of the reflected glory of God in your spiritual maturity structure than you would have, had you been living persistently in carnality.

I hope we have established for you that the Bible contrasts spiritual and carnal. Spiritual is being filled or controlled by God the Holy Spirit. Carnal is being filled or controlled by the old sin nature. The steps from carnality lead through: temptation; to positive volition to sin; to losing the spirit's control; to confessing the sin; to putting him back in control; and, to being restored again to spirituality and to temporal fellowship and all that that connotes.

**The Requirements for Spirituality**

What are the requirements for spirituality? Notice that "to be filled" is passive. If you meet the requirements it happens automatically. You don't have to wait and see if you feel like it; if you notice that you're acting like it; or, anything else. If you meet the requirements, you are spiritual.

1. **Do Not Quench the Holy Spirit**

Requirement number one is found in the book of 1 Thessalonians. We're going to, first of all, look at two negative requirements. There are two negative requirements relative to spirituality. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, we have the pungent little sentence, "Quench not the Spirit." The word "quench" is the Greek word "sbennumi." "Sbennumi" is first of all present which means see to it that every moment of your life you are not quenching the Holy Spirit. It is active which means that you are the one who determine whether he has quenched or not--not anybody else. Also, it is imperative. It is again a command. God is here commanding you to do this. The word "quench" means to neutralize something. Here it is neutralizing the control of the Holy Spirit in your soul. How do you quench God? You quench God by being disobedient to some facet of the Word of God--to some guidance of the Holy Spirit of God upon your life. In other words, quenching is saying "No" to the Spirit of God.

This is not involving an ethical or moral issue such as stealing or adultery or lying. Quenching does not involve ethical or moral issues. It just means being negative to doctrine. It just means being negative to the guidance of the Spirit of God in some respect upon your life. The Holy Spirit is constantly directing you to some service; directing you to some investment of your life; or, directing you to some use of your money. You can resist Him and that is quenching him. You are saying "No" to what he is asking you to do. Therefore, it is resorting to human good production from the area of strength of your old sin nature. Remember the old sin nature has an area of strength and it has an area of weakness. This quenching comes from the area of strength. You are instead with your strength producing human good. Now the problem of that is, in part, that human good soothes the conscience. The Holy Spirit tends to remain quenched in the life of a Christian who is out of fellowship because you had the impression that you are seemingly walking along with the Lord. However, when you quench Him, when you say "No" to him on a non-moral issue, you are taking yourself out of temporal fellowship with the Father into carnality.

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

A second negative command is grieve not. Quench not, and grieve not. Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption. The word "grieve" is the Greek word "lupeo." "Lupeo," again is present which means constantly see to it that you do not grieve the Holy Spirit. It is active voice which means you are the one who is going to decide whether He's grieved or not. And once again, it is a divine command. It is an imperative. God is directing you to do this.

This word "grieve" ("lupeo"), means to cause distress. Grieving results in individual acts of sins in the life of the believer. This does involve moral ethical issues like stealing, adultery, lying, or the mental attitude sins. These are moral and ethical factors where you are doing that which is sinful. It is producing from the weak side of the old sin nature, sins. That's how that ties in. In each case, you are working out of your old sin nature. In quenching the Holy Spirit, you are working out of the strong side of your old sin nature--that inclination to human good. When you are grieving the Holy Spirit, you are working out of the weak side of your old sin nature and you are producing individual acts of sins. Grieving is choosing evil then in place of what is right. Grieving takes you out of temporal fellowship with the Father and immediately places you into a state of carnality.

1. **Walk in the Spirit**

The positive command man relative to spirituality is found in Galatians 5:16: "This I say then; walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Galatians 5:16 gives us a positive command: "Walk in the spirit." It's the Greek word "peripateo," "Peripateo" is present. That means you see to it that you are walking in the spirit. It is active. You are the one who decides it. It is imperative again, a command. Notice, first of all, "Be filled with the Spirit." This is present command. In this case, it is passive because it will happen automatically if you fulfill the conditions. Here are the conditions--two negative and one positive--and every one of them is present active imperative. This means all the time you make the decision, and God is commanding us to do this.

To walk in the Spirit means to live the Christian life in dependence on the Holy Spirit, not on the old sin nature's capacities within us. In other words, to walk by means of the Spirit, we might translate into the techniques of the Christian life--using the techniques of the Christian life under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Walking by means of the supernatural power of God the Holy Spirit is what is meant here. If you walk by His power, you will maintain a status of spirituality. However, Christians are tempted to depend on their own power, on their sincere intentions to carry us through life. A lot of Christians who think they are walking in accordance with the Lord's guidance have simply got some real good will power; or, they simply have some real good intentions, and that's what they're living by. Walking by means of the Spirit is appropriating his divine power. This we do through Bible doctrine in the soul. That's how we appropriate His power. Walking by means of the strength of the old sin nature will take you out of temporary fellowship with the Father and into carnality. Walking by means of the Holy Spirit will maintain your temporal fellowship with the Father and keep you in a status of spirituality.

So from these three commands to every Christian, relative to the Holy Spirit who is indwelling him, it is evident that personal sins are the hindrance to spirituality. Sins are involved in every one of these things:

1. In quenching Him, by not doing what He has asked us to do, we are trying to produce human good as a substitute. Now that's a sin. God rejects that.
2. In the matter of grieving Him, it is a moral issue whether you are willfully doing what God has said is wrong.
3. In the matter of walking by means of the Spirit, you are again doing a sinful thing in leaning instead upon your human capacities in order to please God.

So the big issue is sins. This is the thing that ruins and destroys the state of spirituality. The solution for quenching the spirit, for grieving the spirit, for not walking by means of the spirit is confession of the sins that have caused the trouble. That's why you have to deal with the sins that are involved. They are the things that are at issue in your spirituality. It is not something you are doing or not doing, or thinking or not thinking. It is the actual sins, and not some front or pretense or intention that you may have. Therefore you must resort to 1 John 1:9 which tells us how to deal with these sins relative to our need to return to the position of spirituality. What is required is confession of the sins.

Again I remind you: Avoid the human desire to solve the carnality, to solve what you have done in disrupting your relationship to the Holy Spirit by working up some kind of a sorrow; by seeking to set up a series of promises to God that you will do better; or, to do some kind of penance until you really feel that you have been forgiven. You don't have to feel forgiven. All you have to do is believe what 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just" (faithful--He will do it every time; just--because Christ has already born that sin). "He is faithful and just to forgive us (Christians) our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This has nothing to do with salvation forgiveness. This has to do with fellowship forgiveness. This fellowship forgiveness will come to us every time. It is fellowship with the Father that is destroyed when we have disrupted this normative relationship with the Spirit of God within us. So avoid trying to put in some human gimmickry.

The issue of spirituality then is that it is a life which imitates God (Ephesians 5:1, Ephesians 1:6). It is not to imitate the unbeliever (1 John 1:6, 1 John 3:3). Only the Holy Spirit can realize this goal in your life to live in such a way that you imitate God. You and I would be very foolish people indeed to think that there was some way that we could imitate God by our determination. We can only imitate Him by, first of all, maintaining the position of spirituality; then taking in the Word; growing upon doctrine; using the techniques of the Christian life; gradually building up a spiritual maturity structure in the soul; and, going on to the super grace life that the Lord has designed for you. You cannot do this unless you start with spirituality.

Right now you are either carnal or you are spiritual. If you are carnal, it is because you have grieved the Holy Spirit. You are operating in some area of sin. You have quenched Him. You are operating in some area of negative response. You're bucking some good thing that God is doing, perhaps. Or, you are walking in dependence upon the fact that you are a fine person or a fine character and you can cut the life that is acceptable with God. You cannot. So you're walking by means of the old sin nature. For any one of those reasons you are carnal. Until you confess whichever factor is involved in there, you will continue in the state of carnality. Once you have confessed it, then immediately you are back in fellowship. Immediately you are a spiritual Christian. You will determine which law you will walk by: the law of sin and death or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It is up to your will to throw the switch either way at any point in time in your life.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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