

TAKING THE LIMITS OFF YOUR HUMAN SPIRIT

Adjusting the order of spirit and soul

Janelle Wiseman Brown

July 20, 2010

Revised 5-15-14

WHO IS ON THE THRONE -- SPIRIT OR SOUL?

Walking with Jesus in daily life for more than three decades, I have learned much about God, both from His Word, from others and from life. However, 32 years after I was born again, a light bulb switched on in my head when I read this scripture:

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Cor. 2:14, NKJV

What if my natural man (soul/mind) could abdicate the “throne” of my being and let my spirit be the true leader of my life under Holy Spirit? Did my natural man need to submit to Holy Spirit through my spiritual man? I sensed my mind had been trying to make an “end run” around human spirit to get to God.

My initial questions turned into Bible study, dialoguing with God and conversation among family and friends. My husband, Kennedy and I believe it is important to accompany any study of the scriptures with personal application. Learning about each one’s precious, personal, human spirit has actually been one of the most practical, transforming studies we have done. Now after 59 years of marriage, we have come to truly appreciate and honor the unique gifting God has given to the other’s spirit. So much of our relationship had not been that way.

Since 2005, the Lord has had our family on the fast track of learning the difference between our soul and our spirit. Does that sound like we took a journey into the complicated world of theology? Just the opposite happened! When my husband and I began to pursue what God says about our spirit and its need to be above our soul, blinders came off our eyes, and prison doors swung wide open for us and our family.

God simplified what could be a complicated revelation by daily examples and stunning, demonstrable proof that we were onto something big. Key to the ongoing revelation and personal transformation is that we were made spirit first, in the image of God, then soul and body. We, in the church community, usually say, “body, soul and spirit.” That is the wrong order, and the order has important implications for how we live life. I Thessalonians 5:23 underlines this fact.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thess. 5:23, NKJV, emphasis added

Meditation on this scripture catapulted me into examining my own condition: “What exactly is the relationship between my spirit and soul?” Hebrews 4:12 took me further on the trail toward truth. It speaks of a dividing between the two:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the **division of soul and spirit** ... Heb. 4:12a, NKJV, emphasis added

I asked the Lord why we would even *want* a division between soul and spirit. The full answer was to come in stages after an initial repentance for my soul being in control of my spirit, It took several years of Bible-reading, meditation, teachings from others and life experiences to see how serious was the condition of my inner man. My soul was in effect “smothering” my spirit and had prevented Holy Spirit through my personal spirit from being the “director of my show.” That led to a second deeper repentance, asking God to liberate my spirit from my soul-control, in order for me to fulfill my God-given destiny. I knew I could only do this with my spirit in charge, being itself fully submitted to the Lordship of Christ.

We must take the limits off our spirit, so it can deeply connect with our Father and receive from Him the power to live this Christian life.

Now that our family has had nine years of “experimentation” with the message of the human spirit, we can tell many convincing stories to demonstrate God’s wonderful original design for each human spirit as leader of their own soul and body. Grandson, Josiah can boast about his first victory of spirit over soul when he was only two months old!

Josiah likes his safe seat

Baby Josiah could not travel five minutes in the car without screaming and struggling to get out of his car seat. His big brothers sang songs enroute and made funny faces to divert him, but he strongly resisted their help.

Josiah's mother (our daughter, Mindy) expressed to us her serious concern that Baby's screaming fits might prevent the family from taking a six-hour car trip to the beach later that month. Granddad responded to Mindy on the phone: "Perhaps Josiah is feeling claustrophobic like I did for years. You know, I've had many victories over this stronghold, but the enemy might be wanting to pass it on to Baby. Remember years ago, when I was panicking about getting on an airplane? I finally came to peace when the Lord said to me, "Now, Kenny, I am strapping My seat belt around you 'There, Son, you are in your safe seat. Stay there, and I'll come get you out at the end of the trip.' Mindy, I would try addressing Josiah's spirit specifically, directing him to take charge of his body and enjoy his safe seat. It might work!"

Some days later, our daughter put Josiah in his car seat, and before he had a chance to fuss, she looked directly into his eyes and said, "I call your spirit to attention. This car seat is safe for you to ride in. It is not a bad thing. It is a good thing. Father God tucked your granddaddy into his safe seat, and Father God will tuck you into your safe seat too. I bless your spirit with peace and the enjoyment of riding in our car. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

The trip to the market produced not one peep from Baby Josiah. Would this miracle work for the next trip? Mindy held her breath a few days later as she again strapped him into his car seat and reminded Josiah's spirit that he was safe just like Granddaddy. The consistent, continual screaming fits ended.

How would Josiah do on the big car trip? The day turned out to be very pleasant, and time proved Josiah to have turned a corner. He experienced only the normal fussiness of a baby on a six-hour car trip.

That experience, along with many others, set us to studying what God's Word has to say about the way we are made: spirit, soul and body. This scripture came alive to me one day:

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
John 4:24, NKJV

Josiah was made (as were all of us) in the image of God (Genesis 1:27); therefore, I believe we can say that his spirit was made first because God is first and foremost Spirit. God isn't first and foremost Soul, and God certainly isn't Body as we know our physical frame. Therefore, it makes sense that Josiah's *human spirit* is the part of him that connects with God. His soul (mind and emotions) wasn't made to connect with God; his soul was made to be the interface between his spirit and the physical environment. We have been all topsy turvy, thinking we had to understand God with our minds and "figure things out" with our intellect. This is explained well in I Cor 2:14, quoted above

As I embarked on the study of our personal spirit, I was keenly aware that if I just wanted to prove my theories correct, I could give the scriptures my own "private," interpretation (2 Pe. 1:20). I determined to not do this, so I asked God for two or three witnesses or examples (Matt. 18:16) to either confirm or change the way I was thinking about this topic. That guidance was abundantly forthcoming. I was not disappointed.

In my pursuit of God, I realized in 2005 that for 32 years of walking with Jesus, my mind had controlled my spirit most of the time. God was deeply grieved over this. I could feel it. My tears of repentance were profuse, as God began to show me how far I had strayed from the beautiful, original design He had planned for me before the foundation of the world. I asked God to forgive my mind for bullying my spirit into submission to my soul, but I also asked God to forgive my spirit for abdicating leadership. At the close of my prayer, I transferred rulership of my whole being from soul to spirit and acknowledged that all of me was under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I sensed something really important had taken place.

Oh, it may sound quite dramatic but now nine years later, I can say, "It is real! My spirit, like Josiah's, was just waiting for someone to validate it and "press it into service!" At some point, I realized there was a new faith rising, and I began consciously telling my mind, "Now, you don't need to figure this out. Spirit, this is your work. Go to Father and bring back everything we need."

I began to sense my spirit becoming more “proactive,” and as that happened, my mind relaxed, not having to be in control, trying to stay on top of life, since now my personal spirit was a “responsible leader.” It was a gradual change but steady and upward. It has been a grand adventure, and that is why I love to tell the stories of my family and friends. Father is inviting you to the same life.

As you read this, do you not sense some excitement? Can you detect a heavenly aroma, heralding a whole new level of life to be lived in a closer connection to Father God? This is for you! God is no respecter of persons, you know! Your story will have different scenery and players from mine, but the principle will be the same: An active, ever awakening, nurtured human spirit will bring you closer to God and will be the agent to see your destiny fulfilled. The bonus is that you will also have a world of fun as you go!

MORE FAMILY STORIES

Keenan: “I heard my spirit.”

When our grandson, Keenan, was four, our daughter, Christina was teaching him how to hear God’s voice through the inner voice of his personal spirit. She wasn’t sure he was “getting it,” until he rushed in triumphantly one day and announced, “Mom, I did it! I heard my spirit. I got this spoon, see? And I got up on the [dining] table, cause I was lookin’ at the hangy things on the light [his other grandma’s chandelier]. Y’know how we saw that guy make music by hitting glasses of water with a spoon? Well, anyway, I thought I could make a pretty noise if I hit the hangy things with a spoon. And then I heard inside my head, “DON’T DO THAT, KEENAN!” I heard my spirit, Mom, didn’t I?”

Yes, I think you got the hang of it, Keenan! May we mature adults get the hang of it as well as you.

Zachary is my PR man

Zachary belongs to our son Jeff. One evening at a party I was discussing the topic of our human spirit with a friend. Zachary overheard me as he passed by on the way to get some refreshments. He wheeled around and snuggled up close to me, listening to the conversation. At the first opportunity, he declared to my friend who was looking puzzled over something I said, “Oh, yes sir. What my grandma is saying about your spirit is exactly right. Yes, sir.” And then he added, “May I stay and listen, Grandma?!”

I was impressed that a conversation about the human spirit was more attractive to a twelve-year-old than the delicacies offered at the party. However, that is partially explained by Zachary having first hand knowledge that when his spirit calls out to Holy Spirit for help in his homeschool assignments, he really does get help! It was not a boring topic for Zack.

Devin partners with Jesus

Those who have met our granddaughter, Devin, know that she is a special package wrapped up in a body that has never walked nor talked. She was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome from infancy. From her wheelchair, she lives life big on the inside, for we have come to know her as an intercessor for the Lord. Her mother, Jennifer, knows her language well through her eyes. and we all have experienced her sparkle when we speak of the Lord, or we play worship music. One day I was caring for Devin and noticed a bed sore trying to erupt. Of course, bed sores for a wheelchair-bound person can become serious as they are often slow to heal.

Devin is accustomed to our blessing her spirit, but on this day I felt led to look directly and purposefully into her eyes and say, "Devin, in the Name of Jesus, I call on your spirit. It is your job to heal your body. Jesus has healing for you, but it is you, Spirit of Devin, who must go to Jesus and bring healing back. I commission you to receive healing, so that your skin will mend quickly. New skin, Devin. Now, go!" A few hours later, I checked Devin's skin, and the color had changed back to normal. It had never before dramatically healed within the span of several hours.

I believe God is giving us the invitation to live big in our spirit, intimately connected with Him and with the others in our lives.

Let's take the limits off our human spirit.

Let's just see what God will do!

Please obtain permission from the author before quoting or internet posting: