

God as Our Source and Being Subjective

Part 2

Subjectivity damages our relationship to the Body. In Romans 14:7-8 Paul says, "For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." These two verses are in the context of the Body life. Subjectivity here in Romans 14 expresses itself by the saints despising one another and judging one another. In other words, being subjective means living by our own view and opinion. This damages our receiving of the members of the Body. When Paul fellowships his burden concerning the receiving of all the saints, he stresses the need for us to not live to ourselves. In Romans 15:3 he says, "For even Christ did not please Himself." Living to oneself and pleasing oneself are factors of subjectivity, and damage the organic reality of the Body.

For the rich and full church life we need to be a person who is one spirit with the Lord and one with the members of the Body, not despising or judging the saints. Being distracted by our subjective

views and opinions damages our relationships in the Body, making it impossible to have the Lord's expression of His one Body on this earth. This is why Paul says, "None of us lives to himself." With self out of the way, now we only need to care for "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" as Paul says in Romans 14:17. It is in this way that we will overthrow the divisive demon of subjectivity, and allow the God of peace to crush Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20). Amen.

Being subjective causes us to misunderstand and misinterpret

Subjectivity causes you to be a person that misunderstands and misinterprets things. This is surely a chief characteristic of subjectivity. When we are left to ourselves we misunderstand and we misinterpret. That is, we do not hear right, and we do not perceive right. How many times have you misunderstood your wife? How many times have you misinterpreted your husband or misinterpreted

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the brothers? You judged them. You drew a conclusion about them, and later you discovered that you were far from the truth. Why? Because you believed your own thought and misinterpreted them. Whenever we leave Christ, our spirit, the truth, and the fellowship of the Body, we become prone to misinterpret others. For example, we may misunderstand a person's countenance. We may look at a person's countenance in a meeting and feel that they are thinking about us, condemning us, and judging us.

This is what happened with the Corinthians. They misunderstood Paul. They misinterpreted Paul again and again. In 2 Corinthians 1:12 Paul said that he was related to the believers not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God. He says, "We conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and [sincerity of God], not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you." So Paul was moving with the saints in the spirit. But the saints there, the subjective selves that were not dealt with, misinterpreted his movement.

When we are subjective and undealt with, we misinterpret and misunderstand those who are in the spirit. This shows us how prone we are to be deceived by our subjective mind. If we are not in the spirit, if we are not occupied with Christ, if we are not standing with the truth, and if we are not in the fellowship in the light with the Body, then we surely are open to misinterpret and misunderstand many things.

Being subjective makes us an outward person

Subjectivity also makes us a shallow, outward person. Second Corinthians 10:12 says, "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with [certain of them] who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, [are without understanding]." This means the Corinthians were just outward in their relationships, comparing outward things. This is a basic characteristic of subjectivity—we just look at outward things. There is no depth, no inward reality, but just comparing ourselves among ourselves.

This is definitely a characteristic of a subjective person. He is just superficial, measuring things in a mere outward way. There is no depth of spirit with a subjective person.

Being subjective closes our being to God and the Body

Another aspect of subjectivity is that you close your being to God and to the members. Subjectivity makes you a closed person. This is the way some of the believers were in 2 Corinthians 6. In verse 12 Paul tried to open them up by saying, "You are not restricted [in] us, but you are restricted in your own [inward parts]." This means that they were closed. They were narrow in their own inward parts. So this is another characteristic of being subjective. You are closed — closed to the Lord and closed to the Body. You just live in yourself.

The reason the Corinthians were so closed was that they were not dealing with the Lord over their defiling associations. They were still compromising with darkness in their lives. That is why in verse 17 Paul says, "Come out from among them and be separate. . . . Do not touch what is unclean." Sometimes, when you come to a saint, you just have the sense he is not open. There is no transparency, but rather there is an opaqueness due to his closing to the Lord.

When we are open to the Lord in our life, it is so easy to fellowship. But when things get confusing and we are very subjective, it is often because there is no genuine openness to the Lord. A lack of dealing with the Lord makes a person more subjective in his relationships with the members of the Body. Paul said to the Corinthians that they were closed and narrowed in their own inward parts. They were not open to the Lord nor to Paul. When Paul talked about being open and being enlarged, he immediately shifted the focus of his fellowship to an exhortation in verse 14: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Then he went on to speak about not touching what is unclean. He knew that their subjectivity, which manifested itself by their being closed to him, was because there was still something defiling the release of their

spirit. Thus, he says in 2 Corinthians 7:1-2, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all [defilement] of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have defrauded no one.” The way out of subjectivity is to keep our spirit cleansed from every kind of pollution and defilement.

Being subjective makes us suspicious

Subjectivity makes you a suspicious person. This is described in 2 Corinthians 10. Those saints were suspicious of Paul because they were living in their own subjectivity — in their reasoning and in their opinion. This is a subjective state.

Being subjective makes us distrustful and anxious

Subjectivity makes you distrustful and anxious. This is the pitiful end of a subjective person — you do not trust anyone. You only trust yourself. You only believe your feelings, and you do not trust anyone else. You are anxious about your state. This is also due to believing your own feelings and your own thoughts. Oh, brothers and sisters, we all need to rise up and shout, “Lord, I reject my self!” Praise the Lord! “Oh, I love Christ! I love my spirit! I love the truth! I love the Body! Hallelujah! I am rearranged! I am in another source!” By this shout we will get out of our subjectivity.

Being subjective makes us merge with demons

Subjectivity causes you to merge with demons. Believing yourself is actually believing the demonic activity in your being. This is what it means to be subjective. James 3:14-15 makes it clear: “If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts . . . this wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, [soulish], demonic.” James puts these words together: earthly, soulish, demonic. Soulish means being subjective, being in yourself. Then the next word he uses after soulish is demonic. So this literally means that a subjective person is a demonized person. He is a person who is subject to

the activity of demons, which causes him to merge with their suggestions. You think that *those* feelings in you are *your* feelings, but they are not really yours. They are the enemy’s. He has found a nest in your subjectivity. If you refuse to turn to your spirit, if you do not take Christ, if you do not stand with the truth, and you do not receive from the Body, then you are left to demonic activity. This is the pitiful end of subjectivity.

How to deal with being subjective

Stop yourself

Now, let us fellowship about how to deal with this fallen state of subjectivity. Stop yourself, and do not interpret anything concerning yourself or concerning others. The way to be transferred out of yourself and into the spirit is to stop yourself. Do not try to interpret yourself. Do not trust your view, opinion, and reasoning. Just stop. Call a halt to this self that has controlled and lived out its life for so many years. You may need to spend some time with the Lord to stop yourself. In 1 Corinthians 4:3 Paul says, “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by [man’s day].” *Man’s day* is a term in contrast to *the Lord’s day*. *Man’s day* means that man’s opinion and man’s judgment has the sway. *Man’s day* means that it is man’s turn to judge, view, and analyze. The *Lord’s day* means the Lord comes in, as in Revelation 1:10: “I was in [spirit] on the Lord’s Day.” On the *Lord’s day* the Lord came in to walk among the churches to judge them (Rev. 2—3). The *Lord’s day* means that now it is the Lord’s turn to judge. Then Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 4:3, “in fact, I do not even judge myself.” I am not trustworthy to examine myself, to introspect, or to analyze myself. “For *I know nothing against myself*, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.” Just stop yourself. Do not interpret anything about yourself. Do not debate with yourself, do not argue with yourself, do not analyze yourself. Just stop yourself. Say, “Lord, I open to You with Jeremiah 17:9: ‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?’ ” Who

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The Practical Church Life

It is evident from the book of Acts that the believers in the early church lived their daily lives in the context of a corporate church life. Upon receiving Christ, they did not wander off in isolation to live their own Christian lives. They did not confine themselves to having only a private, personal relationship with the Lord. Indeed, the concept of a “lone ranger” Christian life cannot be found in the New Testament. Rather, the believers came together to participate in a corporate church life. The book of Acts reveals that they continually met as the church, they broke bread from house to house, and they ate their meals together. They had a sense that they belonged together. There was a corporateness and an interrelatedness that characterized their daily lives. In other words, they gave themselves to a practical church life. And this practical church life was integral to their Christian life. Their Christian life was not viewed as something separate from or unrelated to the church life. So often we think of our Christian life as one thing and “going to church” as another. To many of us, they seem only loosely connected. But it was not so in the first century. The believers understood that the Christian life and the church life are intricately connected. They knew how difficult it would be to have one without the other. Hence, we need to see the supreme importance of having the practical church life for our growth in Christ. Let us consider how the church life is so essential to our Christian life.

The Spiritual Supply in the Body

The practical church life is essential to the Christian life because of the vast spiritual supply that is in the Body of Christ. The New Testament tells us that the church is the Body of Christ and that each believer is a member in particular. In other words, we are members of a spiritual, organic, living entity. The Body of Christ is not an organization nor a hierarchy. It is not a club or a religious association. It is not even a mere gathering of Christians. The Body of Christ *is the Body of Christ!* When Paul used this phrase, he was not just employing an illustration to make a

point. The Body of Christ is a glorious spiritual reality. It is the fullness of the living Christ. It is alive and organic. It is not an organization, but an organism. And we are the members of this organic Body.

Now, as members of His Body, we are positioned to receive the life supply from the Head. We all know that in a body, there is the continuous circulation of life. We also know that each member of a body is kept alive by remaining attached to the body. For instance, a finger that is cut off does not receive the life supply of the body. What is the result? That detached finger withers and dies. The same is true of the Body of Christ. If we remain isolated from the practical church life, we are detaching ourselves from that abundant supply of the life of Christ. Of course, every believer has an individual relationship with the Lord by which he or she can enjoy a measure of the Spirit. But this individual supply of the Spirit cannot compare to the abundant supply of the Spirit in the Body life. This is why Paul says that we have all been given to drink of one Spirit in the Body. The Spirit is so available for us to enjoy in the context of the Body life. There is a powerful circulation of His life supply in the Body. Therefore, a more bountiful portion of the Spirit is available to the believer who is “attached” and “corporate” than to the one who is individualistic and isolated.

Moreover, we must understand that other members of the Body of Christ can minister the Spirit to us. No one is an all-inclusive member. None of us “has it all” or “can do it all.” We need one another. We cannot say to a certain member, “I have no need of you.” The Lord has set each member in the Body with a certain function, and each function is a particular supply of the Spirit for the rest of the Body. Regardless of how small or insignificant that function may seem, the Lord has set that member in the Body to supply life to the rest of us. Thus, we should never despise one another but instead receive one another. We should receive the portion of Christ that each member can give. If we reject the supply of any member, we are only cheating ourselves. There is such strength and encouragement in the Body! When we are weak or discouraged, we can draw from the

spiritual strength of the other members. When we fail, others will encourage and restore us. When we are deeply entrenched in ourselves, others are able to help us pray and touch the Spirit. When we are perplexed by our lack of growth, we can fellowship with other members that are more experienced in the Lord in order to speed our progress. This is why remaining an isolated believer is so stunting to our growth in Christ. May the Lord open our eyes to see that we are not just individual Christians, but members of His Body, the church.

Practical Salvation from the World

The practical church life is essential to the Christian life in another crucial way. The church life is the practical means of salvation from the world. We are not referring to salvation from hell, but from the world. The world system in which we conduct our daily lives is under the control of the ruler of the age — Satan. The entire world operates according to the designs of the devil and carries with it the spirit of antichrist. The world is not for Christ. It is not even neutral toward Christ. It is resolutely set against Christ. It is *anti*-Christ. It is a pornographic, violent, and lawless age. It is a rebellious and idolatrous age. It is an age that has forsaken the knowledge of God and refuses to submit to the authority of God. And yet, Satan has devised the world to be so attractive to us. He has made the things of the world so alluring to our self, so enticing to our flesh. The goals and interests and pleasures of the world seem so desirable to our natural life. And this allurement is not weak. The world possesses a strong and powerful current. Nor is this allurement occasional. The world's current is continual. It steadily pulls on us to draw us into its entanglements.

We can all testify that as believers, we are not exempt from the tugs of the age. We still have the flesh that is easily enticed. So we need a daily salvation from the world. We need to be kept from its defilement. But how does this happen? Practically, how can we be saved from the world? We might think that our only hope is to leave the world. We may surmise that we must quit our job and move to the desert or the mountains to escape its influences. But the New Testament never tells us to escape the world in this way. We need to stay *in* the world. That is, we need to have a job, drive a car, buy food, etc. But we

do not need to be *of* the world. Yes, we are *in* the world, but we are not *of* the world. We are not under its control. We are not being conformed to its ways and views. We are not being usurped by its occupations. Now, we return to the question, Practically, how does this happen? How can believers be in the world, but not succumb to its powerful influence? The answer is simple — it is by being in the practical church life.

When Peter preached the gospel on the day of Pentecost, he exhorted those who gathered to hear him, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” About 3,000 people responded and were saved and baptized that day. However, the account in Acts indicates how these new believers were saved practically from the perverse generation around them. They continually devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All those who had believed were together and had all things in common. Day by day they continued with one mind in the temple. They broke bread from house to house and were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart. They were praising God together and having favor with all the people. In other words, these believers had given themselves to the practical church life. Their heart, their time, their possessions, their energy were not wasted on the things of the world. Yes, they still went to work. They still had families and human responsibilities. But the things of the world had no influence over them. Why? Because of the God-ordained replacement for the world — the church. When we are saved, we are called out of the world and called into the church. The church is our new corporate context, our new community, our new family. The church is not where the spirit of the world operates, but where the Holy Spirit operates. The church is not where the kingdom of this world is established, but where the kingdom of God reigns. So in the church, we are protected from the allurements and usurpation of the age and are supplied to pursue Christ and to seek the coming of His kingdom.

However, this requires more than a once-a-week “going to church.” The practical church life is not just a once- or twice-a-week affair. It is a life! The saints in Acts did not live isolated lives six days a week and then come together on Sunday for an hour service. No — they were continually together. They ate together.

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can know the heart? Who can know our real state? Then verse 10 says, “I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind.” The Lord is the One who is qualified to know you and change you. In the New Testament, there is a compound Greek word translated “heart-knower.” The Lord is the Heart-knower. He is the One who really knows your heart accurately. So the first way to deal with your subjective state is to stop yourself. Do not interpret yourself or others from your viewpoint. Just stop yourself. And the way to stop yourself is just to be poor in spirit, to be empty, to humble yourself, and unload yourself of your self-made schemes to save yourself. Say, “Lord, I just unload. Lord, transfer me into the spirit. Unload me from my subjective thinking and living.” So this is the first thing — do not interpret yourself. Stop yourself.

Do not sin by acting independently

Do not take any independent action and sin. You ask, what do you mean? James 4:17 says, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” Sin in the context of James 4 means independent action. This is what sin is — independent action. From the beginning, this has been the real source of all sin — man acting independently of God. In this chapter, James is talking about those who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit” (v. 13). To those James says, “Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” “If the Lord wills” is not just a little religious saying. It means we live a dependent life about everything. Then in verse 16 James says, “But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.” What is this boasting, this arrogance? It is being independent in our moves, in our daily life. Then in verse 17 he says, “Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” What is the good here? The good here is dependence upon God. I am going to the store dependent upon God. I am going to fellowship with the saints dependent upon God. To live independently is to live presumptuously and sinfully. Brothers and sisters, perhaps we have never considered sin in this way.

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But this is the basic definition of sin — independence from God. Every sin is traced back to our independence. So the way to have a transfer from our subjectivity is first to stop yourself, and second to not sin by acting independently. How can we do this? By spending time with the Lord to have thorough fellowship with Him. We need to cultivate our fellowship with the Lord.

Disassociate yourself from the devil

The third way to be delivered from subjectivity is to disassociate yourself from the devil. You have to disentangle this soul enmeshed with demons. The way to be delivered out of this old source that has controlled us is to disassociate ourself from the devil and from demons. This is exactly what the Lord did with Peter in Matthew 16:23. Peter had said, “Far be it from You, Lord; this [the cross] shall not happen to you.” Here was a big temptation trying to penetrate into the Lord’s soul. So the Lord looked at Peter and said, “Get behind Me, Satan!” He saw Satan right there. The word in Greek, “*get behind Me*,” can also be translated “get out of My sight, be gone.” The Lord immediately disassociated Himself from the devil, who was trying to divert Him from the cross. The Lord then says in verse 24, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself.” So this denying of the self and disassociating ourself from the devil go together. We need to disassociate ourself from the enemy.

How do you disassociate yourself? Paul says it in this way in 2 Corinthians 2:11: “lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of *his* [thoughts].” “*His* thoughts” refer to Satan’s thoughts in our thoughts. They are Satan’s thoughts in our subjective thinking. So Paul disassociates the thoughts from himself and identifies them as Satan’s thoughts.

So, brothers and sisters, in our experience the way to have this transfer out of subjectivity is to (1) stop ourself; (2) do not act independently and sin; and (3) disassociate ourself from the devil. Speak to the devil. This means you are going to speak to your feelings. You are going to speak to your jealousy. You are going to speak to your doubt.

You are going to speak to your envy. You are going to speak to your opinion. You are going to speak to your reasoning. You are going to speak to what is you! You have been enmeshed with demons, but now you have found out that that is not Christ, that is not your spirit, that is not your real person, that is not really you. That is the enemy.

When you start to disassociate yourself from the enemy with prayer, with the exercise of “the weapons of our warfare” that are mighty through God, you pull down the stronghold. Not only does the stronghold of reasoning come down, but Satan is cast out: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). “The accuser of our brethren has been cast down. . . . And they overcame him [because of] the blood of the Lamb, and [because of] the word of their testimony, and they did not love their [soul-life] to the death” (Rev. 12:10-11). That means they said, “Soul-life, I am not going to preserve you. You are the one that wants to preserve itself. You are the one that is holding back. Satan, you are the one hiding out in my soul. You are the one that is afraid. You are the one that hides from the light. You are the one crouching as sin in the flesh. You are the one that is independent. You are the culprit, soul-life. You are enmeshed with Satan.” Preach to the devil. Disassociate yourself from the enemy with a strong spirit, and demons will leave you and you will be free — free in a new source. So stop yourself and open wholly to the Lord. You cannot do anything to change yourself, but you are connected to the power plant, to the Triune God, to the name of Jesus, to the Spirit of God who casts out demons. You are one with that Spirit. Stay one with Christ, hold Him as the Head, stay with your spirit, believe the truth, and stand with the Body.

This is how to have a transfer; it is to stop ourself and open to the Lord and contact Him. We have been interpreting, *we* have been living, we have lived to ourselves; and we are a subjective mess — deceived and filled with demon activity. Now we need to disassociate ourself from the enemy. And this enemy is not merely an objective enemy. This is a subjective enemy enmeshed with our souliness, possessing us with our own states of mind and our own moods. You have to disassociate yourself from your own mood, your own

feeling. Oh, the enemy hates this word. This word will help us all.

The best kind of prayer to deliver us from this subjective state is to exercise our spirit and draw a line. On this side, “You fallen angel, you devil, you demons, I have been enmeshed with you. I have thought your thoughts, I have believed your feelings. You have caused me to be shut up to myself. But this day, I am building a separating wall between you and me. I declare war with the weapons of my warfare that are mighty through God. My real person is Christ. It is no longer I. I have been crucified with Christ. Now *Christ* lives in me. I am regenerated in my *spirit*. The *truth* is mine and I stand one with the members of the *Body*.” Take these four pillars and you will overthrow the stronghold of self. You will drive out every subjective state that keeps you in bondage to self. The transfer will be there. Praise the Lord! Oh, may the Lord grant to us a full deliverance from the self and from its subjectivity.

— Bill Freeman

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They served together. They met together from house to house. They prayed together. They worshipped and praised together. They sang and made melody in their hearts to the Lord together. They fellowshipped over the Word of God together. The church life was not something you periodically “went to.” It was a way of life. No wonder the early church was so prevailing! But without such a church life, it is difficult not to be usurped by the world. By ourselves, there is little possibility of our withstanding the powerful current of the age. Yet, when we present ourselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord to live for His Body in the context of the church life, we are saved from the perverse generation. We are not conformed to the age.

The Body Tests, Protects, and Balances Us

The practical church life is essential to our Christian life for another reason — it always tests us, protects us, and balances us. We must realize that believers are the continual targets of the devil’s

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attacks. In his attack on us, he uses many different tactics. One of his most common tactics is to lie to us and to deceive us. Often, he attempts to convince us of something that is not true. The Bible tells us that Satan is a liar and a deceiver. What does he tell us? He will often try to convince our mind that we are someone special. He will engage the pride and ambition in our flesh with thoughts that we are really wonderful. We begin to think of ourselves as very spiritual and gifted. We believe that our discernment is better than others'. We become puffed up concerning our ministry. Such thinking does not reflect spiritual reality but is rather spiritual deception. This is why Paul warns "every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think."

Another common strategy of the devil is to attack us by means of accusation. He will point out to us our every failure and weakness. He will whisper to us about what we have done and what kind of person we are. If we listen to him, we will become increasingly deflated and depressed. We will eventually want to give up the Christian life and go back to the world.

The devil also likes to push us into extremes, especially in the area of Christian practices or teachings. He will convince us that a certain practice or truth is the most monumental item in the whole Bible. Then this practice or truth becomes our "hobby horse." It becomes the only thing worth talking about. As a result, we become a "one-liner." We are not balanced, but are off on an extreme tangent.

These attacks are dangers for all of us. However, the isolated believer is far more susceptible to these attacks than the believer who is living in the church life. Why is this? The reason is because the church life serves as a protection to us. If I am an isolated Christian who does not listen to the other members of the Body, then I will be more likely to think highly of myself. I am more open to the devil's deception. But if I live in the church life, my spirituality has a chance to be tested. It is rather easy to appear spiritual when I am living alone, without any interaction with other members of the Body. But when I present myself to the church life, I will encounter different situations with the brothers and sisters that will serve as a reality-check to my spirituality. I will find out that perhaps I am not as wonderful or spiritual as I imagined. Likewise, if I am an isolated believer, I will be more susceptible to continual accusation. But, in the church life, I will not be able to go too far

without other members of the Body noticing my condition and reminding me of the blood of Christ. They will bring me back to the truth and help me overcome the enemy. And finally, if I am an isolated believer, I am more susceptible to being pushed into extremes. By myself, I lack the balancing that the other members provide. I can easily pursue one tangent for years without any adjustment. But in the practical church life, I can be tempered and balanced. And I have access to those who have more experience in the Lord and who will keep me from extremes. Therefore, the church life serves as a protection to our Christian life.*

(To be continued next month)

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