

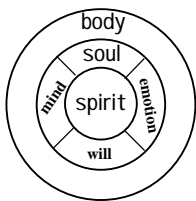
THE CHANGING OF OUR SOURCE

The Christian life is more than a one-time experience of receiving Christ and knowing that we have eternal life and are going to heaven. Although this is true, God’s full thought with the new birth is that a new source be established within us where He Himself dwells. This new source is our regenerated human spirit (John 3:6). Having a change of source is the most central thing in our new birth.

To have a change of source means we no longer live from our self, but from the life of the Son of God in us. Thus, what naturally follows the new birth is a progressive awareness of a new source in our daily life. This happens spontaneously as we pass through experiences with the Lord in which the old source of the independent self-life is exposed and dealt with, and the new source of our spirit gains the ascendancy.

According to Genesis 2:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23, man is a tripartite being composed of spirit, soul, and body. Before the new birth, although our spirit existed within us as a potentiality, it was in a dead

The tripartite being of man
Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23



condition (Eph. 2:1). So the source of our living was not our spirit, but our soul—made up of our mind, emotion, and will. But in regeneration, our human spirit becomes the leading part of our being because this is where we are

joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). It is from our Christ-indwelt spirit that the faculties of our soul will find their proper source. Before the new birth we lived a

totally independent self-life that did its own things, thought its own thoughts, made its own decisions. But once our center changes with the new birth, the soul begins to sense that it is a dependent faculty. Now, Christ comes in to make home and rearrange all our inward parts (Eph. 3:16-17).

The rearrangement of regeneration

From the moment we receive Christ and are born again, a deep and fundamental change takes place in us — the source of our life changes from soul to spirit. Every regenerated person is a rearranged person. The new birth rearranges our inward parts to make Christ in our spirit the source of our being. The apostle Paul refers to this fact in Romans 8:10: “If Christ is in you . . . the spirit is *life* because of righteousness.” Our regenerated spirit becomes the life-center of our whole being. So regeneration not only changes our eternal destiny, it rearranges us from our old soul-source to our new spirit-source where Christ is our life.

The New Testament uses the phrase “according to spirit” (κατὰ πνεῦμα) three times in reference to a believer, showing that man’s spirit is his new center and source. We are not only **born according to spirit** (Gal. 4:29), but we are to **have our being according to spirit** (Rom. 8:5), and we are to **walk according to spirit** (Rom. 8:4). Indeed, we are to continuously live in union with the Lord as one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).

The change of source from soul to spirit takes place instantaneously at the moment of the new birth. From

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that time on, the faculties of our soul (*mind, emotion, and will*) undergo a progressive transfer and find their source in Christ dwelling and operating in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). In experience, the practical effect of this change and rearrangement may differ from person to person, but it does usher all born-again believers into what the Scripture calls “the dividing of soul and spirit.”

Paul refers to the dividing of soul and spirit in Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to *the dividing of soul and spirit*, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The dividing of soul and spirit is mentioned together with the discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thus it refers to a penetration of the word of God into our innermost being to expose the source from which we live — soul or spirit. This living and operating word is always rearranging us to live in our new source and center.

Experiencing the rearrangement

After we are born again, we begin to experience the reality of our regenerated spirit. Something begins to happen from within — the rearrangement begins to take place. There is a new consciousness of the Lord. We sense His presence moving in us day by day. His life within our spirit begins to flow spontaneously. We find that we have new tastes and new desires. We even feel inwardly forbidden and stopped when we start to do some of the old things we did before we were saved. In fact, we sense inner frustration whenever we go against the Lord’s life within us.

Although we may not initially understand what is happening to us, these mixed emotions are part of what every Christian experiences. In Galatians 5:17 Paul speaks of this as an inner warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. At times we are at a loss about how to explain our ambivalent feelings. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit in our spirit spontaneously functions and produces in our consciousness an opposition of the Spirit toward the flesh. Likewise, the flesh with its sense of death opposes the Spirit.

This sense of death is experienced as a kind of deadness, dryness, emptiness, and uneasiness about attitudes and actions that proceed from the old source of the soul and flesh. The sense of life and peace is a sense of supply, fullness, and rest that proceeds from

the new source of our spirit. Both the sense of death and the sense of life and peace proceed from the source we are living from — flesh or spirit (Rom. 8:5-6). We can often know our source by the symptoms that surface in us.

It is possible that we can be a believer with a regenerated spirit, and yet live and do things out of the source of our soul or self-life. If this is the case, our soul and spirit remain enmeshed. There is no dividing. We are a whole, undivided person with no sense of dependency upon the Lord. It is by learning to pay attention to the sense of death or the sense of life and peace in the middle of our daily life that our soul and spirit get divided. If we exercise ourselves to heed the realm of the spirit, we will be able to identify what is coming from the soul and what is coming from the spirit.

The best example of this dividing of soul and spirit is the Lord’s own experience when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. His soul was troubled and sorrowful (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34), and He prayed more earnestly, repeatedly crying “Abba, Father” (Mark 14:36). It was by this prayer in His spirit that He was divided to say, “Not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39, 41). By prayer, the will proceeding from His soul was divided from the willingness proceeding from His spirit.

Prayer helps divide us so we can identify the source we are coming from. As we exercise our spirit in prayer and fellowship with the Lord, we are practically rearranged and transferred from soul to spirit. We are able to sense the Lord as our life and discern between what is of God and what is not of God (Heb. 5:14).

Being rearranged by compatibility

Knowing the Lord in our daily life is a matter of always remaining compatible with His life. As regenerated believers, we have Another Life in us that has another feeling and another consciousness. As we experience His life, we discover different kinds of responses within us that are according to His life. These responses tell us how to remain compatible.

If we do not remain compatible with the Lord’s life in any area of our living, we will sense an inward awkwardness and lack. For example, in Colossians 3:15 Paul says, “And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.” If I do not let the peace of Christ make the decision in my heart when I am tempted to engage in argumentative talk, I will not be compatible with the

feeling or registration of the Lord's life in me at that moment. As a result of not remaining compatible, we feel the effects within ourselves. We may sense that we are at odds with the Lord because *we* do not feel quite normal in our demeanor or inward posture. By this we learn the dividing of soul and spirit.

On these occasions the Lord is not speaking to us with a loudspeaker out of the heavens. Rather, He manifests His voice by the feeling or registration of His life. The Lord instantly feels a certain way within us, producing either the sense of "life and peace," which tells us we are compatible with His life, or a sense of "death," which indicates that something in our talking, our attitude, or our behavior does not match the nature of His life within.

Romans 8:6 says, "The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace" (ASV). In our experience the mind of the flesh is the consciousness of death, and the mind of the Spirit is the consciousness of life and peace. Of course, the richer and deeper our fellowship with the Lord is — the more we drink of Him as the Spirit day by day — the richer and deeper will be our sensitivity to the consciousness of His life. This means we will be increasingly compatible with His life.

In Ephesians 4:29-30 the apostle Paul refers to being compatible with the Lord's life. He mentions corrupt communication proceeding out of our mouth and links it to grieving the Holy Spirit. This grieving can definitely be felt by us. It is a consciousness the Holy Spirit produces in us.

Consider a person whose language was full of cursing before he was saved. After being saved, without anyone telling him, "Now you're a Christian and you should not curse," he himself no longer feels comfortable speaking in that old way. It doesn't fit anymore. Before, he lived out of the source of his soul — with his own independent mind, emotion, and will. But now he has received Christ. His spirit has been regenerated and he experiences a different kind of reaction to cursing. This reaction in reality is the very reaction and movement of Christ within him.

Being rearranged by the anointing

The New Testament calls this inner movement in a believer the anointing. First John 2:20 says, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all

things." The knowing in this verse is that intuitive knowing that comes when we are born again. Every genuine Christian has this anointing whether or not he understands it. If you are born again, you have the anointing within you. It is there.

In 1 John 2:27 the apostle John assures us that we all have this anointing: "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." The anointing is the movement of Christ that abides in us.

Christ, the anointed One, is alive inside of you. Since the day you received Him, He has been moving in you. That moving is the anointing. The word "anointing" is a verbal noun, indicating action and movement. He is anointing you about what you say, where you go, what you do, what attitudes you hold. The anointing is working in us to practically rearrange our daily life from soul to spirit. Although Christ has been anointing us from the day we were regenerated, we have not always been accustomed to paying attention to Him. Many times we have passed off this inward anointing without much consideration. Consequently, although we are saved and possess a regenerated spirit, in our practical daily life we continue to live from our soul rather than from our spirit. It is these kind of experiences that make us realize how much we need the word of God to divide soul and spirit and give us inward clarity.

The Word of God identifying a soulish man

The Bible describes a person who lives habitually out of his soul as a "soulish man." First Corinthians 2:14 says, "But a soulish (*psuchikos*, ψυχικός) man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he is not able to know them, because they are spiritually discerned." A "soulish man" surely refers to an unsaved person whose spirit is unregenerated, but the context of this passage makes it clear that Paul is referring to believers who basically live in the realm of their soul, making them soulish men.

Even after becoming a Christian, our soul and spirit are so mixed together in our experience that we do not know whether our living is from the soul or from the spirit. This dilemma is solved by continually allowing the living and operative word of God to pierce the

thoughts and intents of our heart and to divide our soul and spirit. Indeed, the word of God has dividing and discerning ability. We ourselves do not have such a keen sense. Our discernment is minimal and often inaccurate, especially after we have lived out of our soul for so many years.

Our greatest need

A believer's greatest need is to get into the Word of God regularly and go to the Lord day by day, especially in the mornings. Open up to the Lord and begin to pray over the verses. Reading the Bible must be more to us than a routine or academic pursuit. We need to actually contact God while we are in the Word. By getting into the Word in this way we find it is "living and active." It begins to operate. It begins to speak. A word will stand out, a verse will stand out, or a phrase will stand out, and then you begin to pray with what touches you. That word entering into your heart clears you up inwardly: "The entrance of Your words gives light" (Psa. 119:130).

You begin to see that you have been in yourself — in your emotions, in your reactions, in your pride and hardness. You have been in your reasoning mind or in your hurt feelings about someone. You have chosen your own will. Light begins to dawn upon you and you become inwardly clear regarding where you have been. You get divided. You begin to see how you have sinned, how you have lived in your soulish life, how you have lived out of your impulses, or how your motivation for saying something was altogether impure. The word divides your soul and spirit, and the thoughts and intents of your heart are discerned.

With this dividing and discerning, you begin to repent and confess to the Lord your lack of living out from Him. And as you confess, your spirit rises to the surface of your being (cf. Eph. 5:18-19 with Col. 3:16) and everything becomes crystal clear. What originates from your soul is exposed to you, and what originates from your spirit is manifested. Yes, there is the realm of the soul and there is the realm of the spirit, and it is the living and active word of God that discovers for us which realm we are living in.*

— Bill Freeman

*This article is taken from the booklet, *The Dividing of Soul and Spirit*, and may be ordered for \$2.95 postpaid from Ministry Publications, PO Box 1077, Moses Lake, WA 98837 or call (800) 573-4105 / (509) 762-0400 / E-mail: ministry@thechristian.org

EAST COAST MEETINGS

A special retreat on "UNION WITH THE LORD" with Bill Freeman, Jim Fowler of San Diego, and Frank Friedmann from Baton Rouge will be held in Dalton, Pennsylvania at the Fatima Renewal Center Memorial Day Weekend (May 28-30, 2004). For details regarding registration, schedule, lodging and costs you may call Don Frantz at (607) 625-4612.

The following week-end (June 4-6, 2004), another conference with Brother Bill Freeman will be held in Middletown/Howells, New York. The meetings will be held at Howells Church, 41-43 Church St., Howells, New York 10932.

The focus and subject of the weekend will be "GOD AS OUR SOURCE."

The schedule of meetings and fellowship for the weekend is as follows:

Friday (June 4): 7:00 PM

Saturday (June 5): 10:00 AM—12 Noon
(Lunch together)
2:00 PM—4:30PM

Sunday (June 6): 10:30 AM

The conference is opened to all. For further details, directions, and hotels in the area, you can call Yvonne Bullis in Middletown at (845) 343-1167 or Ministry of the Word at (800) 573-4105 or (509) 762-0400.

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