

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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Contributing Authors:

Luke Pomery

David V Hall

Victor Hall

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10 Old Goombungee Road

Toowoomba QLD 4350

Phone: +61 1300 885 048

Email: info@rfipublishing.org

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The promise of the Spirit

The gospel brings to us the faith of the Son of God. What is the faith of the Son? Simply, He believes that we can become children of God. He has faith for us! And He gives His own faith to us, so that we can believe what He believes about us. A new believer receives the faith to be born as a son of God. For those of us who were born into a covenant household, the faith of the Son enables us to live each day as a son of God in Christ Jesus and fulfil the Father's will.

In his letter to the Christians in Galatia, the apostle Paul drew attention to some key aspects of the gospel of sonship, as part of a pastoral initiative he was taking toward them. For this reason, his letter provides useful clarity, particularly concerning the subject of faith. Paul summarised the gospel with his statement, 'In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the *promise of the Spirit* through faith'. The promise of the Spirit is the coming of the Holy Spirit, who is the essence of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit connects us to the fellowship of God, who is Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, come and dwell in us. When God dwells in our heart, He enables us by His Spirit to live as He lives.

Paul explained that the promise of the Spirit is given to those who believe. It is only by God's grace through the Spirit that a person can believe God's word that calls them to be His son. For a person to claim they could become a son of God through their own efforts, would be an insane presumption. The gospel is a specific call to accept God's predestination for their life.

References:

Gal 3:6-7, 14, 22
Joh 4:24
2Co 3:18

Further Study:

John 14

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The faith of God

It is God the Father who gives faith to a person who receives the gospel. This faith is gifted to them for their salvation. To understand this faith, it is helpful to note that when Christ came into the world, the faith of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for Their covenant will to come to pass, was revealed in Him. He was the embodiment of Their fullness. The one faith of God has come through the Son of God.

Evidently, it is the faith of the Son of God that the Father gives to the hearer so that they can believe what God believes about their sonship. Because they have received the faith of the Son, a believer can have boldness and confident access to God's purpose for them, which is to become a son of God. It is important to note that they are not receiving the Son Himself at this point; they are receiving His faith, from the Father. The believer no longer simply has faith in God. Now, they have the faith of God.

The faith of the Son of God begins to work in them by the love of God that is poured into their heart by the Holy Spirit, once the Holy Spirit resides in them. The Holy Spirit was given to them by the Father when they cried out to the Lord for help to believe. The first action of faith working by love in the heart of a new believer, is the confession that Christ is their Lord. They are now a disciple of Christ, and the faith of the Son has become part of their life. Further to this, because they are sons of God by faith, and also have received the faith of God as a gift, God then sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their heart.

References:

Eph 2:8 Col 1:19
Eph 4:5 Mar 9:24
Eph 3:11-12 Gal 4:6

Further Study:

Galatians 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

Living by faith

Once Jesus Christ has come to dwell in a believer's heart, they are justified by faith when they do the works that the Son of God does through them. All Three of the Godhead now dwell in their heart. Every child born into a Christian family has received these blessings while in their mother's womb. They are truly blessed of God because He has given them His Spirit.

The faith of the Son enables a believer to live as a son of God for the rest of their life. They are to live continually by the faith of the Son. For a new believer and those born in a Christian family, this is the key point! Paul testified, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God'. The faith of the Son is the means by which we can live as sons of God and fulfil His purpose for our lives.

Paul amplified this summary with many illustrations and pastoral points. For example, he firmly rebuked the Galatian believers for accepting a gospel other than the gospel of sonship, which he had preached to them. The same issue confronts every generation. It is evident that many have turned away from the high calling of sonship. Instead of living in the faith of sonship, many are following a different gospel. An alternative gospel can appear to be Christian, but it lacks the power and faith that is necessary to live as a Christian.

God only joins His power to the faith of the Son of God. The faith that is like a grain of mustard seed, that Jesus spoke of, is the faith of the Son. We can only do the works of faith that belong to our sonship by the power of God.

References:

Gal 3:24 Mar 11:22
Gal 2:20KJV Rom 1:17
Mat 17:20

Further Study: Hebrews 11

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

Precious faith

The apostle Peter addressed his second letter to those who had received a precious faith of the same kind as his. He was writing to Christians who had received the faith of God. Peter testified similarly, that he lived and was sustained by the faith of the Son of God. We have the same faith as Peter! We have the faith of the Son of God. What is His faith? He believes we will come to full maturity as unique sons of God. Now that we have His faith, we believe what He believes about us – that we will be useful and fruitful sons of God!

The Holy Spirit continually pours love into our heart, enabling the faith of God to be active in our lives. Faith works in us through the love of God. The faith of God is made substantial in us, and will increase in us throughout our pilgrimage on this earth.

Working by the love of God, faith supplies to us the seven qualities called ‘the excellencies’ of Christ. These are virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. These qualities are the proven character of a son of God. They are evidence that the faith of God is working in us. Peter wrote, ‘If these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ’. Once we have the faith of the Son of God, these qualities are ours. Faith supplies them to us. As we continue to live by the faith of the Son, these qualities will increase in us. Virtue is one of these qualities. We begin to manifest virtue as a result of receiving the faith of the Son of God. What is virtue? We could say that virtue is the *character, attitude and actions* demonstrated by someone who has the faith of God.

References:

Rom 5:4-5

Gal 5:6

1Pe 2:9

2Co 4:13

Further Study:

2 Peter 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 5

A virtuous person

Virtue, as well as the other qualities of Christ's life, needs to be received by us, formed in us and demonstrated through us. A virtuous person is one in whom the substance of Christ's life is being formed. Virtue is evident in a person's conduct – the way they live and relate in their day-to-day life. A virtuous person will be *full of conviction* regarding what God is asking of them. They are illuminated and, as a result, they are full of initiative – eagerly getting on with what God has planned for them. However, they do not become independent or isolated.

A virtuous person is also *full of strength*. Being one who is strengthened by the Lord, they in turn strengthen themselves for the task. They simply 'get on with the job' that pertains to their God-given name and works. They do not seek the praise of others. Interestingly, however, others will bear witness to their works of faith, and it will be to their praise. They are *full of joy* and easily enjoy fellowship with others. They do not allow themselves to have a victim attitude, nor the demeanour of 'feeling sorry for themselves'. Since they know the faithfulness of God towards them, they are not afraid of difficult seasons.

Most significantly, a virtuous person will be *well-pleasing* to God. This is because they offer themselves in obedience to His will. They are content with their identity and predestination given by God. In the Psalms, the virtuous person is described as having 'oil' on their face, causing their face to shine. Their confidence in God and resolve concerning His will, are visible to those around them. All of us can demonstrate virtue. Virtue is the evidence that faith is working in us! As we submit to the life-long process of Christ's life being formed in us, we will prove ourselves useful and fruitful in every phase of life.

References:

Gal 4:19

Heb 1:9

Php 4:8, 18

2Pe 1:8

Further Study:

Proverbs 31

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 6

Full of joy

The life of a Christian should be full of joy. In the first case, we are filled with joy whenever we hear the word of God. In the parable of the sower, Jesus explained that the person who receives the word of God with illumination has joy in their heart. John the Baptist said that we rejoice whenever we hear the voice of the Bridegroom. Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom, and His church is being made ready as His bride. Truly, our heart is filled with joy whenever we hear Christ's voice as He speaks to His church.

We recall that Jesus Christ endured the cross and poured out His life because of the joy that was set before Him. What is His joy? It is the joy that the Everlasting Covenant of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will enable many sons to be brought to glory. With this joy in His heart, Jesus endured the travail and anguish of offering to see us born as sons of God!

We read in the Scriptures that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rejoice over us with gladness. In the parables, Jesus described the rejoicing in heaven that breaks forth when a person is born as a son of God. The Lord rejoices over every one of us! This joy is expressed in Christ's voice whenever He speaks to us through His messengers. Jesus Christ is full of joy because He believes that Their covenant plan will be accomplished.

When Jesus expressed this joy to His disciples, He explained how God's covenant would be outworked. However, the disciples did not yet *understand*. Jesus knew that if they had received illumination, they would have been full of joy at hearing His words. Jesus further explained to His disciples, 'Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your *heart will rejoice*, and your joy no-one will take from you'.

References:

Mat 13:20 Zep 3:17
Joh 3:29 Joh 14:28
Heb 12:2 Joh 16:22

Further Study:

Luke 15

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 9

His joy in us

In the days after Christ was raised from the dead, the disciples were born of the Spirit. When that took place, because faith had come in their hearts, they could now rejoice with His joy. This is a most remarkable point. His joy became their joy! Jesus said to His disciples, 'I have spoken to you, [so] that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full'. How does Christ's joy become our joy? His joy is a result of His faith. We receive the joy of Christ because we receive His faith. We go on receiving His faith as we continue to receive the word of Christ. And we live by His faith because we have His Spirit dwelling in us.

What is His faith? It is that He believes Their plan is going to work – that many sons will be brought forth to glory. His faith is given to us, so that we *believe the same thing He believes*. This is how His joy becomes our joy. As we live by the faith of the Son of God, His will is being outworked and fulfilled in our lives, and in the lives of those around us. His covenant plan is coming to fruition. As such, His joy is made complete and full in us. His joy abides in us and no-one can take it from us. The apostle Peter described this as 'joy inexpressible'.

The joy of the Lord becomes our strength, enabling us to endure and persevere through every season. Jesus endured because of the joy that was set before Him. We also can endure because of the joy He has given us. The joy of the Lord being made complete in us is the evidence that the gospel is effective.

References:

Joh 20:22 Gal 4:6
Joh 15:11 1Pe 1:8
Rom 10:17 Neh 8:10

Further Study:

Isaiah 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

The need for travail

We can understand travail as the *effort, pain and process* of bringing something to birth. When something is born, it is new. For example, a pregnant mother travails to bring a new person into the world. As Jesus noted, 'Whenever a woman is in labour she has pain, but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish [or travail] because of the joy that a child has been born into the world'. Jesus used this example to explain that seasons of pain or sorrow would be turned into joy, whenever His life is being formed in us.

The Scriptures speak of a particular travail necessary for sons of men to be 'born' and then to 'grow' as sons of God. The Holy Spirit, as the Helper of the Father and Son, has a unique involvement in this travail. Not only does He travail personally for the sons of God; He also enables sons of God to travail with endurance for what God wants to establish and form in them. We also note that messengers of Christ travail for others so that Christ may be formed in them. This is the travail of Christ Himself within His disciple-messengers so that their ministry of the gospel will be effective towards those who hear them.

When the gospel is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit brings a spirit of grace and supplication to enable a person to hear and respond to the word. Grace enables a person to hear what God is saying and see what God is giving to them. The Holy Spirit convicts them of sin, righteousness and judgement, causing them to know the love of God that called them to be a son of God, and to see why they have fallen short of God's plan. God's grace enables them to choose to receive this call and to *respond* with repentance. They begin to supplicate, or pray, by the capacity given by the Holy Spirit.

References:

Rom 8:23, 26 Luk 22:44
Gal 4:19 Col 2:1
Zec 12:10

Further Study:

John 16

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

The spirit of grace and supplication

The spirit of grace and supplication enables a person to mourn with godly sorrow. When a person mourns this way, it produces in them repentance, leading to salvation. They cry out to God to be forgiven for their sin. This sin is, principally, the pursuit of their own way. Importantly, however, the spirit of grace and supplication also urges them forward, beyond the joy of finding forgiveness from God. They begin to *travail for something new*.

The spirit of grace and supplication, given by the Holy Spirit, enables a person to travail for 'new birth'. This person begins to cry out to God for help. God answers their cry and sends them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit travails in them, so that they are brought forth as a newly born son of God. The season of travail results in fullness of joy, having resulted in new birth. However, at this point, the new believer is just a babe. There is a lifetime of growth and maturity ahead of them. The whole pilgrimage of growth following their 'birth' is also part of the travail.

The same is true for a child who is born into a Christian family. They are already partakers of the divine nature, through the faith of their parents. However, they are a spiritual babe. The life of Christ needs to be formed and trained in them, so that they continue to grow to full maturity.

For all of us, having been born as a son of God, this travail is an *ongoing* dimension of our Christian pilgrimage. There is continual effort, pain and process as we grow and mature as sons of God. As we pray, the Holy Spirit travails in us, so that we proceed to mature as sons of God. We have daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit in His perpetual work of supplication and travail within us. The messengers of Christ also travail for Christ's life to be formed in us.

References:

2Co 7:10

Gal 4:19

2Pe 1:4

Col 1:28

Rom 8:26

Further Study:

2 Corinthians 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 12

We groan within ourselves

There is a travail which we personally experience in order to mature and grow as sons of God. This is what it means to 'groan within ourselves' with the same travail as the Holy Spirit, until we come to full maturity in every season of our life. As Paul wrote, 'We also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan [or travail] within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body'. In every circumstance in life, we mourn and travail as those with hope.

Describing this travail, Paul said, 'I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus'. This is our mindset too! And we can be encouraged at any point, that if we have a different way of thinking, God will reveal this to us. God helps us to be established in His work and mindset of travail, to see 'something new' come to birth. In our own lives, we can give thanks to God for the fruit that He has already brought forth in us. But we also realise there is more fruit to come. And we know we will have fellowship with Him and others in a travail to see this come to pass.

We are not only traving for our own lives; we are also traving for our brethren and for new believers. This is because the ministry of reconciliation has been committed to us. Christ makes us adequate as disciple-messengers. We participate in the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to see the life of Christ formed in others. We travail in word and prayer, so that others can grow as fruitful sons of God. What a privilege it is for us to share in God's travail to see the sons of men 'born' and 'grow' as sons of God.

References:

Rom 8:23 2Co 3:5-6
2Co 5:18 1Th 2:9
Col 4:12

Further Study:

Philippians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 13

Being spiritual

Jesus said that a person is spiritual when they have been born of the Spirit. In other words, to become spiritual, every person must be born from above to see the kingdom of God through the Holy Spirit. They must be born of the water of the word, receiving the incorruptible seed of God that contains the Spirit of the Father – in fact, being born a new creation. And, they must be born of the Spirit of the Son, to share His life in the form of another seed – the divine nature. This is how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have come to dwell within the believer.

In order to continue in the Spirit, the love of God will compel them to enter the kingdom. In this way, they will come into Christ through baptism, and will be made a member of the body of Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the seal of their sonship. He is able to give to a son of God, the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the expression of the firstfruits of their sonship in the world, and the expression of their ministry as a member of the body of Christ.

A person living as a *firstfruits Christian*, has been converted from walking after the flesh. They can now walk according to the Spirit. They are regenerated daily and sanctified to their name by living as a slave of Christ. Their life reveals the fruit of the righteousness of God. Having been established in the culture of the kingdom, they are equipped to minister to others the reconciliation they received.

References:

Joh 3:3,5

Rom 5:5

Act 19:5-6

Jas 1:18

Gal 5:25

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 16

The carnal Christian

When Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of heaven to the disciples and Nicodemus, it was not yet possible to be born of the Spirit. The disciples and Nicodemus belonged to the Old Covenant, which was made with the flesh. Jesus taught them about spiritual birth – something beyond the life of the flesh. He taught that they could be born of the Spirit. Moreover, if they could walk by the Spirit, they would cease to be carnal and, instead, become spiritual!

The impact of Jesus' word upon them was to move them towards becoming spiritual. Regeneration could only occur within them once the Holy Spirit came as the New Covenant. They first needed to become disciples of the word. This illustrates something very important for us. It shows that there is another kind of Christian – an unspiritual one – responding to the word. This is the *carnal Christian*. When the word comes to us, it strikes us where we are carnal, wanting to move us towards the spiritual. As it was for the disciples, the impact of the word upon us will be either towards what is spiritual, or towards an offence.

When we are offended, our mind can only function carnally, choosing destructive courses of action. This is the law of the mind at work. In the negative sense, our mind, which at first delighted in the law (or word), may harden and become focused on the desires of the flesh. It is in this way that we can seek to save our own life. Mechanisms of survival drive a person to react, conquer others, or use every other law for personal advancement, even seeking to fulfil the law of God their own way. This is a self-seeking and lawless way of living. We call this, living by 'the other law' which is in us. This law is the expression of our carnal nature. If we walk after this fleshly nature, we will die.

References:

Rom 8:6-7, 13
1Pe 2:11
Rom 7:23, 25
Tit 2:13-14

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 17

Judgement at the table

The apostle Paul warned the Corinthians that if we eat and drink the communion in an unworthy manner, then we will eat and drink judgement to ourselves. Those who are carnal cannot eat and drink worthily, since they have set their minds on fleshly judgement and disaffection. Many become weak and sick as they partake of the body and blood, because they are under judgement at the communion. However, the same judgement can be a teacher, teaching discipline so that we can be born of God to become spiritual. This means, being properly sanctified and aligned to our name. The carnal person can find repentance through the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, in order to cease from sin. If they do this, they will not be judged with the world, but will, nevertheless, receive a limited reward. There is no eternal reward for dead works that are based on religious ambition and projection.

However, if a person continues to respond carnally to judgement, they will corrupt even further. This highlights for us a third kind of 'Christian'. While they may call themselves a 'Christian', they are in truth a *messenger of Satan*. Their response to the same judgement produces hostility and wickedness. The law of their mind and the other law, colluding with the law of sin fathered in them by Satan, has now become lawless. They claim the right to interpret Scripture against the two other groups – those who are carnal and those who are spiritual. Their spiritual sight has ceased to be regenerated. They no longer perceive the difference between carnal and spiritual Christians, becoming enemies of both.

No longer seeking the law of God, they are now the judges of it. They have become cynical and unbelieving about the integrity of Christ being in the flesh of their brethren. They are, therefore, of the spirit of antichrist and, as such, are part of the messenger of Satan that buffets the presbytery.

References:

1Pe 4:1-2

1Jn 4:3

1Co 3:15

Php 3:18-19

Rom 8:7

2Ti 2:24-25

Further Study:

1 Corinthians 11

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Spiritual sight

We are spiritual when we have been converted from living by the flesh, to walking according to the Spirit. Having been born of the Spirit, we can know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We can perceive all that God has prepared for those who love Him. We have received the Spirit of God to know the things freely given to us by God. These things are not revealed to us through human wisdom, but through the word taught by the Spirit.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit that causes our spirit to be regenerated so we can see the kingdom. In that moment, we begin to be spiritual people. We are able to see the treasure that God has prepared for us - our sonship. And having been born of the Spirit and entering the kingdom through baptism, we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit so we can continue to 'see' and be led by the Spirit. Whether we are born again or born in a covenant household, we will need to continue to walk in the Spirit and be spiritual.

Jesus spoke of the principle of 'sight' when He described the eye as 'the lamp of the body'. It is the means by which light can enter a person. He warned that if our eye is evil, then our body will be filled with darkness. He also said that if our eye is clear, then our whole body will be full of light. Jesus was referring to the regeneration of our spirit by the Holy Spirit, to receive the light of the word so that we can have the light of life. This is important, because we will not be able to continue in the Spirit if our eye becomes unhealthy.

References:

1Co 2:12-13 Joh 8:12
Rom 8:14 2Pe 2:17
Luk 11:34-36

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 19

The light of a lamp

The condition of our spirit will affect how we are able to receive the rays of light from a lamp. We will need to be trained to look after our spirit, ensuring that we maintain a healthy perspective concerning the context in which we are receiving this illumination. We will need to remind ourselves to meet the word in the same manner in which we first received it and believed, when it was spoken to us. In relation to every new admonition of the word, we will need to become poor in spirit, mourn for our shortcomings and their impact, and travail for our sonship to mature as we receive the word with meekness.

When Jesus referred to the 'lamp', He was also speaking to us about the context in which the light would be shining. This is the light of the lampstand church. We need to be personally connected to this context so that the rays of this light shine into our hearts and illuminate us. The lamp of a lampstand church is the presbytery fellowship from which the word of God shines into the heart of every member of the body of Christ in a local congregation.

It is important to the health of our spirit that we hear and obey the word that God shines into our heart through presbytery. The apostle John said that if we walk in this light, then our fellowship will be with the Father and the Son. This is the same fellowship that began to be open to us, when the Holy Spirit first opened our eyes with regeneration. The light of the presbytery is shining the grace of God into our heart so that we can receive the treasures of His grace into our earthen vessel. The light that shines into our heart becomes a practical instruction, which we could call 'the word of His grace'.

References:

Luk 11:34, 36
Rev 1:20
2Co 4:5-7
Act 20:24, 32

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

1 John 1

Proverbs 20

The light that is in you

When we join ourselves to the word of the presbytery, we receive capacity for discipleship. We can be trained and conformed into the image of His Son. This word brings the love of God to us so that we mature in sonship and continue to partake of the divine nature. It proclaims obedience to us so that we understand how to present ourselves as a living sacrifice for obedience. Through this word of grace, we were made spiritual and are now being sanctified to our name as a certain firstfruits, by the Holy Spirit.

When the word of God comes with illumination, its light becomes our life. If we are full of light, then the word, which is Spirit and life, has made us alive in the Lord. We see all the things given to us by God, according to our name as a son of God. We are able to exercise the capacities of our soul, including our mind, will and emotions, to present our bodies as slaves of righteousness. Our motivations are governed by the Spirit and we are able to perform the good works that God prepared for us to do.

Let us remind ourselves that our eye can become degenerate. This happens when a person sets their mind on the flesh and seeks to control their life. Rather than presenting themselves for obedience to the word as slaves of righteousness, they source their obedience in themselves and call it the 'truth'. They judge the proceeding word from the basis of their education, tradition or reasoned position. The word of God is used as information to support the agenda of their own life. This is their 'light', which Jesus called 'darkness'.

References:

Rom 6:16, 19
Eph 2:10
Psa 36:9

Psa 56:13
Isa 50:10

Further Study:

Titus 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 23

A spirit of gentleness

As spiritual people, we need to remember what we learned when the Holy Spirit first brought illumination to us. We saw the wonder of the promise of our sonship. But, we also began to cry out for help, because we saw that we could not achieve sonship by our own effort. It is remarkable that the word from the presbytery continues to show us our need of the regeneration of our spirit and the renewing of our mind. It reminds us, with every relational issue or training adjustment, that we need to be converted from our fleshly responses by becoming poor in spirit, mourning for the impact of our sin, travailing for sonship to come forth, and receiving the word with meekness. A person who is spiritual will not seek to graduate beyond this truth. This is what it means to be spiritual.

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul proclaimed that we are to have the same attitude that was in Jesus Christ. The word 'attitude' can refer to the way a person is, and the mind-set that a person has, in relation to someone else. This is more than a passing feeling or emotion, like anger or frustration. Paul described the attitude of a spiritual person as 'a spirit of gentleness'. We remember that Jesus said, 'Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart'. This is the demeanour and attitude of a firstfruits believer, whose total preoccupation is to serve or minister to the needs of the saints. They are ready to encourage and give aid to a brother, even if that brother has stumbled or been caught in a trespass. This is the restorative work of one who is spiritual.

References:

Php 2:14-15 1Co 16:15
Mat 11:29 Heb 5:12
Gal 6:1

Further Study:

James 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

Ministers of reconciliation

It is helpful to remember that reconciliation first came to us while we were still enemies of God. In the Father's initiative toward us, He did not count our trespasses against us, but reconciled us to Himself, while we were yet undeserving. We were brought near and restored to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son. God has now given to us this same word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors of Christ who are appealing to all men, on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God. This is the message that we are to proclaim.

When we set our mind on the Spirit, we will no longer see our brethren according to the motivations and judgements of the flesh. We do not know each other or relate to each other in this way. Our attitude to fellowship with our brethren must be a spirit of gentleness, with a view to the restoration of relationships. Paul encouraged us, 'If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness'. A spiritual person will not be exercised in carnal assessments, in order to convince or rebuke someone who is caught in a trespass. Because they walk by the Spirit, they will not be vulnerable to the mechanisms of the flesh, leading to legal judgement.

A spiritual person will have his senses trained to discern good and evil by the grace of God in the fellowship of his brethren. Those brethren who represent Christ to him, will confirm the knowledge of his name (who he is) and the focus of his work, as he walks in the light of their fellowship. When he expresses his submission and sanctification in this fellowship, he is setting his mind on the things of the Spirit.

References:

Rom 5:10 Col 1:19-20
Gal 6:1 Eph 2:16-17
Gal 5:16

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 5**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 25

Looking to ourselves

The spiritual person will hold fast his confession of the word of reconciliation which was given to him in Christ. He will remember the witness of our great High Priest who experienced all our weaknesses and all temptation, yet was without sin. This passage of Scripture in Hebrews is not intended to convey the notion that our attitude should be superior, as though we are expressing a patronising sympathy to someone who is 'under-par' or second class. It is, instead, an attitude of genuine love and 'fellow-feeling', since we also are vulnerable to the same weaknesses and temptations.

Paul tells the spiritual person to 'look to yourself lest you also be tempted'. This means that our attitude will be to appreciate that we are vulnerable to the same temptations as the weaker brother. We appreciate that, being weak, our conscience is vulnerable to being strengthened to fulfil the desires of the flesh. On the other hand, if our demeanour is superior to the weaker brother, we will not only be fleshly, but also our own demeanour will arouse the weaker brother's conscience to condemnation, instead of reconciliation. We are then guilty of bringing our brother to ruin by causing them to stumble; and thus, we are sinning against Christ and have become enemies of His reconciliation.

A spiritual person will be aware of their own cultural propensities and failings. In this way, we will resist being drawn to judge our brother from a superior position. We will be conscious that the Holy Spirit has joined us to this brother. No-one is immune from temptation, so we should be able to entreat one another with the word of correction in meekness.

References:

Heb 4:15 1Co 8:10-12
Luk 4:13 2Co 5:16
Gal 6:1 Jas 3:2

Further Study:

Hebrews 13

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 26

Not ministers of the flesh

The apostle Paul declared that if we walk after the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in our attitude and relationships: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. These elements of a spiritual person's attitude are free from, and unaffected by, law. However, if we set our mind on the flesh, the deeds of the flesh will produce immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. Those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We observe that those who practise these ways, seek to draw others into their agenda, and think it strange that others do not agree with their fleshly positions. They prove to be ministers of the flesh. Ministers of the flesh do not submit themselves to the brethren. They operate by law, and their mode is to be the mediator of the law. This means that, instead of reconciling others with gentle correction, their mode is either as an arbitrator or negotiator. This is what we refer to as the 'collegial model'. This style of counsel relies on the logic of things to be done, arising from a private assessment of what God's word requires. The words of Christ are treated as a law, which allows the collegial person to maintain authority and control over the interaction.

Those who are spiritual not only need to walk in the Spirit, but need to become skilful through training in order to be ministers of the Spirit. As ministers of the Spirit, their testimony will show that they are submitted to the fellowship of light in the presbytery and the body of Christ. They will understand who they are and, therefore, will be sanctified by standing with their brethren where the witness of their name is known and where the Spirit of God is found.

References:

Gal 5:16, 18, 21
1Pe 4:4
3Jn 1:9-10
Joh 3:20

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

Romans 13

Proverbs 27