

Spirit, Soul, and Body

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

A Review ... for Where We are Going

For many of us, this is a review. Joshua 1:8 says *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.”* If you are meditating on the Word, you are going to by nature be reviewing it! Romans 10:17 says *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* It does not just come by hearing new words of God. This review will be helpful to us all! As we are being sent out into the harvest, the purpose of this message is to prepare us for the next step: discipling those God is bringing into our lives and brining into our church.

The discipleship manual Brad and Peter have been working on is going to stir our faith and help us in our own walk with God. It is also so concentrated in the foundational truths of God that it will become the manual that we use to help other believers come into deeper relationship with God - far beyond them just being saved!

Our walk with God consists of reconciliation, transformation, and duplication. We have been reconciled to God through the work of Christ. We are going through the process of being transformed by the renewing of our minds. We are partnering with God in duplicating both the reconciliation and transformation in others.

At Agathos, Pastor Brad laid a foundation of reconciliation - who we are in Christ, free from condemnation - the true Gospel of Grace. He then taught us about the transformation process which will be on-going for all of us until we are in Heaven. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds according to the Word of God. Pastor Brad also taught before on “how to share the gospel” - the duplication part of our walk - and we are getting back to it now. We have a call as a body to go out, to reach out, to deliver to others what God has delivered to us. And we are seeing that duplication process grow in the our body. It went from 2 to 4 to 11 instances of sharing the gospel over the past three 2-week periods.

We are now at this launching point of sharing the gospel - of seeing lives come into the kingdom. The question is “how do you help foster them?” That’s what this manual is for. Discipleship is not just bringing someone to church, not just helping someone come to the Lord, and it’s not a “flesh

clean-up event.” Discipleship is simply helping our brothers and sisters become followers of Christ while becoming more of that ourselves as we grow closer and closer to God.

Spirit, Soul, and Body

There are three parts that make up who each of us are: spirit, soul, and body. Let’s be really clear about what each of those are. We are a spirit, we have a soul, and we live in an earthly body. And how do we know this? Where do we see those distinctions in scripture? Here are two clear examples:

Hebrews 10:14 is a really great verse to understand the spirit, soul, and body and is also likely to be a question-mark for those that you are discipling. *“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”* The same verse says “has perfected forever” and “are being sanctified.” One speaks of the past – has perfected, the other to the present and into the future – are being sanctified. So which one is it? While there seems to be a tension or conflict between those two phrases, both are true. We have been perfected forever – in our spirit. And we are being sanctified (being transformed) in our soul. When we are born again, we become entirely new in our spirit. We take on the Spirit of Christ and our spirit is instantaneously born again! Yet, we still engage in the transformation process the rest of our lives. Our mind, will, and emotions (our soul) are continually being transformed. It is a daily work.

1 Corinthians 6:19 says, *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God...?”* This verse shows that deep inside each believer we are now the Holy Spirit and He lives inside this earthly dwelling - our bones, muscles, and tissues. In Hebrews 10:14 we saw Spirit and soul separated out and now in 1 Corinthians 6:19 we see Spirit and body separated out. Our body - our skin, bones, tissue, and muscles - are just an earthly dwelling for our Spirit, whereas our soul is made up of our mind, our will, and our emotions.

Flesh and Heart

It will also be helpful to clear up two other terms used in the Bible – flesh and heart. “Flesh” refers to the combination of your body and your soul. Essentially everything apart from your spirit. “Heart” is the combination of your soul and your spirit – your mind, will, emotions, and spirit. Particular care should be taken with the term heart when reading the Word. In some verses it is used to particularly mean the spirit and in other verses it is used to mean “soul.” The key is to interpret scripture with scripture as it relates to understanding that word “heart.” Let’s look at a few examples.

In Acts 8:21, we see Peter and John going into Samaria, which had just seen many people saved and baptized, and now Peter and John are going out and baptizing people in the Holy Spirit. Upon witnessing the baptism of the Holy Spirit and seeing the great power that was coming upon people, Simon the Sorcerer tried to buy this power from them! But listen to what Peter says: *“You have*

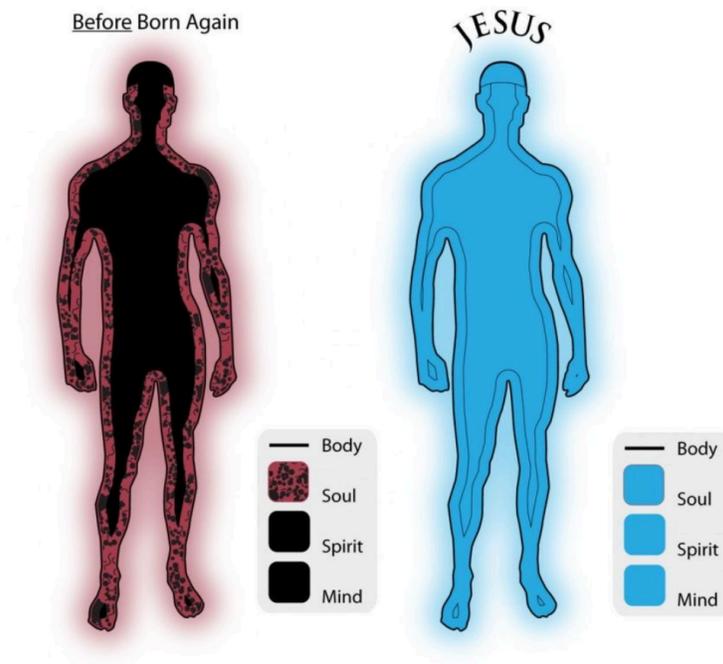
neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.” So, we see the word “heart” here. Peter is saying, “you can’t take part in the baptism in the baptism of the Holy Spirit yet because you haven’t been born again!” Peter was saying “your heart - your spirit - isn’t right with God because it is not renewed with the spirit of Christ like these other people recently have - you haven’t been reconciled to God!” So in Acts 8:21 we see “heart” meaning “spirit.”

At other times, however, we can see from scriptural context that “heart” is used to particularly mean soul – such as in Matthew 15:19 - *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* This is where confusion can set in if we are not careful and specific in our study of the Word. In Acts 8:21 Simon the Sorcerer’s “heart” was not right - he was not born again in his spirit! Here, in Matthew 15:19, on the other hand, it says our hearts produce all sorts of evil thoughts and intentions.

Thinking of Matthew 5:19, consider this: where do your thoughts come from? They come from your mind – a part of your soul. Additionally, we also know that as believers our perfected Spirit cannot produce evil thoughts and blasphemies. Both lines of logic help us see that in saying “heart” Mathew 15:19 is specifically referring to our soul. Clarity around this terminology (spirit, soul, body, flesh, and heart) is going to be very helpful for those we are discipling!

“So, what happens when we are born again?”

For all people, those born again, and those not – our bodies and our souls are of similar composition. Although believers can renew their souls and bodies, we all have bones and tissue and our mind, will and emotions. The thing that fundamentally changes upon being born again is our spirit.



When we look at the diagram of the us before we were born again, we see that our spirit was dead and dark. In that pre-born-again state we are separated from the life of God and we are spiritually dead. Not only were our spirits dead, but that spiritual deadness also pervaded our souls and into our bodies. Before we were born again many of us were perhaps emotional wrecks, facing seemingly continuous physical illnesses, and/or had very poor thought lives about ourselves and the world around us. Before you are born again, that death in your spirit permeates out into the other two parts of you - your soul and body.

Ephesians 4:17-18 speaks to this *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”* Paul is speaking to the fact that the unbeliever has their understanding darkened, they are alienated from the life of God, and have blindness in their heart. In other words, their spiritual death pervades into their soul.

Now, looking back to the diagram, we see Jesus who, on the other hand, was pure light. John 1:5 says *“God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”* Jesus says in John 14:6 *“I am the way, the truth, and the life...”* While on this earth, Jesus was both pure light and life. Every aspect of Him (Spirit, mind, will, and emotions, and body) was completely perfect.

So what happens when we are born again? What happens when we accept Christ into our life as Lord and savior? Let's look at 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”* When we are born again we become a new creation! This referring to the new creation in our spirit as we are now in Christ!

In John 20 we see the Apostles become born again as Jesus breathes on them saying, *“receive the Holy Spirit.”* When we are born again, we receive the Spirit of Christ on the inside of us. We receive the Holy Spirit instantaneously. That very moment, we receive 100% of the Holy Spirit: no darkness, all light. Wall-to-wall Holy Ghost! When we are born-again, there is immediately nothing but pure Holy Spirit inside of us! This is something that we cannot forget. We cannot forget it concerning ourselves, nor can we forget it about our younger brothers and sisters in Christ after they are born again - especially those we are helping walk through the discipleship (transformation) process.

When we received the full portion of the Spirit of Christ, that did not necessarily transform our soul or our body immediately. Think back to yourself before you were born again. You may have struggled with emotional issues, with lusts or angers in your thoughts, and choosing (willing) to do wrong. When you received the Spirit of Christ instantaneously upon being born again, it probably

didn't drastically change all of those parts of your emotional life and thought life in an instant. In the moment of being born again you received the 100% Spirit of Christ but you still needed transformation in your soul!

This is what the work of transformation is for – primarily transforming our souls – our mind, will, and emotions. In the same way, a young brother or sister in the Lord who you are discipling won't change in their soul overnight. They may sin against you in some way because of their still imperfect soul. So of course, you forgive them - 70x7 times if necessary! But let's also consider 2 Corinthians 5:16 *“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.”* As believers, we are being instructed to regard each other no longer according to the flesh - to no longer think of them according to their soul or their body – we think of them according to their spirit. Their spirit is now that of Christ - the same Holy Spirit that is also inside of each of us!

When God looks upon this born again brother or sister, he sees Jesus, by virtue of His Spirit in them! That's how our Father sees us. That is how He sees our young born-again brother or sister in Christ. We are urged to see them likewise!

The Transformation Process

Now what the enemy will try to do, is to make us think otherwise about ourselves and about our other brothers and sisters in Christ around us. The enemy want to make us think that there is something at our core that is bad or evil. He wants to trick us into believing that all the thoughts that come into our head are really the “true you.” Those are lies he wants to sow into our heart about ourselves or those around us.

He uses these lies to make us think that we need to “get more good” into us - that we have to try harder to make ourselves holy. That is the trap. That is religion. We have to fight against that because in fact, we have all the goodness, all the holiness, all the righteousness, all the perfection within us that we will ever need! We have the 100% Holy Spirit inside of us already! As believers, that is what is at our core – that is our true self! Rather than trying to “get good into us” we need to simply be letting that holiness of the Holy Spirit out of us! We can allow that “true self,” the Holy Spirit that is inside of us, to transform our souls: our mind, will, and emotions. What this will do is make you realize that you don't have to get good in – you need to let good out! The Spirit works from inside of you to impact your mind, will, and emotions if you will let Him.

In other words, transformation can be thought of as the maturation of the Christian soul. Paul said to the Philippians (3:12), *“not that I have already attained, or am already perfected.”* None of us ever fully “arrive” concerning the discipleship process while here on earth.

There are three ways we can be about the transformation of our souls. There is one core offensive way to do this and two defensive ways to transform your soul. The core way is using the mirror of the Word and lining up with the Word. And the other two helping ways are by keeping / guarding our hearts and by managing / eradicating unbelief in our lives.

The Transformation Process: Looking at the Mirror of the Word

The core offensive transformation strategy is using the mirror of the Word in order for our soul to line up with who we are in Christ - who we are in our born-again spirit. This can be a challenge because we can far more directly experience what is going on in our bodies and souls. You can feel your body – you know if something is hot or cold, or if something hurts in your body, or if you're sick. Likewise you feel your emotions and you know your thoughts – perceiving your soul and how it's doing. By contrast, there is often less direct of a direct sense of your spirit. Thankfully, the Lord has revealed to us so much about our true self, our spirit, in His Word. So, what we need to do is to learn through the Word - using it as a mirror to learn about our true self, to align the rest of ourselves with this true self via the Word, and thereby be truly transformed. (see 2 Cor. 3:18)

Romans 12:2 says “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*” So if we look at what the Word says about the born again spirit we now have within us, we see that its key virtue is that it is righteous! Now I'm not saying that we are self-righteous. Instead, like 2 Corinthians 5:21 says “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” As believers, we are the righteousness of God in HIM! We are not self-righteous, we are Christ-righteous! But that still means that we are righteous - in the truest sense of the word! “I am at my core, righteous! Regardless of something I may hear, see, think, or do.”

So what do we do with that reality of our righteousness in Christ? 1 Corinthians 15:34 says, “*Awake to righteousness, and do not sin.*” This verse is telling us that we need to realize that righteousness is our true nature now, and that we need to focus on that. We need to take hold of the reality of our righteousness in Him and in so doing we will “be holy as He is Holy.” Developing a righteousness-consciousness is how we go about that process. If you will be about the righteousness that is in you, you will be transformed in your thoughts, in your will, and in your emotions. On the other hand, if we have a sin-consciousness, if we are constantly rehearsing “oh I did that ... oh I thought this ...” and you are speaking that out you are actually counteracting the expression of His righteousness that is already in you! If we have and focus on a sin-consciousness, we will struggle to not act accordingly. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

Rewards for Righteousness

As you read the Word look at the places where it talks about what becomes of the righteous, holy, or upright person! There are many places in the Old Testament where the righteous are promised incredible things! Look at what they will have or receive and realize that when you read about those who are righteous, holy, or upright before God and realize it's talking about you!

For example, Psalm 34:17 says "*The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.*" Now, under the old covenant, that would have been something of an aspirational verse. In other words, we would have had to try to get that righteousness on our own, and boy would we have failed and fallen short of all those promises of righteousness. But praise God we are now in the new covenant and we have full righteousness through faith in Christ! Therefore Psalm 34:17 applies to you and me -to all those who will receive Christ and realize that they are righteous in Him!

Psalm 37:30-31 says "*The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*" This is what we need to be saying and thinking about ourselves as believers. "I speak wisdom. My tongue talks of justice. My posterity will be delivered (Prov. 11:21)!"

Recently, Andy has been blessed with a great opportunity - he's been leading a huge project - a very visible project. Since starting his career, Andy has deliberately sought to be faithful with little and as a result he has been given more.

So, how has Andy gone about being faithful with little? Primarily by transforming his soul, his mind by the Word! Andy speaks Proverbs 16:3 in faith "*Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.*" When you commit your work to the Lord, God Himself establishes your thoughts. He makes you smart on the job, smart at home, and smart relationally when you commit your work to Him! Similarly Psalm 37:5 says "*Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in him, and He shall bring it to pass.*" Psalm 37:5 is daily reading and speaking for Andy. He is saying "Lord, I commit this to you and I trust in You to bring it to pass. You and I are going to partner together on this and that's how I'm going to get through it. I am not capable of this on my own, but certainly with you I am!" Through that, the fruit of the Spirit comes out in our life and in the way that we go about the work - and we see success come to pass!

So on this very critical project Andy has been working on, he's had personal biweekly meetings with two of their company's business unit presidents and a number of vice presidents and others. These gentlemen report to the CEO of our 16,000 employee company – so they're pretty high up in the food chain. So, Andy has had critical work to be accomplishing and is reporting back to them on that work directly.

A little anecdote ... In one of these meetings Andy told his superiors that it would take me 6 weeks to complete some upcoming work and they, “encouraged” him to go faster and come back in 2 weeks. So what did Andy do? After all, that could be fairly stress inducing – peace wrecking possibly. Andy won’t say that he’s arrived – that there haven’t been any stresses – but he will say that in committing his works to the Lord he has seen it come to pass and has been able to do it with joy, peace, and patience!

In fact, they’ve had some really big developments and some challenges lately on the project, and one of Andy’s leaders has remarked – “you’re still smiling through it!” That is the fruit of the spirit shining through in Andy’s life. God is saying “you have the Holy Spirit in you and His fruit is peace, patience, and joy. So, partner with Me and that can pervade into your thoughts, will, and emotions - into your life.” So be encouraged in that! Look in the mirror of the Word and line up your thinking with the Word as it speak to the real you - to the Righteousness that is within you!

That encapsulates the offensive approach to transformation - to Christian soul maturation. You are taking territory and gaining ground by using the mirror of the Word and aligning yourself with it.

The Transformation Process: Guarding your Heart

There are two other helpful ways to transform your soul – and they’re a bit more defensive strategies. The first is by keeping your heart. This strategy is essential to making sure you maintain the ground you’ve taken by the word! Our heart is what determines what will be produced in our lives. Look at Luke 6:45 *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”* First we see from Jesus’ words here that the heart and how we tend to it is really important because the heart determines what will be produced in our lives. We also see the profoundly important connection between heart, words, and the fruit of our lives. The heart drives our words and our words drive our lives. *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”* (Prov. 18:21)

Let’s also look at Proverbs 4:20-23 *“My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”* Take care of your heart! Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. This section of scripture tells us how important it is to keep our hearts - to guard our hearts. And it also tells us just how to do this. It mentions words, ears, and eyes. These are the three gateways of our heart – what you say, what you hear, and what you see. Tend to what you say with your mouth. Tend to what you see with your eyes. Tend to what you hear with your ears. Fill your eyes and ears with His Word! Speak out with our mouths the Word of God!

For example, if you are meditating in the Word about your righteousness in Christ, but then speaking to friends about how terrible you are – your words are working against you! You are counteracting the good you are doing for yourself by meditating on and declaring God’s Word about you. Keep your heart by keeping your words, your ears, and your eyes. Surely we can see areas in our lives that need improved, but take care about how you do that - go about it with with a righteousness-consciousness. Go about that by taking in the truth from the Word and allowing that to do the transformative work - as opposed to speaking negatively about yourself or listening to words coming in about you that are not lined up with the Word of God.

The Transformation Process: Dealing with Unbelief

Another helpful component of the transformation process in your soul is knowing that your faith will be released by getting unbelief out of its way! Let’s see what Jesus says in Matthew 17:20 about faith. In the second half of the verse He says: *“for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”* But what does he say before that? *“Because of your unbelief.”* So, what was Jesus answering? He was telling the disciples that it was because of their unbelief they couldn’t cast out the demon that was causing the boy’s epilepsy. Jesus was saying “it is because of your unbelief. The problem isn’t that you don’t have enough faith. The problem is that your unbelief is blocking that faith.”

This is a simple (but not easy) concept - that unbelief is what is hindering our faith. It is, however, a true key to the transformative process that needs to go on in our lives! So how do you remove unbelief from your life? First by realizing that the issue for any of us not seeing the fruit of what the Word says is because of unbelief - not because God’s Word is not working! Recognizing unbelief is not bad, negative, or something to feel guilty about. It is just the fact of the matter that can upon recognition be addressed! In fact, the offensive strategy of transforming our soul (looking at the mirror of the Word) is the same strategy we use to drive out unbelief! As you are seeing who you are in the Word, be prepared to see areas where you have unbelief. Don’t run away from those. Say “I need to see this more in my life!” Get after that unbelief by bathing your mind in His Word! Your thoughts will be replaced with His thoughts and your ways will be replaces with His ways. Your results will be replaced with His results!

So, what are the three parts of our walk with God? Reconciliation, transformation, and duplication. And what are the 3 parts of each of us? Spirit, soul, and body. And what are three key ways to transform our souls? Using the mirror of the word, keeping/guarding our hearts, and beating unbelief! May we grow not only in our own transformation but also in reconciling others to you and helping them to be transformed to look more like Him!

Text Summary (for reading as a group)

Joshua 1:8 says *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.”* If you are meditating on the Word, you are going to by nature be reviewing it! Romans 10:17 says *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* It does not just come by hearing new words of God. This review will be helpful to us all! As we are being sent out into the harvest, the purpose of this message is to prepare us for the next step: discipling those God is bringing into our lives and bringing into our church.

Our walk with God consists of reconciliation, transformation, and duplication. We are now at this launching point of sharing the gospel - of seeing lives come into the kingdom. The question is “how do you help foster them?” That’s what this discipleship manual is for. Discipleship is simply helping our brothers and sisters become followers of Christ while becoming more of that ourselves as we grow closer and closer to God.

There are three parts that make up who each of us are: spirit, soul, and body. Hebrews 10:14 says *“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”* We have been perfected forever – in our spirit. And we are being sanctified (being transformed) in our soul. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God...?”* Holy Spirit lives inside His earthly dwelling - the bones, muscles, and tissues of believes! Our body - our skin, bones, tissue, and muscles - are the earthly dwelling for our Spirit, and our soul is made up of our mind, our will, and our emotions.

It will also be helpful to clear up two other terms used in the Bible – flesh and heart. “Flesh” refers to the combination of your body and your soul. In Acts 8:21 (with Simon the Sorcerer) we see “heart” meaning “spirit.” At other times, however, we can see from scriptural context that “heart” is used to particularly mean soul – such as in Matthew 15:19 - *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* Here we can tell that thoughts come from our mind – a part of your soul. Clarity around this terminology (spirit, soul, body, flesh, and heart) is going to be very helpful for those we are discipling!

So what happens when we are born again? The thing that fundamentally changes upon being born again is our spirit. Before we were born again, our spirit was dead and dark - we were spiritually dead. Not only were our spirits dead, but that spiritual deadness also pervaded our souls and into our bodies. Ephesians 4:17-18 speaks to this *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”* Paul is speaking to the fact that the unbeliever has their understanding

darkened, they are alienated from the life of God, and have blindness in their heart. In other words, their spiritual death pervades into their soul.

Jesus, on the other hand, was pure light. John 1:5 says *“God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”* Jesus says in John 14:6 *“I am the way, the truth, and the life...”* Jesus was both pure light and life. Every aspect of Him (Spirit, mind, will, and emotions, and body) was completely perfect.

When we accept Christ into our life we become a new creation! (2 Cor. 5:17-18) This referring to the new creation in our spirit as we are now in Christ! When we are born again, we receive the Spirit of Christ on the inside of us - instantaneously, 100%, no darkness and all light. Wall-to-wall Holy Ghost! This is something that we cannot forget. We cannot forget it concerning ourselves, nor can we forget it about our younger brothers and sisters in Christ after they are born again - especially those we are helping walk through the discipleship (transformation) process.

However, when we received the full portion of the Spirit of Christ, that did not necessarily transform our soul or our body immediately. Think back to yourself before you were born again. You may have struggled with emotional issues, with lusts or angers in your thoughts, and choosing (willing) to do wrong. When you received the Spirit of Christ instantaneously upon being born again, it probably didn't drastically change all of those parts of your emotional life and thought life in an instant. In the moment of being born again you received the 100% Spirit of Christ but you still needed transformation in your soul! This is what the work of transformation is for – primarily transforming our souls – our mind, will, and emotions.

Similarly, a young brother or sister in the Lord who you are discipling won't change in their soul overnight. They may sin against you in some way because of their still imperfect soul. So of course, you forgive them - 70x7 times if necessary! But let's also consider 2 Corinthians 5:16 *“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.”* As believers, we are being instructed to regard each other no longer according to the flesh - to no longer think of them according to their soul or their body – we think of them according to their spirit. Their spirit is now that of Christ - the same Holy Spirit that is also inside of each of us! When God looks upon this born again brother or sister, he sees Jesus, by virtue of His Spirit in them! That's how our Father sees us. That is how He sees our young born-again brother or sister in Christ. We are urged to see them likewise!

Now what the enemy will try to do, is to make us think otherwise about ourselves and about our other brothers and sisters in Christ around us. The enemy want to make us think that there is something at our core that is bad or evil. He wants to trick us into believing that all the thoughts that come into our head are really the “true you.” Those are lies he wants to sow into our heart about ourselves or those around us. He uses these lies to make us think that we need to “get more good” into us - that we have to try harder to make ourselves holy. That is the trap. That is religion. We have

to fight against that because in fact, we have all the goodness, all the holiness, all the righteousness, all the perfection within us that we will ever need! We have the 100% Holy Spirit inside of us already! Rather than trying to “get good into us” we need to simply be letting that holiness of the Holy Spirit out of us!

There are three ways we can be about the transformation of our souls. The core way is using the mirror of the Word and lining up with the Word. And the other two helping ways are by keeping / guarding our hearts and by managing / eradicating unbelief in our lives.

The core offensive transformation strategy is using the mirror of the Word in order for our soul to line up with who we are in Christ - who we are in our born-again spirit. This can be a challenge because we can far more directly experience what is going on in our bodies and souls. By contrast, there is often less direct of a direct sense of your spirit. Thankfully, the Lord has revealed to us so much about our true self, our spirit, in His Word. So, what we need to do is to learn through the Word - using it as a mirror to learn about our true self, to align the rest of ourselves with this true self via the Word, and thereby be truly transformed. (see 2 Cor. 3:18)

Romans 12:2 says “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*” So if we look at what the Word says about the born again spirit we now have within us, we see that its key virtue is that it is righteous! We are not self-righteous. Instead, like 2 Corinthians 5:21 says “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” As believers, we are the righteousness of God in HIM! We are not self-righteous, we are Christ-righteous! “I am at my core, righteous! Regardless of something I may hear, see, think, or do.”

So what do we do with that reality of our righteousness in Christ? 1 Corinthians 15:34 says, “*Awake to righteousness, and do not sin.*” This verse is telling us that we need to realize that righteousness is our true nature now, and that we need to focus on that. We need to take hold of the reality of our righteousness in Him and in so doing we will “be holy as He is Holy.” If you will focus on the righteousness that is in you, you will be transformed in your thoughts, in your will, and in your emotions. On the other hand, if we have a sin-consciousness, if we are constantly rehearsing “oh I did that ... oh I thought this ...” and you are speaking that out you are actually counteracting the expression of His righteousness that is already in you! If we have and focus on a sin-consciousness, we will struggle to not act accordingly. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

As you read the Word look at the places where it talks about what becomes of the righteous, holy, or upright person! Look at what they will have or receive and realize that when you read about those who are righteous, holy, or upright before God and realize it’s talking about you! For example, Psalm 34:17 says “*The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.*” Praise

God we are now in the new covenant and we have full righteousness through faith in Christ! Therefore Psalm 34:17 applies to you and me -to all those who will receive Christ and realize that they are righteous in Him! Likewise Psalm 37:30-31 says *“The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.”* This is what we need to be saying and thinking about ourselves as believers. “I speak wisdom. My tongue talks of justice. My posterity will be delivered!”

Recently, Andy has been blessed with a great opportunity - he’s been leading a huge project - a very visible project. Andy speaks Proverbs 16:3 in faith *“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.”* Andy is saying “Lord, I commit this to you and I trust in You to bring it to pass. You and I are going to partner together on this and that’s how I’m going to get through it. I am not capable of this on my own, but certainly with you I am!” In committing his works to the Lord Andy has seen it come to pass and has been able to do it with joy, peace, and patience!

There are two other helpful ways to transform your soul. The first is by keeping your heart. This strategy is essential to making sure you maintain the ground you’ve taken by the word! Our heart is what determines what will be produced in our lives. In Luke 6:45 Jesus said *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”* Proverbs 4:20-23 also tells us to keep our heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Keep your heart by keeping your words, your ears, and your eyes. Surely we can see areas in our lives that need improved, but take care about how you do that - go about it with with a righteousness-consciousness. Go about that by taking in the truth from the Word and allowing that to do the transformative work - as opposed to speaking negatively about yourself or listening to words coming in about you that are not lined up with the Word of God.

Another helpful component of the transformation process in your soul is knowing that your faith will be released by getting unbelief out of its way! In Matthew 17:20 Jesus says: *“for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”* But what does he say before that? *“Because of your unbelief.”* So, what was Jesus answering? He was telling the disciples that it was because of their unbelief they couldn’t cast out the demon that was causing the boy’s epilepsy. Jesus was saying “it is because of your unbelief. The problem isn’t that you don’t have enough faith. The problem is that your unbelief is blocking that faith.”

This is a simple (but not easy) concept - that unbelief is what is hindering our faith. It is, however, a true key to the transformative process that needs to go on in our lives! First realize that the issue if we are not seeing the fruit of what the Word in an area of life is simply unbelief - not God’s Word not working! Recognizing unbelief in our life is not bad, negative, or something to feel guilty about. It is

just the fact of the matter that can upon recognition be addressed! In fact, the offensive strategy of transforming our soul (looking at the mirror of the Word) is the same strategy we use to drive out unbelief! As you are seeing who you are in the Word, be prepared to see areas where you have unbelief. Don't run away from those. Say "I need to see this more in my life!" Get after that unbelief by bathing your mind in His Word! Your thoughts will be replaced with His thoughts and your ways will be replaced with His ways. Finally, your own results will be replaced with His results!

Points to Ponder . . .

- Why is it important to "rehearse" or "review" what we already know in the Lord?
- What are the three main components of our Christian walk and how are we focusing on each as a church?
- Why is the spirit, soul, and body teaching so important for young believers ... and which scriptures would you lead a younger brother or sister through to teach it to them?
- What part of believers needs transformed? How is that done?
- What makes us righteous and what are some of the benefits of righteousness?