Training my spirit

Our spiritual battlefield is the mind, but the mind and the spirit are not the same. Proverbs 20:27 teaches, “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord” — like a candle man’s spirit guides and gives light.

Scripture teaches that God’s creation of man, “The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). God created man three-dimensional. God formed man’s body out of dust of the ground. Man is not a body. He lives within a body, but he was created a “living soul.”

The word translated “soul” is, “psuche,” from which our modern word “psychology” comes from, meaning, “unseen part of man.” It refers to the person living inside the body; our personality — our mind, emotions and will! Man was created to live in a physical world, so he needed a “physical” body to communicate, and experience, the physical world. He are a “SOUL” living in a “BODY.”

Something else happened at creation. “God breathed into man breath of life and man became a living soul.” Hebrew word “breath” and “spirit” are both translated from the same Hebrew word. So God breathed “spirit” into man, “and he became a living soul.” Man’s spiritual life was the result of his union with God.

The Hebrew word translated, “death,” means, “separation.” God said to Adam, “In the day that you eat of the tree, you will die.” Yet he lived, physically, 930 years after he sinned. So, God could not have been referring to physical dying. And, Adam still had his personality (mind, will, and emotions), so God was not referring to soul-life dying. So, what happened the day Adam sinned? He was driven, separated, from the presence of God. His “union with God” was broken. The death God referred to was SEPERATION from God. It was a “spiritual” death. His spirit was separated from God. Man was no longer a “living” soul – but just a “soul.” Death means separation.

The Bible teaches, “If we are not in union with the life of God, we are dead —“ dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). We can have physical life and soul life, but we are dead as far as our spirit is concerned — we are separated from God.

Ephesians 2:1 states, “When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are ‘quickened’ “ — that is, “made alive!” Death is SEPERATION and LIFE is UNION WITH GOD!

We take care of our body and the needs of our soul yet inwardly still feel dissatisfied — because we are living a dull two-dimensional plane and not the dynamic three-dimensional plane God originally intended. Without God our spirit is dead. We can communicate through our body and our soul but we are dead spiritually, if we have not accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior.

God created man predominately a spiritual being! His spirit was to rule his life by feeding upon “the Tree of Life.” He was to have fellowship and intimate communion with God through his spirit. Instead man chose to eat of the forbidden tree that fed his soul. Man’s whole drive and energy was to be derived from his spirit in union with God, by partaking of the Tree of Life. As he maintained union with God, his spirit would direct his soul and body. Man’s spirit was to give him insight and guidance in his
decisions, actions and attitudes. As his spirit received information for life from the spiritual world, his soul acted on this information as he lived in a physical world. His insights, decisions, actions, attitudes were under control of God, by the Holy Spirit.

**MAN’S SPIRITUAL APTITUDES AND ABILITIES**
- Comprehending the essential nature of God – ("Light" – John 1:5)
- Discerning right and wrong – ("Conscience" – Romans 2:15)
- Comprehending the basic meaning of life – ("Wisdom" – 1 Corinthians 1:20-24)
- Sensing the spirit of others ("Sensitivity" – 1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
- Directing basic drives and emotions ("Creativity" – 1 Corinthians 2:12-13)

**MAN’S PSYCHOLOGICAL APTITUDES AND ABILITIES**
- Thinking, reasoning, remembering
- Feeling various emotions
- Exercising the will and making choices

**MAN’S PHYSICAL APPTITUDES AND ABILITIES**
- Seeing – Hearing – Tasting – Feeling – Smelling

Of course, man received physical data as well because he was created for and lived in a physical world, but he was predominately controlled by his spirit. His soul (the real person living in a physical body) received data by his spirit. His physical body then acted -- or lived!

Man sinned and lost his spiritual ability and union with God. He died; not physically, but spiritually. His spirit was separated from God. Now man can only live the blessed life God intends him to live, as his spirit rules -- he allows God to direct him through spiritual aptitudes and abilities.

Man was created a soul in a physical body to be directed by his spirit. He lived in physical world, but was always to live in subjection to his spirit. God did not want a robot, or animal, to serve Him, He desired a created creature that would return His devotion and love; one capable of the same emotions and responses He had, one He could fellowship and have communion with.

"Love," true love, demands a choice, so, to accomplish this, God gave man a will -- and a fair test of obedience. Man sinned and disobeyed God. He chose to be own boss and live by the desires of his soul -- or, flesh.

Of course, man’s soul was to function, it was a part of his makeup. God told man to learn of every tree of the garden except one. God was saying, “Use your knowledge all you want to in every area of the world except you are not to know evil by experience. The only way I intend you to have knowledge of good and evil is to learn by discerning of your spirit.”

Everything changed when man deliberately, with a “free-will,” disobeyed God, choosing to satisfy his soul’s cravings. His spirit died. He was separated from God.

When man sinned he received something -- “weaker element in his human nature.” The New Testament word “Sarx,” is translated, “flesh.” It is not referring to man’s flesh-body, but rather it refers to the "unregenerate condition of a person whose spirit is dead" (Romans 7:5; 8:8-9) -- the source of wrong impulses (See 2 Peter 2:18 and 1 John 2:16). After a believer’s spirit is reborn, he still has a carnal sensual side. (See Galatians 3:3 and
Adam’s “spirit” died when he sinned and mankind became a victim of Satan’s aggressions and temptations. All he had left was the craving of his soul because he was separated from union with God and had only a lower nature to program his soul for insights, decisions, actions and attitudes. He no longer had “spiritual life.”

We must not neglect our spirit or we will never be a well-balanced whole person. When we accepted Jesus Christ, by faith, into our heart, we received the New Life of Jesus Christ. We were “born-again” by divine life that Jesus brings to renew our spirit. The Holy Spirit brought the resurrected life of Jesus Christ into our spirit. Our soul responded by: (1) understanding with our mind; (2) repenting with our emotions, and (3) choosing with our will. John 3:6 declares, “That which is born of the Holy Spirit is our spirit — we are born-again! We invite Jesus Christ to enter our heart, “spirit,” and establish a living relationship with God. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God.”

Expect resistance from your lower nature. Galatians 5:17 states, “The flesh lusts against — (fights, has conflicts with) the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.” That means that we still have “the lower nature,” mankind inherited from Adam’s race. The New Testament refers to this nature as “carnal,” “flesh” or, “the old man.”

There are initial evidences of God’s Spirit in within our life. I’ll list three:

1. **A SPIRITUAL HUNGER FOR GOD’S WORD**
   When our spirit is born-again (made alive), it needs to be fed. Nourishment for our spirit is God’s Word. 1 Peter 2:2 teaches, “Without consistent intake of the Word, we will never discover successful living.” Jesus said,, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

2. **A NEW SENSITIVITY TO RIGHT AND WRONG**
   When the Holy Spirit unites with our spirit, our conscience is strengthened, but our mind, emotions, and will (our soul) continue to manifest conflicts with our renewed spirit. God’s Word is able to transform this dimension of our being. “For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has His way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures” (Galatians 5:17 Living Bible).

3. **A DESIRE FOR A TRANSFORMED LIFE**
   Our spirit begins to comprehend the image of Christ and is dissatisfied with our former life, producing a desire to become more like Jesus. Christ. “For whom God chose He ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son”(Romans 8:29). “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the RENEWING OF YOUR MIND” (Romans 12:2). After we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, by an act of our will, we find there is a struggle within our life. We soon discover two forces within as we attempt to fulfill what we know to be right. One force seeks to draw our attention to wrong impulses the other seeks to draw our attention to the right impulses. Don’t be discouraged, Paul describes this struggle in Romans 7:15-25.
1. **BE REBORN IN OUR SPIRIT** — We must be made alive in our *spirit*, then allow our spirit to become the center of our life.

2. **REBUILD OUR THOUGHTS**

   The Holy Spirit is the Author and Interpreter of Scripture. He enters our *spirit*, by the new-birth and is able to rebuild our thoughts around a comprehension of God’s Word. (See John 16:13 & 14:26)

**(A) MEMORIZE GOD’S THOUGHT STRUCTURES**

   To think God’s thoughts we must be able to comprehend and appreciate
His structure of thinking as presented in His Word. The fact that many sections are hard to understand only underscores the truth of Isaiah 55:8-9, where God says, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts.”

(B) SATURATE MIND WITH SCRIPTURE -- (Meditation is a lost art.)

“Meditation” comes from the concept of a cow chewing its cud, bringing up again and again what it has eaten. In the same way we recall in our mind over and over again what we read in God’s Word. We saturate our mind with God’s Word. Not only does this fill us with good thoughts, but it also “washes out” thoughts that are opposed to Scripture. Joshua 1:8 teaches, “If God’s Word does not depart out of our mouth; but we meditate on it is day and night and do according to all that is written therein: whatever we do will prosperous, and we will have good success.” Reconstruct all our ideas around God’s principles of living (See Psalm 119:10-11). Jesus taught that we are “sanctified through God’s Word” (John 17:7); we are cleansed by God’s Word (John 15:3).

Only through our spirit can we discover the dimension of living God has for us and gain personal fulfillment of what we long to achieve. When we are born-again the Holy Spirit produces life to our spirit. Our responsibility is to let this new life to penetrate our soul. It takes time to meditate in God’s Word. We need to shut self up alone with own spirit and God.

3. REDIRECT OUR GOALS BY AN ACT OF OUR WILL

We must practice the Word. James 1:22 tells us to be a “Doer of the Word, not a hearer only.” Visualize each word. Ask self, “How can I turn God’s Word into action that will build Christian character and lead others to salvation?” How do I “Redirect my goals?”

Read Philippians 4:6-9 in the Living Bible

God has given us a free will that doesn’t vanish when we are born-again. We have the choice of living a carnal Christian life or a victorious one. Christ has made provision that we live an overcoming life. Now that we are born-again we must set new goals for our life by an act of our will, receiving God’s Word into our mind. How is this done?

(A) ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOD’S WORK AND REPUTATION

Any physical member within our body is sensitive to needs within the whole body, just so we are to “lay down our life for others.”

(B) PURPOSE TO BECOME A LIVING TRANSLATION OF GOD’S WORD

God has certain specific goals that He wants to accomplish in our life and He is looking for those through whom He can reach these objectives. We are to
live Scripture. Comparing our society with similar situations in Scripture will help us to gain an understanding of the goals God wants to accomplish.

(C) EXPAND MEANING OF KEY WORDS TRANSLATING THEM INTO ACTION
One of God’s greatest problems is using words to communicate His ideas and our inability to comprehend the thought concepts behind the words. We need a Bible concordance to look up other verses in which the same word is used; an expository dictionary to express the meaning of the word as used in the original language; and a dictionary to look up the full meaning of the English word.

4. REFOCUS OUR EMOTIONS

God gave His Word to make us a WHOLE PERSON -- this involves allowing Scripture to direct our mind, will and emotion. When we are born-again the Holy Spirit makes our spirit alive, now the Holy Spirit desires to direct and control our soul. James 1:21, “Receive with meekness (full control) the engrafted (implanted) Word, which is able to (has power to) save your souls -- (mind, will and emotions). We continue to experience conflicting struggles in our mind, will and emotions.

Romans 12:2 tells us that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God makes it possible for us to “Be transformed by the renewing of our mind.” Galatians 5:17 teaches, “For the flesh lusteth (wars) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”

Building God’s Word in our heart means to give it first place, allowing it to become the full expression of our emotions. Proverbs 4:20-22, “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.” That is excellent advice. Of course we “DO” other things, but we put God’s Word first!

(A) PERSONALIZE THE SCRIPTURE WE HAVE STUDIED AND MEDITATED UPON
God delights to hear His own Word, especially when using it to express our own desires and emotions. We can take the same sections studied and mediated on it, and add personal pronouns wherever possible. An example: John 15:7, Jesus said, “If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.” Personalized, “Lord, I will abide in You and allow Your words to abide in me; then, whatever I ask will be done unto me.”

(B) EXPRESS IRRITATIONS, DISAPPOINTMENTS, HEARTACHES THROUGH SCRIPTURE
Most of the Psalms was written by a man called, “after God’s own heart.” They express the very heart of God and should express our heart, as well. There is a wide spectrum of emotions in the Psalms -- much of this spectrum we may not yet have experienced. God allows certain situations in our life to expose us to new sections of this spectrum; to gain a wider sensitivity and insight into the nature of God (and the feelings of others). Many Psalms are written in first person and are excellent material help us refocus our emotions.

BUILDING SCRIPTURE INTO OUR LIVES
This demands central focus of our concentration. If this is to take place in our life, we can never try to “fit it into our present routine!” How is this accomplished?

1. SELECT A MEANINGFUL SECTION OF SCRIPTURE
Find a passage of Scripture that relates directly to a question, a problem or a particular interest that you have. When it comes to studying, meditating, and memorizing Scripture, the question is, “When will I ever find time?”

2. BEGIN THE DAY IN EVENING
The last important thoughts on our mind in the evening just before going to sleep remain on our subconscious mind throughout the night, consciously or unconsciously, and can set our mental attitudes for the day. Determine areas of personal character deficiency and find sections of Scripture, relating to them. Take these sections through the following steps:

1. MEMORIZE – “The entrance of Thy words gives light” (Psalm 119:130)
   “It is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you” (Proverbs 22:18)

2. VISUALIZE – Picture each word. Proverbs 2:3-5, “If you cry after knowledge and life up your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then shall you understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”

3. PERSONALIZE – Put Scripture into the first person and quote it back to God. For instance, “If You abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you will and it will be done unto you” (John 15:7).

God commands that we, “present our whole being and faculties as a living sacrifice, consecrated and worthy of God’s acceptance. And, not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of the mind” (Romans 12:1-2). He commands us to “receive the end of our faith even the salvation of our souls - (mind, will and emotions) – seeing we have purified our souls - (mind, will and emotions) – in obeying the truth…” (1 Peter 1:9, 22) and to, “commit the keeping of our souls (mind will and emotions) to God in well doing” (1 Peter 4:19).
Hebrews 10:39 commands to “believe to the saving of our soul – (mind will and emotions).” The 20th Century New Testament renders this verse, “For these cravings of our earthly nature conflict with the Spirit, and the Spirit with our earthly nature – they are two contrary principles – so that you cannot do what you wish.” How do I overcome this struggle within?

Jesus, “If you remain in union with Me and My words remain in you, you may ask whatever you please and you shall have it” (John 15:7). 1 Peter 1:4 says, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious [God’s Word] that by these [by God’s promises] ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts.” God’s word is powerful, able to change our mind, will, and emotions (our soul) until we become more conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

Lord’s Supper is symbolic of the divine life of Jesus Christ. As we partake of the emblems of Christ’s body, we are illustrating a precious, glorious truth. We feed upon His Word for our spiritual life. As physical food becomes a part of us physically when we feast upon it, just so as we feed upon God’s Word, it becomes a part of us spiritually!

This is accomplished:

1. By memorizing God’s Word with our mind
2. Visualizing God’s Word with our will, and
3. Personalizing God’s Word with our emotions

Just as our physical senses are windows to the physical world, so our spirit senses are our windows to the spiritual world. Our spirit has senses also: SEEING - Ephesians 1:18; HEARING - Galatians 3:2; FEELING - James 4:8; TASTING - Psalm 34:8; and SMELLING - 2 Corinthians 2:16,

Paul said, “We preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” Colossians 1:28. The Greek words, “perfect in Christ Jesus,” is also translated “Complete in Christ” – “full grown” – “mature though union with Christ Jesus.” – That is my prayer for you!
The Holy Spirit gives life to the believer’s “spirit” when he is born-again.

EMOTIONS

WILL

MIND

SOUL

Believer’s “spirit” made alive by the Holy Spirit at New Birth, John 3:6

EMOTIONS
Quote Scriptures back to God as personal prayer

WILL
Revise Personal goals

MIND
Study, Meditate and Memorize

Attitudes & Actions