

Spiritual Life Part 4: How Does the Spiritual Life Actually Work?

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Spiritual Life is impossible (e.g., Rom. 12-16 has 48 impossible commands); it requires a miracle. But God has made it possible through the Cross of His Son. The moment we believed in Christ, we were: (1) freed from the shackles of sin (Rom. 6), (2) we were given an inner man to overcome our sin nature (despite the fact that we still sin because of our sin nature that remains), (Rom. 7), and (3) we were resurrected and given a new life that is capable of obeying God (Rom. 8).

Human history also testifies to the fact that we're able to succeed in the spiritual life because God has been at work throughout it to restore the fellowship He had with man in the Garden. He finally accomplishes this when He sends Christ to die on the Cross. Thus ultimately God's original intent for man will be realized: (1) man will once again be in complete harmony with God and himself and (2) man will once again have complete dominion over the earth.

The lives of other believers like Abraham and David also testify to our ability to succeed because it shows that God is faithful to His Word. Not only does He give impossible commands, He enables believers to obey them. And even though man's first inclination is to sin, as it was in the Garden and it is today, the Cross provides us more than just salvation from hell. Through the Cross, God has given us the ability to overcome our sinful tendencies.

II. REMEMBER YOUR FOUNDATION

A. *Romans 6, 7, and 8*

God has enabled us to live righteously before Him, but we must pay attention to what He's done for us and given us through the Cross of His Son.

B. *1 John 1:5-10: We Must Live With Our Hearts Open to God's Word*

1 John 1:9 is part of a paragraph that deals with our spiritual integrity. Will we allow God's Word, His light, to reveal our sinfulness, so that we can confess it and reestablish our fellowship with God?

C. *2 Corinthians 3:18: God Transforms Us as We Look Intently into the Mirror of His Word*

We must come before the mirror of God's Word with an unveiled face, as Moses did in Exodus 34. And as we behold the glory of our Lord in the pages of God's Word, the Holy Spirit will perform His transforming ministry in our lives. As this happens we will begin to see, do, and think the way our Lord did. Sinful habits will give way to new spiritual ones.

D. *James 1:22-24: Don't Forget Who You Really Are*

We must realize that inside of us is a sinless new nature that is waiting to obey God. This is the "born-again face" James talks about and we must not forget who we really are. We can see this born-again face in the mirror of God's Word, in the portions of Scripture that describe it and in the lives of other believers who live according to their born-again face.

E. *1 John 5:14-15: Remember to Communicate With Your Heavenly Father*

Every believer has complete access to His heavenly Father through prayer. And He answers every request that is according to His will. What's His will? For us to obey Him. So if we ask Him to enable us to live a successful Christian life, then He will grant that request. However, we must remember that it's a moment by moment process, *from glory to glory* (2 Cor. 3:18).

F. *Romans 8:5-6: You Must Have a Spiritual Mindset*

Everything ends and begins with our minds. In order to have a successful Christian life, we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds, Rom. 12:2. We must be focused on the things of God not the flesh. This means that we must seek His will for our lives, i.e., to be transformed into the image of His Son. So our thinking will be one with Christ's thinking.

III. HOW DO WE APPLY THE FOUNDATION IN OUR DAILY LIVES?

A. *How Do We Know When We're Living by the Flesh?*

Galatians 5:19-21 reveals the works of the flesh but it can be more subtle than this. We tend to have sinful tendencies that may appear minor, but they are in fact sin. This sin leads us away from God and his transforming power. In order to determine what is sin in our lives or whether we're living by the flesh, we must ask ourselves, "Is this something Christ would do?" If the answer is "no," then it's probably your flesh at work.

B. *Life Example: Dealing With a Childhood Issue*

IV. CONCLUSION

God has provided us everything we need to live righteously before Him. So when it comes to living our lives, we must be firmly planted on this foundation. We must recognize our behavior for what it is, sin. And having identified it, we must move forward with the solution God has provided: Christ and everything His Cross has done for us.