

Live a Life Full in God

The Guide to Nurturing
Your Mind, Soul, and Body

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"To my dear husband, Georg, whose support and motivation have been fundamental pillars in the realization of my dreams. Especially in those moments when I have undertaken projects to glorify God, his support has been unwavering.

Thank you for always making me feel loved and firmly supported in every step I take."

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CHAPTER 1:

UNDERSTANDING OUR TRIPARTITE NATURE

Key Bible verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:23 serves as a foundation for exploring the profound and complex nature of our being. Here, the apostle Paul reveals an essential truth about our constitution as God's creations: we are tripartite beings, composed of spirit, soul, and body.

However, some Christians believe that the "soul" and "spirit" are the same, an idea known as “dichotomy.” According to this belief, the human being is composed solely of two fundamental parts: the spirit (or soul) and the body, using "spirit" and "soul" interchangeably to refer to the same aspect of our being.

This belief, however, contrasts with Paul's explicit statement in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which not only reflects the complexity of our nature as described in the Bible, but also clearly and unequivocally affirms our status as tripartite beings. According to Paul, we are a spirit, we have a soul, and both spirit and soul inhabit a body, a doctrine known as trichotomy.

For a deeper understanding of the words “soul” and “spirit” according to their original meaning in Scripture, and how these terms support the doctrine of trichotomy, it is crucial to examine the original languages of the Bible. These languages establish a clear distinction between both concepts, demonstrating that they are completely distinct.

Next, we will delve into the biblical definitions of spirit, soul, and body, based on the original languages of the Bible:

1. Definition of “Soul”:

a. Hebrew: Nephesh

Genesis 35:18, “And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.”

The word “soul” in the original Hebrew is *nephesh*. In the Old Testament, *nephesh* is used to refer to life or living being, focusing on the internal aspects of the being, such as desires, emotions, and individuality.

In the context of Genesis 35:18, *nephesh* is used to denote the moment when Rachel is dying; that is, her life (soul) is departing. This use emphasizes the departure of Rachel's vital essence at the moment of her death, highlighting the belief in the existence of a vital or essential component that leaves the body at the time of death. The mention of *nephesh* in this passage emphasizes the belief in a vital dimension that transcends the physical body, which, when dying, ceases to animate the body.

b. Greek: Psyche

Matthew 10:28, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

The word “soul” in the original Greek is *psyche*. In the New Testament, *psyche* refers to our mind, feelings, will, and emotions, also focusing on the inner or psychic life of the human being.

The soul is also the scene of many of our spiritual battles, facing decisions, doubts, and temptations. James 1:21 urges us to receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls, highlighting the importance of submitting our soul to transformation and renewal through the Word of God.

The passage in Matthew 10:28 reminds us that although our body

is vulnerable and mortal, our soul possesses immortality and transcends earthly life. Fearing God, who has the power to affect both soul and body, is fundamental to our understanding of life and eternity. Thus, in our search for identity and purpose, it is vital to remember that our "soul" is intimately linked to our Creator and His love for us.

In summary, your soul is YOU: your mind, your being, your personality, and your thoughts; everything that constitutes your essence "you", but without the body.

2. Definition of "Spirit":

a. Hebrew: *Ruach*

Genesis 35:29, "So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

The word "**spirit**" in the original Hebrew is *ruach*, which refers to the immaterial part of a human being that establishes a direct connection with God. It is through the *ruach* that we come to know, worship, and serve God, for "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Worship and knowledge of God occur in the spiritual realm.

a. Greek: *Pneuma*

Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

The word "**spirit**" in the original Greek is *pneuma*. *Pneuma* is used to refer to the human spirit, that part of us capable of interacting with the Spirit of God, distinguished from the soul in its capacity for spiritual communion.

The spirit is that part of us that is born again when we believe in Christ as our Lord and Savior. With this new faith, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, giving us a renewed spiritual life. It is through the Holy Spirit that God communicates with us, touching our *pneuma*.

This unique connection allows us to experience the presence of God, guiding us and filling us with His love and wisdom.

Our spirit is the place of our communion with God, where we worship and receive spiritual revelation. It is in our spirit where we become aware of our need for salvation and seek a deep relationship with our Creator.

From an etymological perspective, which is the study of word roots, it is clear that the soul and the spirit are not identical. This is because God uses different terms to refer to each. As we delve deeper into the study of the Bible, we discover that we are a spirit, we possess a soul, and we live in a physical body.

The spirit is the immaterial part through which we establish connection, knowledge, worship, and service to God, as expressed in John 4:24, indicating that knowing and worshiping God is possible only in the spiritual realm. Understanding that the soul is the seat of the mind, feelings, emotions, intellect, and will, we recognize the fundamental distinction between these aspects of our being.

b. Definition of “Body”:

a. Hebrew: *Basar*

In Genesis 2:7, we find a narrative essential for understanding the creation of the human body: "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being."

Although the specific term “**body**” is not directly mentioned, this passage is fundamental to understanding the physical formation of the human being. The Hebrew term *basar*, commonly translated as "flesh" in the Old Testament, is understood in many contexts as synonymous with body or the physical manifestation of the human being.

b. Greek: *Soma*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reveals a profound truth about our body:

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

In the New Testament, the Greek term for **“body”** is *soma*, and it refers to the physical body. This term is used to describe the material part of the human being, distinct from both "soul" and "spirit." It is in the body where our actions are manifested and our faith is lived out in tangible ways.

This verse underscores the sanctity of the human body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and calls on believers to glorify God with their bodies.

Conclusion:

We are tripartite beings, created in the image and likeness of God, comprised of a spirit that seeks divine communion, a soul that processes emotions and thoughts, and a body that serves as our vehicle in the earthly realm. Understanding this reality is essential for living our faith holistically, seeking sanctification in all aspects of our being.

Reflection Questions

1. What are the three distinct parts that make up the human being according to 1 Thessalonians 5:23?

2. What belief contrasts with Paul's assertion about our tripartite nature?

3. How does the belief in trichotomy differ from the belief in dichotomy?

4. What is the soul and what functions does it fulfill according to the Scriptures?

5. Which part of us connects with God?

6. How is our body described in the Bible?

Biblical Verses

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV):

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Genesis 35:18 (NKJV):

“And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.”

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV):

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Genesis 35:29 (NKJV):

“So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”

Romans 8:16 (NKJV):

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Genesis 2:7 (NKJV):

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NKJV):

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Answers

1. According to the Bible, we have three parts: spirit, soul, and body.
2. The contrasting belief is dichotomy, which holds that the “soul” and “spirit” are identical, perceiving the human being as composed only of two parts: spirit/soul and body.
3. Trichotomy maintains that we are beings composed of three distinct parts: spirit, soul, and body. In contrast, dichotomy proposes that there are only two fundamental components: the spirit/soul and the body, considering the spirit and the soul as the same entity.
4. The soul, represented by the Hebrew words "nephesh" and Greek "psyche," refers to our inner life, including the mind, feelings, will, and emotions. It is the stage for our spiritual battles, decisions, and transformation through the Word of God.
5. Our spirit connects with God.
6. Our body is described as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 2:

CARING FOR YOUR SPIRIT: UNITING WITH GOD

Key Bible verse: 1 Corinthians 6:17, “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”

Understanding how to care for our mind is a crucial step in our spiritual walk, but it is equally important to live a life that is pleasing to God. The only way to achieve this is with the active Spirit of God in our life.

Human beings are a composition of spirit, soul, and body: we are essentially a spirit, we possess a soul, and we reside within a body. Our spirit is the immaterial part that enables us to know, worship, and serve God, since He Himself is Spirit.

John 4:24 states: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” This underscores that we cannot know God in any way other than through the spirit. Therefore, God desires that we take care of our spirit, that part of us that can unite with Him, seeking to be one with God.

1 Corinthians 6:17 delves deeper into this truth: “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” The word “join” speaks of a deep connection, like gluing, binding, or cementing, suggesting a union so close that it cannot be easily separated.

How can we unite our spirit with God's?

First, it is essential to understand that all humans are born with a fallen spirit, a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience.

I. WE ARE BORN SINNERS BY NATURE.

By nature, we come into the world as sinners, which allows sin to influence all aspects of our being. Everyone, without exception or distinction, is subject to physical death. But the question arises: Why do we die? Why is it impossible to escape death?

Romans 5:12 offers a clear explanation: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

Genetic science has demonstrated that genes, which reproduce physical, intellectual, and spiritual traits in humans, are transmitted through the blood. We observe how people can resemble their parents so closely, inheriting not only physical and intellectual traits but also the sinful nature and mortality.

Sin transformed Adam's human nature from innocence to sinfulness. This altered nature has been transmitted to all his descendants, causing humans to inherit a natural inclination towards sin from birth.

The Greek term “hamartanō,” meaning “to miss the mark,” illustrates how sin affected Adam, moving him from innocence to a constant propensity for sin. This nature has been transmitted to all human descendants of Adam through the blood.

This explains why children do not need to be taught to behave badly; they act badly by nature. Conversely, we must make an effort to teach them to do good, as they are born with a sin inclination.

Although genetic science allows us to know our genealogy and physical and intellectual heritage, it can never reveal human wickedness or depravity.

However, the Bible provides us with information about the origin and consequences of sin and, fortunately, also about the solution to this profound evil.

What is the solution to this profound evil?

The solution is the blood of Christ, His death in our place. By accepting it by faith, our sins are forgiven. The sinful nature, which is