

Dr. Sharon Schuetz

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE BORN AGAIN?

Did you know that we have a spiritual body that gets transformed the moment we are saved?

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(Formerly: Why God Came Down)

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE'RE BORN AGAIN?

The world has hijacked the word born-again and changed its meaning from spiritual birth to include any enlightenment experience. If we break a habit, we're born-again, or if we received understanding, we're born again. By the world's standards, it doesn't take much to be born-again. However, Jesus made it clear to Nicodemus that one must be born of water (the human birth) and the Spirit (spiritual birth) (John 3:5,6). Unless we're born of the Spirit, bringing life to our dead spirit, we're not born-again, or rather, we're not saved.

Spiritual birth is the most significant experience in our lives. We can have all the good things: a happy marriage, children, education, a successful career, money, property, friends, or any of the many benchmarks of success, and fail to be born-again. In that case, we're utter failures and will spend eternity regretting it.

While every generation has challenges that divert our attention away from the spirit, today's Christians are in greater danger than many of our predecessors. Our parents and grandparents found it easier to find time for spiritual pursuits. Today we have television, movies, video games, social media, and unlimited distractions that feed our minds and spirits. There are endless diversions surround us, drawing our attention away from God and into destructive

energy-draining behavior that fills our minds with negative thoughts. It is not uncommon to spend hours scrolling through Facebook or Twitter or watching useless videos that poison our spirits. We struggle to shut out the noise, concentrate on God's Word, and fellowship with Him in praise and worship.

Every human being must personally experience the new birth. We can't depend on someone else's salvation. Our parents or spouses may be Christians, but that doesn't guarantee heaven for us. We can't base our relationship with God on another person's experience. If the thought of judgment creates a feeling of fear or dread, we should check our hearts. It would be deadly to make a mistake here.

We have made the whole process of salvation appear too effortless today. Getting saved is simply asking Jesus to come into our hearts and save us from sin. Right? What could be easier than that? It is what we do after we get up from our knees that matters. After we take this most crucial step and submit our lives to Him, He must become our Lord. That is all there is to it. It is essential to understand how to proceed in the next step and then help others grow spiritually. We will discuss this in this book.

REGENERATION:

Spiritual Renovation

Regeneration, or spiritual renovation, is one of Scripture's names for the new birth or spiritual renovation (Mat. 19:28; Titus 3:5). Paul says, '*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*' (Titus 3:5). In biology, regeneration is the restoration or new growth by an organism of organs, tissues, etc., lost, removed, or injured. Spiritually, it means that God gives man a new life or to be "born again" from a previous state of separation from God and subjection to the decay of death (Ephesians 2:5).

To renew is to make new or restore something to the first state or like new. People do this with houses or cars. People buy old houses and fix



them up. They hire contractors to install new cabinets, repair walls, add windows, carpet, paper, paint, and whatever else necessary to make it useful, beautiful, and valuable. It's like a new house when we finish it.

Our spirit is like that old house when we're born-again. The renovation process extends to our whole nature: changing

our hearts, illuminating our minds, and freeing our wills. When we yield to Him, Jesus replaces our dead spirit with a new one. He then puts His Spirit into that new spirit. Both Jesus and the new convert work together to nurture the union. Like the house, our Lord takes possession of our heart, room by room. With His blood, He cleanses the darkness of our conscience and sweeps the cobwebs from our spirit. He promises, "*...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.*" (1 John 1:7).

The work is not completed all at once. It is a process. Our contractors probably take days or weeks to finish the house, depending on how badly it needs repairs. Jesus will continue working on us until we join Him in heaven at the end of our lives.

In the beginning, all of God's creation was perfect, including man. Unfortunately, we didn't stay that way, hence the term regeneration. After He made all the creatures, the earth, the sky, and the plants, "*...God said; Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good*" (Gen. 1:26, 31).

Through Adam's disobedience, man was no longer good. Sin and death had now entered God's perfect creation. "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" (Rom. 5:12). Death is the absence or

withdrawal of breath and the life force that makes interrelation with others possible. It is separation from God.

God knew that Adam would fall; however, he had to give him the opportunity. If Adam chose to obey God and refuse to eat from the forbidden tree, we would have an entirely different relationship with Him today. Adam's disobedience and fall destroyed man's spirit making spiritual renovation necessary.

In creation, God gave us a human spirit where He could live. This spirit would "house" God's Spirit so that He could live in us through our spirit and become one with Him. *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16,17)."* Had Adam refused to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would have eventually eaten the fruit from the tree of life. At that point, God's Spirit would have entirely filled us, making us spiritual beings. Instead, God drove them out of the garden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life.

Adam's disobedience killed man's spirit, making it dead to God. We can compare the fall to a large, bombed-out three-story building. The bomb has destroyed the ceilings and the floors. The top floor fell into the second, and both the second and third floors collapsed into the bottom floor. Our

human spirit suffered similar damage in the fall. Both our spirit and our soul "fell" into the first floor, the body.

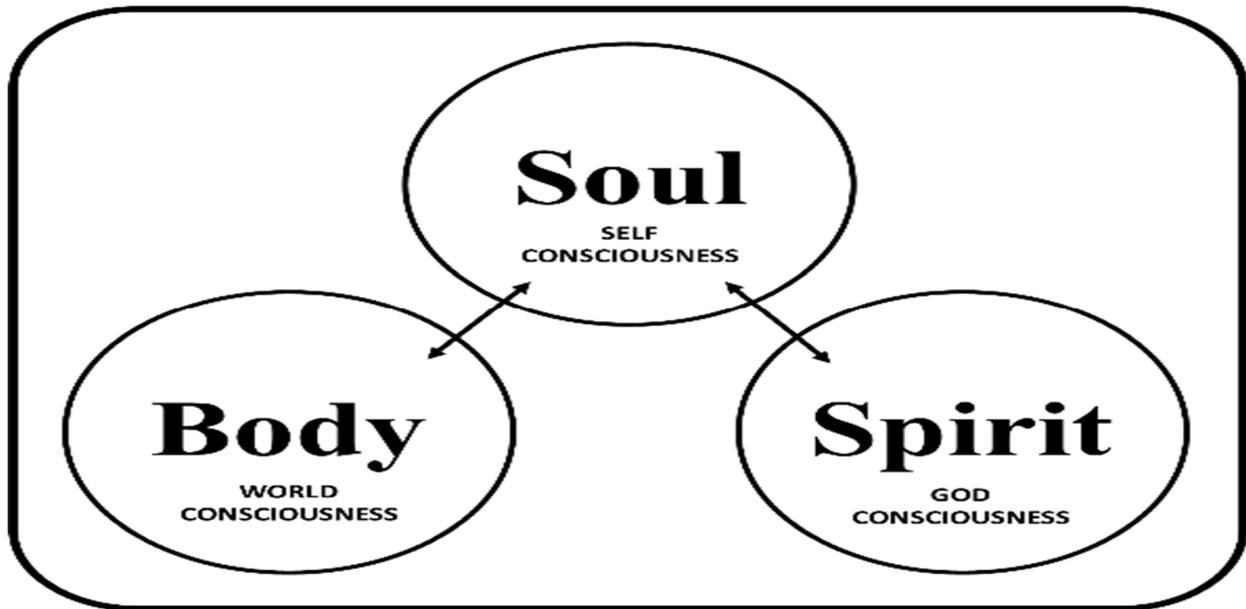
God had several reasons for testing Adam. For now, we need to understand that He had to prove our nature. God wants children who love Him for who He is, not forced submission and obedience out of fear. True, Proverbs tells us that we must "fear" the Lord, and we must. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding"* (Prov. 9:10). This fear is a healthy fear that leads us to repentance and a relationship with God.

God planted the truth of eternity into our hearts. Paul told us that all men know this. *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse"* (Rom. 1:20). The fear of eternity's unknown drives us to seek God. "The knowledge of the holy is understanding" means that once we embrace Him and develop a relationship with Him, we understand who He is. Love grows between Father and child because of this fear.

This fear is also a reverential fear that makes us want to please Him. Once we're saved and know Him as our Father, we do not fear losing Him, but we don't want to disappoint Him. We know He loves us, and His mercy extends beyond our limited understanding. However, disobedience leads to disappointment, and disappointment

leads to a sense of failure and sorrow, separating us from God's presence.

Adam had to choose whether he would obey God, enjoying endless fellowship with Him, or sacrifice his relationship



with God and seek knowledge his own way. Of course, we know he chose the latter and yielded control of our senses to our lower nature through the body. Man's spirit and soul "crashed" into the bottom floor, the body. The body and soul then became the master of unregenerate men. The Bible refers to this combination of soul and body as "flesh.

Paul introduced the Scriptural division of the three parts of man: spirit, soul, and body in Thessalonians 5:23: *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* God created us with these three components because each has an essential

role in our function here on earth. Before the fall, all three were free from sin. There was no sin in the world at the time of creation.

The deeper our understanding of how God designed us, the more we can understand the relationships of the Triune Godhead. We can learn of God the Father, His Son, Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit with each other, as well as how to deepen our relationship with them.

Even in the creation of man, we can see the three parts of man. First, God made the body. The Bible doesn't give a lot of detail about how God formed our bodies out of dust. It just tells us that it was so. Genesis tells us, "*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 soul (Genesis 2:7);*" next, He breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. Here is where the spirit entered the body. Genesis called it "the breath of life." The exact second God's Spirit enters the body, man becomes a living soul.

When the breath of life touched man's body, it produced the soul. Therefore, the Bible calls man 'a living soul.' This 'breath of life is man's spirit, the source of his life; however, it is not the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "*it is the Spirit who gives life*" (John 6:63). This breath of life comes from God Himself.

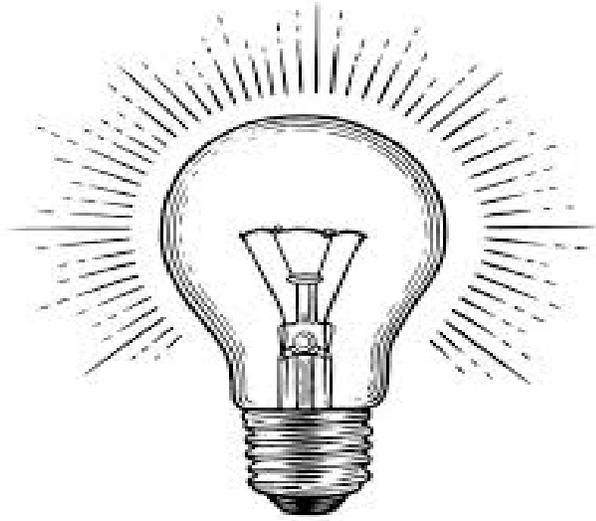
God's breathing produces two lives in man: spiritual life and soulish life. So, when God breathed life into the human body, it became the spirit. At the same time, when this spirit touched the body, it produced the soul. This is the

source of the spiritual life and the soulish life. Of course, this spirit is not the 'God's life;' it is simply *'the breath of the Almighty [which] hath given me life'* (Job 33:4). It is not the uncreated life of God entering into men. The spirit Adam received is not the life of God that we obtain through our new birth experience. When we're born again, we receive the life of God Himself; it is the life represented by the tree of life. This spirit of man is eternal, but it doesn't have the 'eternal life.' It will live forever, but we choose its destination.

God never called Adam a spiritual being. He used the term "living soul." All living creatures have souls. The fact that man has a spirit through which he can commune with God makes him unique. God didn't create any other being like him. The beings He created closest in similarity to man would be angels.

Though there are many things' angels and humans have in common, many things separate us. God made humans in His image. We can bear children and have families. Though sin entered both the angelic and human sphere, only human sin is forgiven. Christ came to die for the sins of humanity, not of angels. Humans who trust Christ as their Savior will one day judge angels and have a higher position than angels in the ages to come.

We can use a lightbulb and lamp to illustrate the act of creation. The lightbulb in a lamp shines, creating light. The bulb was dead until we turned on the electricity. Electricity entering the lamp produced light. The lamp (the body) needed electricity (the Spirit) to make light (the soul).



Notice how succinct Paul was in describing the three parts of a man in Thessalonians, "...*spirit and soul and body.*" The (human) spirit connects us to God and is the only way we communicate with Him. It is the highest in order and gives us God-consciousness. The soul is in the middle and connects to the spirit and the body. It is the medium of communication between our spirit and body. It is self-conscious and holds a higher position than the body. The body is last on the list. It has the lowest place, and it is how we connect to the world, giving us a world-consciousness.

We're all born with a spirit. God communicated with Adam and Eve through their spirits, just as He communicates with us through ours today. Theirs were alive to God at that time and ruled them both. They didn't give their bodies any thought at all. The Fall destroyed the spirit's link to God, awakening the senses in their bodies and souls. It was like

flipping a switch. It turned off the spiritual connection and turned on their dormant flesh, the body and soul working together.

Jesus accomplished many things through His death. *He told us, ". . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, (John 10:10).* This life is eternal life. We often overlook the word "abundantly" in our Bible reading and teaching. It is found 11 times in the New Testament. Nine of those times were when Paul speaks about his love for or labor in the church. Here it is defined as "(περισσότερον), superabundant or far more."

The first use of this word is in John. It is used twice in describing what Jesus can do for us and through us, and means, "(Περισσός), beyond; superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality); excessive; preeminence: exceedingly abundantly above, more abundantly, advantage, exceedingly, very highly, beyond measure." The second is in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, '*Now unto him, that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us'* (Eph 3:20). Both instances are talking about what Jesus can and will do in and through the church.

God can only achieve this abundance through us because Jesus completed what God promised in Ezekiel. '*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my*

spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them' (Eze. 36:26,27).

Jesus' death accomplished many things, including reconnecting us to God by putting this new spirit in us as part of the new birth experience. Old Testament saints didn't have God's Spirit in them as we do today. Before the cross, His Spirit came upon men for a specific purpose but didn't stay. The people couldn't have a personal relationship with God the way we do today. He only communicated with people through a prophet, king, or by sending an angel with a message.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT:

God-Consciousness

Our human spirit has three essential parts that help us maintain positive interaction with God. The first part is our conscience. Without a clear conscience, we will not hear God, nor will He listen to us.

It is the foundation for the other two parts of the spirit.

Jesus told the Disciples that it was only through obedience that He and the Father would both enter and live within us. *'... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'* (John 14:23).

It's hard to imagine a more direct command than Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He explained that ours is a spiritual battle, who our enemy is, and what we must do to be victorious. *'(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).'*

We must guard and protect our conscience as if it were a fragile newborn in need of constant care and nourishment.



1. Conscience
2. Intuition
3. Fellowship (Worship)

SPIRIT

The more tender our obedience to the slightest movement of the Holy Spirit, the more of God's personality, character, and heart He will reveal to us. A clear conscience yielded to the moving of God's Spirit leads us into a profound, tender experience of fellowship with God. Our Father invites us to sit in 'heavenly places' with Him, but it can only happen when our conscience is clear. *'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6).'*

A clear conscience exercises our intuition, the second component of the spirit. Through our intuition, we see and recognize the things of God. It brings them to our awareness. 'Intuitive knowledge' springs into action when God wants to show or tell us something. Some people call it their 'knower.' They say they 'know it in their knower.'

This knowledge doesn't come from the world around us, nor does it come from study or something we see, hear, imagine, or even through prayer. It's not that God won't show us things through these methods. He certainly will. However, intuitive knowledge comes from deep within our spirit through the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose.

Intuition makes us aware of the spiritual things around us. It alerts us to the presence of God and helps usher us into His presence through the third part of the spirit: fellowship.

The Samaritan woman at the well asked Jesus where they were to worship God. Until Christ came, there was no communication between God the Father and the people. Everything went through a person who God picked out for

a specific purpose or a Prophet. Jesus explained that the time was soon coming when all people could worship God through their own spirits. They wouldn't have to go to Samaritans' mountains or to Jerusalem to worship. They would soon be able to fellowship directly with God through their own spirit.

He told her, '*...the hour cometh, and is now, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23,24).*'

Notice that this third component of the spirit is called both worship and fellowship. We do that because worship of God in its truest form is fellowship. As we worship Him with a clear conscience, our minds and spirits are free to commune with Him without anything blocking our fellowship. In true fellowship, we join the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in the "heavenly places" promised in Ephesians.

Andrew Murray said, *"To worship is man's highest glory. He was created for fellowship with God: of that fellowship worship is the sublimest expression. All the exercises of the religious life meditation and prayer, love and faith, surrender and obedience, all culminate in worship. Recognizing what God is in His holiness, His glory, and His love, realizing what I am as a sinful creature, and as the Father's redeemed child, in worship I gather up my whole being and present myself to my God, to offer Him the*

adoration and the glory which is His due. The truest and fullest and nearest approach to God is worship. Every sentiment and every service of the religious life is included in it: to worship is man's highest destiny, because in it God is all."

God communicates with us through our spirits. It is His doorway to the soul. That is why Jesus said we must be born again. Through our new birth, He replaces the crushed spirit we received in the fall with a new spirit that brings us into fellowship with Him.

THE SOUL:

Self Consciousness

The death of our human spirit separated us from God in the fall, making us unable to see, hear, know, or feel His presence. He doesn't communicate with us through our bodies, nor does He speak directly to the soul. The cross opened the door between our spirit and soul for direct fellowship and instructions.



The mind, will, and emotions are in our souls. Each one works together to carry out essential functions. God speaks to us through our spirit. Our spirit communicates directly with the soul, and our soul instructs the body. The unregenerated body controls us with its drives, desires, and addictions through its connection to the world. It sends its signals to the soul, and the soul chooses whether or not to obey the body's lusts.

The unregenerated soul is little more than a prisoner to the cravings of the body. The Bible talks about the flesh, which is the combined soul and body. The soul resides between the spirit and the body and is the conduit for both. God's original design was that He would live in our spirit, and through it, He would instruct and communicate with us.

Modern psychologists, including many Christians, don't recognize or even admit that man has three parts. They lump the body and soul together into one man ignoring the existence of our spirit. The Apostle Paul explained that we have both a soul and a spirit. *'For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'* (Hebrew 4:12).

The dividing of the soul and spirit is crucial whether or not we understand what is taking place. Very few of us are even aware of their different functions. Even fewer know what they are and how to utilize them in their pursuit of a deeper relationship with God. We need to know the parts of the spirit and the functions of the soul, and how they work together. It's not complicated if we understand the role of each part.

Collins Dictionary says the soul is *"the part of you that consists of your mind, character, thoughts, and feelings."* When the body signals that it wants something, the soul responds. The mind thinks about whether we want or need it. It asks questions and considers whether it's necessary—the mind reasons whether we need what the body craves. The will determines whether or not the body gets what it wants.

How do we distinguish the soul from the spirit? As Christians, we must learn to deny the soul and the self. Jesus told His Disciples, *"If any man will come after me,*

let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26). This Scripture shows us that the soul is the self. To deny self is to deny the soul. It is to deny our own mind, emotion, and will. The mind, emotion, and will work together to make the soul.

THE BODY:

World-Consciousness

Before the fall, Adam and Eve were connected to God through the spirit. He communicated with them this way. If Adam had obeyed Him, we would have been permanently linked through our spirit and would have become spiritual beings.

Adam severed our connection to

God through his wrong choice, resulting in spiritual death first, followed by physical death and decay. This death disconnected us from God and connected us to the world through the body, making us fleshly beings instead of spiritual ones. We became slaves to the beggarly elements of the world: touching, tasting, seeing, smelling, and hearing. Prisons and hospitals are full of people enslaved to the cravings resulting from bondage to the flesh through their bodies.

Adam and Eve paid little attention to their bodies before the fall. The moment they tasted the forbidden fruit, '*...the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. . . And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself (Genesis 3:7-11).*'



- 1.Sight
- 2.Taste
- 3.Hearing
- 4.Smell
- 5.Touch

BODY

Notice, *the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew they were naked?* They had always been naked. They were never aware of it before the fall quickened and causing their soul life to rule. Before then, their souls responded to God and communicated with Him through their spirits. Their spirit had rule over their soul, and the soul instructed the body. After the fall, their souls woke up to the body's sensations and the world around them, thus, destroying their fellowship with God.

They were never ashamed of their nakedness. In fact, they weren't even aware of their nudity. They were not afraid. *“As soon as they had eaten it, **they were given understanding and realized that they were naked**; so they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves.”* (Genesis 3:7) Their bodies woke to new feelings, drives, and sensations. God knew there were only two ways they could be aware of themselves and their bodies. Either someone told them, or they disobeyed God, ate the fruit, and awakened their conscious mind to their own existence or self-awareness. He knew what they had done, but He wanted to hear what they would say, so He asked them, *'And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? (Genesis 3:11).'*

The curse wasn't God's angry response to man's disobedience. He didn't curse the world to strike out or to punish us. He wasn't getting even with us when He said we would strive for our survival. The curse existed before the

fall. It was the natural result of living outside of God's Holy Law. If Adam had obeyed God and stayed within His boundaries, the curse that Satan and his angels were under would never touch him nor us. Through disobedience, he stepped outside of God's protection into the natural realm and the effects of the curse. One result of stepping out of God's protection was that Adam and Ever were sent out of the Garden of Eden into the world of pain, suffering, and sorrow. *“Then the LORD God said, “Now these human beings have become like one of us and have knowledge of what is good and what is bad. They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever.” So the LORD God sent them out of the Garden of Eden ...Then, at the east side of the garden, he put living creatures and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life.”(Genesis 3:22-24)*

Our fallen world operates on laws that we tend to overlook because we're so familiar with them. One such law is gravity. We don't give a lot of thought to gravity. It's a law that works all the time, whether we're aware of it or not. It has always existed and always works the same way. That is what makes a law a law. The results and behavior never changed. We don't have to worry that we may float away when we get out of bed each morning. We simply step out of bed and start walking.

Gravity is a natural 'law' whether you believe in it or not. Even if you doubted its existence and stepped off the ledge

of a ten-story building, the outcome is the same whether you believe in it or not. It won't matter if you shout, "there's no such thing as gravity," all the way to the ground. The end will be the same despite your opinion.

Death is a brutal part of the curse. With the principle of spiritual death, Adam introduced physical death into the world. We will all die one day unless we're part of the generation that is here when Jesus returns. Death and decay are part of nature. Our body dies when it wears out or gets destroyed.

Where Adam once lived in God's presence, receiving the fulfillment of his drives from Him, he caused us to draw that gratification from the world around us through our bodies. It's the channel through which information is fed to our soul to process, make decisions, and determine our actions and response. Our lips and our fingers hold most of the body's touch receptors. These receptors gather most of the data we use to examine and reach conclusions about the world around us. Our eyes, ears, nose, hands (skin), and tongue gather most of the data we use to determine what will affect our decisions and the direction of our lives.

We reach out to the world beyond us through our bodies. Without it, we have no connection to anything or anyone. It is like a vehicle for the soul. A car helps us function in our daily lives, transporting us where we need to go. Similarly, the body transports the soul and the spirit. Most of us can barely function without a vehicle. We drive so far

to work, to day-care, to church, and to shop, especially those of us who live in rural communities like East Texas.

The average family needs a car for basic survival—lack of transportation limits what we can do and where we can go. Even our time and schedules don't belong exclusively to us. If we must ride with others, it's probably on their schedule, which often leaves us waiting when we would rather be doing something else.

Mechanical problems restrict where and when we can go. Like the car, our body is our transportation for the soul and spirit. The same happens to us if the body breaks down. It confines our range and influence.

Similarly, we can compare our bodies to a house. Everyone needs a home. We may not like the one we have, but it will last for many years, barring accidents or illnesses, if we take care of it. It can only stay alive while the spirit and soul reside inside. If it wears out or gets destroyed, both soul and spirit immediately enter the presence of the Lord, and physical death occurs.

Our human spirit died to God in the fall. This death separated us from God so that we could no longer see, hear, know, or feel His presence. Through His Spirit, God moves into our spirit when we're born-again. The human spirit is His doorway to the soul.

RECOGNITION:

KNOWING WE'RE GUILTY!

Recognizing that we're guilty is an essential first step of being born again. This reasoning doesn't start with our own volition. God stirs our hearts and calls us to it. There is nothing noble in humanity, including our desire to know God. God placed the origin of this desire into our hearts at creation. He must, however, kindle it and bring it to life. When He does, we start seeing Him in everything we do. We fear Him because our nature is corrupt, and we know that we're evil lawbreakers.

Why does God say, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* (Proverbs 1:7)? Few people initially come to God because they love Him. Fear is what brings most people. When we see ourselves in the reflection of God's judgment, we tremble in terror before him. We realize we must meet Him one day and account for what we've done in this life. We understand there's no justification besides Christ's, and we quake with fear. A healthy fear of God shows us our need for salvation. The fear of God turns to bitterness and anger in some people, which is an unhealthy fear. They reject the nail-scarred hand reaching out to them across the pit of destruction. They choose to ignore the gift that God so lovingly and freely gives. Because they rejected Christ, they become angry and bitter. They've chosen hell and still refuse to repent and accept salvation.

Our nature changed after the fall. We don't want to love God just because He's God. We learn to love Him only after we get saved. We learn to trust Him as our love grows and deepens. Since Eden, our natural inclination is to hide from God to avoid thinking about Him, which usually causes us to fill our time and thoughts with other activities. We try to keep busy and keep our minds off our problems. Many people can't sleep without a radio, television, or music in their room in hopes of distracting their thoughts from eternal matters.

The fear of the Lord is our understanding of the results of our disobedience. Knowing that God is a serious-minded Creator and that only through Jesus Christ will we avoid hell drives us into His loving embrace. This is the beginning of wisdom. An intelligent person begins to seek wisdom by turning to God for answers.

THE SON OF MAN: THE SON OF GOD

Jesus had two reasons for becoming a man and living in the flesh. He told his disciples: *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10)*. This powerful statement has two main clauses. Each is rich with meaning.

The first clause, *"I am come that they might have life,"* refers to the atonement. If Jesus had not come, we would have no hope. The death principle dominated the world, and none of us can stop it. Adam's sin introduced death into the world. We can't appreciate what Jesus, the Second Adam, did on the cross until we understand the first Adam's impact.

Lucifer convinced one-third of the angels to rebel against God, resulting in His ejecting them from heaven. God could never let anything unholy stay there. To do so would destroy the innocent virtue of His celestial kingdom.

Earth was the perfect venue to place these malefactors. God could have annihilated this rebel who had loosened so much trouble with his pride and lust for power. Or, He could have vaporized them with a mere thought; however, He had a plan. God would avoid future defiance and prove the sin's nature to the faithful watching hosts. He would circumvent future uprisings and rebellion and the death of the guilty by stopping it now. If He didn't, there could be a continual cycle of rebellion and death throughout eternity.

Sin must run its appointed course. What better way to stop all possible traces of sin than to plant a beautiful garden on this insignificant planet, Earth? Many people don't understand why a God of love allows so much pain in the world. God doesn't cause people's suffering; sin does. One day He will remove all traces of sin. He wants His children to enter heaven understanding what their redemption cost. He lovingly showed every creature, both angelic and human, the fundamental nature of His grace and the destructive nature of sin, thus eliminating all hints of possible future rebellion.

He created a new creature and placed him in this garden. This new species would depend on God for its entire existence. Yet, he could also choose for himself whether to obey or not. Adam, the father of our race, had the freedom to choose. Although he didn't understand their full results, God gave him two choices.

God told Adam he would die if he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam had no idea that this death included his spirit. He had never seen death and couldn't imagine what it was or what it meant. It was a new concept. He didn't understand the consequences of his actions. He looked up one day to see his beloved Eve gripping the forbidden fruit with juice trickling down her arm. She had a look in her eyes that he had never seen before. Of course, had he refused the fruit she offered him, things would be different. We so quickly judge Adam's sin. Although it was dreadful, we often fail to recognize his position or his choices.

Before God gave him this magnificent helpmate, Adam was lonely. He didn't fully understand the consequences of his

actions. All he knew was that his beloved Eve had done something God told them not to do. He didn't know what her fate would be. However, he joined her in it because he loved her.

Eating the fruit sealed the fate of everyone born through their marriage union. Earlier, we talked about the three different parts of man: the spirit, soul, and body. God originally made our spirit to hold His Spirit, somewhat as it does today. First, he had to pass a test. God couldn't let man eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. "*And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever (Genesis 3:22).*

Adam's failure didn't catch God by surprise. He expected it. He had already planned the next step in Project Man. He knew that Adam would fall, dooming future generations to slavery to our lower, fleshly nature.

In the fullness of time, Jesus stepped out of the glory of His heavenly home and took up temporary residence here. He was the Son of a virgin, and He lived a life of sinless perfection as the Second Adam. He died to sin through His death. While He lived in His fleshly body, Jesus was sensitive to the power of sin and the pain and suffering it caused Him. Through rejection and persecution and many other dealings with sinful man, evil continually tormented Him. When He laid down His life on the cross, He died entirely free of sin's power. It had no dominion over Him, nor did it have the ability to hurt Him. Jesus redeemed humanity through this selfless act of love.

The law had strict limits, such as only pointing out our flaws and telling us how corrupt and evil we were. Yet, man had no power to change. We can compare the Law to an invitation to an elegant dinner that we are required to attend. We must wear our finest attire. As we stand in front of a mirror to get ready, we see a large smudge of dirt on our faces, and our hair is uncombed and sticking up all over. We can see large streaks of dirt on our dresses. We want to get cleaned up, but we can't move. Our arms hang loosely to our sides, and there is nothing we can do. We won't get in unless we are clean and appropriately dressed. We don't know what to do.

Alone, we can do nothing. However, Jesus shows up and uses a warm soapy rag to wash our faces. He takes a brush to our hair and hands us a new dress. He holds our hands, raises our arms, and speaks healing. Our arms begin to move, and we can change our dress. We are dressed with a clean face, a beautiful dress, and lovely hair in just a few minutes.

According to the law, none of us can do anything except wait on a promised comb, washcloth, and the freedom to move so we can use them. There is nothing we can do. We're dependent on someone else. Jesus brought the washcloth and the comb. He released us to have the freedom to become clean. His blood washes and cleanses our hearts, giving us the power over self and Satan. Through His death on the cross and His resurrection, we can walk in the freedom God intended and have the power to fulfill the law and mercy for where we can't.

Jesus was referring to our victory over Satan, the world, and ourselves when He said, "*and that they might have it (life) more*

abundantly" (John 10:10). The word abundant means bounteous, lavish, plentiful, and ample. God doesn't want us to live shallow, weak, sickly lives. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

We can see this principle in the illustration of a Styrofoam cup representing our spirit before the fall. We crush it with our fists to symbolize the destruction of our spirit that fateful day in the garden. For thousands of years, our spirits were crushed and broken, unable to hold the Holy Spirit. They remained this way until Jesus came and prepared a new vessel through his perfect, sinless life.

The Spirit of God didn't live inside men in the Old Testament. He descended upon individuals for specific purposes, but He didn't "live" in anyone. The ascension of Christ made this possible. Before Jesus went to the cross, the Holy Spirit was known as the Spirit of God. Old Testament Scripture referred to Him as the Holy Spirit on three occasions. All three referred to the Spirit of God, the Father. He didn't have a separate identity like He does today. They didn't call Him the Holy Spirit until Jesus' death and resurrection because the Holy Spirit was not the same. He was the Spirit of God, not the Spirit of Christ. There is a significant difference.

What does Scripture say about the Spirit's coming? *"But He spoke this about the Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).* The word "given" was not in the original text. Writers added it later when

the phrase appeared incomplete and inconsistent. It was, however, evident in its original form.

Jesus comes into our hearts (our spirit) when we get saved; then, we can get to know Him and learn who He is. We have no doubts at all that Jesus is there. Because of His sinless life and obedience to death, He paid the price for our sin. He did this as a man. We all know that Jesus was the Son of Man and Son of God. Occasionally some say, “Sure, He overcame sin and lived a sinless life. He was God.” We must understand that He is the Son of God and man; however, He didn’t operate on the earth as God. He was a man, and everything He did in this world was as a man. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the operation of the Spirit did all His miracles and healings through Him as a man.

That’s why Jesus told His disciples, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*” (John 14:12) He knew that not only was He going to send the Holy Spirit, after His resurrection, the Holy Spirit also became the Spirit of Christ. He told the disciples that He was leaving, but the Holy Spirit would replace Him on earth and live in the heart of man. Like Christ, Spirit-filled men could and have accomplished many miracles and healing throughout the centuries. Jesus could only do this after He conquered sin and death.

Paul told the Romans that the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus would free us from the law of sin and death. “*There is*

therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1-4)

The Holy Spirit received the power of the resurrection. The resurrected life of Christ is the Spirit of Jesus that lives in man's heart and is the power He gives us to overcome and be victorious in our battles.

Although God was omnipotent before the cross, man's fallen flesh limited His freedom in our lives. He had no vessel to inhabit, no spirit. The human spirit was dead and crushed. God had to make a new spirit. He tells us, *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh"* (Eze. 36:26). For God's plan to work, He had to replace the dead, broken, hopeless spirit we inherited in the fall with a new spirit where He could live. Jesus did this.

Christians are unaware of what Jesus achieved in His short thirty-three-year life span. His life on earth as the Son of Man and the Son of God made the atonement possible. It gives us the freedom to stay here, in the depths of sinful man, to serve God after we get saved.

The First Adam's failure cursed all humanity. Jesus, however, was never corrupted by it. His mother was human, and His Father was God. This set Him on a different plane than the rest of us. He had the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of any other man. The difference was that He didn't have Adam's fallen, broken spirit. He had the spirit Adam had before the fall, the one He received from God. This spirit came from His Father, God, just like we received the defective one from our father, Adam. In Jesus, two distinct natures existed in one being: the nature of man and the nature of God. His human nature came from Mary, His mother; His divine nature came from God, His Father.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Hebrews that the sacrifices and temple worship on earth were types and shadows of the actual temple events in heaven. Israel's high priest entered into the Holy of Holies once a year with the blood of bulls and rams. Only one man entered, and then, he only entered once a year. The high priest must be ceremonially clean and free from sin. If he were not, he would die. He wore bells on the bottom of his robe and had a rope tied around his ankle; if the bells stopped ringing while in there, those on the outside the massive curtain pulled his dead body out by the rope on his leg.

Jesus gave His sinless, perfect life for the sins of the world. After that, He went into the Holy of Holies in heaven, with His own blood as the ultimate sacrifice and our High Priest. He didn't, however, have a rope tied to his leg. He had no

sin. He went in, as our High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

Before Jesus lived on earth, He went in and out of heaven's Holy of Holies at will. He entered as part of the Godhead: as the Son of God. After He rose from the grave and ascended to heaven, He went to the Holy of Holies, not as the Son of God; his entrance was as the Son of Man. There is a crucial distinction in this. Because He had both the nature of God and the nature of man, He purified our sinful human nature. He did this as a man. When He prayed, when He fasted, when He bled, when He got angry, when He cried, and when He obeyed God, He did so as a man. He redeemed our human nature as a man. It was the human nature part of Him that went into the Holy of Holies. He entered as a representative of humanity.

Because Jesus went into Heaven's Holy of Holies as a human being, we can now sit in heavenly places with Him, our Father, and the Holy Spirit. *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6)*. This is why He tore the curtain in the temple. *And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. (.Mark 15:38) And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. (Matthew 27:51) And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. (Luke 23:45)* God felt this was important enough to place it in three different books of the Bible.

The veil represents the separation of a Holy God from sinful humanity because our sins have separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2). The High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, behind the veil, once a year. The size and thickness of the veil divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. It was 60 feet long, 30 feet wide, and was about one inch thick, and was so massive and heavy that it took 300 priests to move it around.

Notice that the temple curtain was torn from the top down to the bottom, indicating that it was torn from the top by God Himself. The curtain was torn at the exact moment Jesus died. He had just paid the price for man's sin. What no human could possibly tear by human strength, God did by the death of His Son. Now we can go behind the curtain and have access into the Holy of Holies. It wasn't Jesus' torn flesh that ended our separation from God but His sinless life, death, and resurrection. Now "*we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus*" (Heb 10:19).

The tearing of the veil also represents what happened in heaven when Jesus died. "*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" (Hebrews 9:11,12)

Because Jesus went into the Holy of Holies in heaven as a man, we can now sit in heavenly places with all three members of the God Head. Jesus opened the door back to God so that we can sit in heavenly places with Him in our worship. We have only one requirement to go through this doorway. We must be born-again. When Jesus went into the Holy of Holies, He carried his own blood, which He sprinkled on the altar. This was the ultimate sacrifice: the ultimate act of redemption. Only then could Jesus fulfill his promise when He said, *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you . . ."* When you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to come into your life as your Savior, He can then, *". . .take away the stony heart out of your flesh"* (Eze. 36:26). This gave Him the right to send the Holy Spirit back to work through the church.

REPENTANCE:

RECEIVING THE NEW BIRTH

Acknowledging our need for Christ only gets us part of the way. The next step is to act on what we have learned. We must repent in heartfelt sorrow for our sins and be born-again. Repent means to change one's mind or purpose. We must turn around and go the other way.

No one needs to tell us we're guilty. We know that. We need someone to remove the guilt, and this is what Jesus does. He takes the guilt upon Himself and opens the door between man and God that slammed shut in the fall. He restores or renovates our Spirit back to where it belongs. This requires the participation of the soul's faculties. There are four steps involved in this process.

1. We Open Our Spirit.

We can't receive salvation if our spirit isn't open to God. Jesus told us: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:20).* At first, we deal with God through our minds. We need an open mind to make the right choice. We must want God. *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).* God honors a hunger like this.

When we install a satellite dish, we must connect to the satellite. If not, there won't be any reception when we turn

on the TV. The dish is a bowl-shaped disk that catches the waves when facing the sky. Our spirit is like this antenna. We must turn to face God's Spirit and open our spirit to receive from Him.

The Holy Spirit softly whispers our name, making Him known to us. Our minds wander, and we begin to think about God. He crosses our minds while riding in the car or walking down the street. We shudder when we do something that displeases Him. Our minds race to the White Throne Judgment, and we realize we will eventually stand before Him and account for our lives. We reject it, of course. The Holy Spirit, however, doesn't give up on us. He keeps God on our minds even when we try to change what we're thinking.

God gives man every opportunity to find him. God is not responsible if we refuse His marvelous gift of salvation. *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). Our job is to tune in to His frequency and get His message when God sends His "spiritual waves" to us.

2. We Understand with Our Minds.

Our minds are so complex we will never understand them. The more we know, the more questions we have. We examine our choices and believe through the mind. We must look at our options to grow in grace, analyze our

decisions with our intellect, and daily put our life in God's hands.

Many people think Christians mindlessly follow a dominant pastor, exchanging reason for something mysterious and spiritual. This isn't true. A Spirit-led Christian's mind and intellect are challenged, expanded, and stimulated when he becomes a Christian. As he studies the Bible and relates what he learns there to the world around him, he will mature intellectually. It isn't necessary to turn our minds off to be a Christian. We just know to use them more effectively.

The mind is one of three areas of the soul: the mind, the will, and the emotions. We decide every action. Even to procrastinate and avoid making choices is a choice. We just have less control over the results of procrastination.

We consider our choices through a complex reasoning process. The mind is like a filing cabinet. Our minds carefully file every memory and experience, and even the smells associated with them. We often attach emotions to these memories, which affect the selection process. The human mind has three levels of thought: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind, and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind is aware of us and our immediate surroundings. The subconscious mind never ceases its activities. It observes, analyzes, measures, and files data all the time. The unconscious mind is the deeper part where we store our understanding of those memories, including

the attached emotions. It is the point of our habitual, learned, mechanical behavior.

The decision-making process involves all three of these areas of thinking. The conscious mind considers the choices; the subconscious mind relates experiences and knowledge to the conscious mind for consideration; the unconscious mind sends signals to both the others that affect the final decision. The Christian who yields his life to the Holy Spirit finds his mind is less cluttered, and he has more freedom to make appropriate choices. As we read, meditate, and study the Scriptures, our natural powers of reason become stronger.

3. We Choose with Our Will.

We often use the words "choose" and "will" together because the will has the final say on our choices. Anything new that becomes part of our identity and personality passes through a screening system. The will is the faculty with the final say about all our choices. Emotions, reason, conscience, and all the other faculties of the heart affect our decisions. However, the will can only get the necessary power through a strong determination made in repentance or the act of turning away from sin to a loving God.

4. We Repent Through Our Emotions.

Repentance begins in the spirit but must also be a rational and emotional reaction to our consciousness of sin and guilt. Emotions are the part of the soul that feels. We all have them. We release large amounts of energy through our

emotions. In worship, we focus on God, who He is, and what He has done for us. We do this through prayer. It connects us to God. W.M. Taylor once wrote: "True repentance hates the sin, and not merely the penalty, and it hates the sin most of all because it has discovered and felt God's love." This important principle changes lives when we understand it. Fear of God saves a person. The love of God keeps a soul. When we pray like this, God hears us and knits our souls to His.

BELIEVE:

And Receive

God puts His Spirit into us when we're born-again, making us want to please Him. We want to learn about Him. The more we learn, the more we want to know. His Spirit lives in us. His mind is in us. His desires, His affections, His purpose, His intentions, His thoughts, and His conscience are there too. We should examine the Word. It's where we find Him.

Finally, we must trust God and believe He will keep us. We must trust Him to help us when we're in trouble and have enough confidence in Him to understand that adversity can't beat us. We must realize that we'll always have this relationship, and we'll meet Him in heaven soon.

Our walk with Christ is full of choices. We grow in strength as we allow God to guide our decisions through His influence. Every day is a new day with new opportunities and problems. By praying and giving God yesterday's worries, today, we can have a clean slate. We must trust God, even when we don't know what He can do in every situation. That is when we see who He is.

Many years ago, a suspension bridge was built across a wide gorge. People marveled at it and wondered how they could build a bridge across such a vast space? How could they even begin such a project? Well, they shot an arrow from one side to the other. The arrow carried a tiny thread across the gulf, establishing a connection. Eventually, they

used the thread to pull a piece of twine across; the twine carried a small piece of rope after it; the rope carried a cable across--and in time came the iron chain from which the bridge was to hang. Faith in God is much like that bridge. Although it may initially be weak, a little faith can move us to a stronger and stronger faith that can perform greater and greater deeds.

Pastor and author Adrian Rogers commented in his book, *The Secret of Supernatural Living*, "God has so engineered your mind that you can't think two thoughts at one time. So, if you think what is right, you can't be thinking what is wrong." We need to check our thoughts because we have the final say-so about which ideas we will consider. God provided only one way! His! He took a chance when He made the human mind. He risked that many people would think wrong thoughts. Many do. We have choices every day. To be born-again is simply to choose a course of action and following through on that direction as God leads us each day.

Soon after a family moved into their new home, it began to demonstrate the effects of their slipshod ways. Trash littered the yard. The lawn withered for lack of attention and, even when replanted, died out again. To enter this house was to enter a shambles. It never was clean or in order.

Another family eventually bought and moved into the house. They painted the house, cleaned up the yard, and replanted the lawn. The results were entirely different.

What had happened? There was a marked improvement in the house's appearance because there was a change in those who lived there. In the same way, there will be a positive change in life when we become a Christian because there is a perfect new resident within, the Holy Spirit.