“Who am I?” That is a question we often ask ourselves. We sometimes follow that up with, “What is wrong with me, or us?” Today I want to look at some things the Bible tells us about ourselves that might be helpful as we sort through these things.

The Bible speaks of us as being composed of body, soul, and spirit. For example, Paul writes, “*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.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NKJV).

When the Bible uses the word soul it most often uses the Greek word *psyche* from which we get our word “psychology”. The soul is the core of our being. We often describe it as mind, will and emotions. This is where we feel love or where we make decisions. The body is how the soul communicates with the outside world. The eyes may see a beautiful sunset and as a result we may have the feeling of awe at such a beautiful sight. We enjoy a good meal thanks to the smells and taste of the food. So our body interacts with the world and allows our soul to react.

God intended our spirit to communicate with Him. When the soul senses spiritual realities it does so through the spirit. For example, Paul writes, “*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*” (Romans 8:16, NKJV). And Jesus tells us, “*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*” (John 4:24, NKJV). Sometimes when we are singing or listening to music we may think we are having a spiritual experience when in fact we may be having a soulish experience. It’s important to distinguish the two.

Our biggest problem is that when Adam and Eve sinned, the human race fell from a state of perfection to a fallen state of death and dying. Our bodies are subject to injury, disease and death. The spirit which was the channel of communication with God died. And our soul, made up of mind, will, and emotions is badly damaged. We are not as bad off as we could be, but every facet of our being I affected by the fall. Theologians call this “Total Depravity.” Look at the following quotes from the Bible to see the description which God gives concerning our situation.

“*This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*” (Ephesians 4:17–18, NKJV)

“*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*” (2 Corinthians 4:3–4, NKJV)

“*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” (1 Corinthians 2:14, NKJV)

When he says “natural man” in the previous verse he uses the word “soul.” The soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit. This is a man whose spirit is dead and so all he has to operate on is his soul.

One more passage from Paul:

“*As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” “Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”; “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*” (Romans 3:10–18, NKJV)

So our problem is that our entire being has been affected by the fall. What’s the solution? The solution is to believe the Good News, the Gospel, of Jesus Christ. He died on the cross as the payment of the sin penalty and He promises life to every person who believes on Him.

Jesus said, “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” (John 10:10, NKJV).

He also said, “*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*” (John 5:24, NKJV).

The life He is promising is eternal life, but it is also a resurrection of the spirit within us. He promises to give us a new heart, a new spirit, and new motivation and he promises to give us the Holy Spirit to live in us to guide us and to pray for us. God calls this the New Covenant:

“*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*” (Ezekiel 36:26–27, NKJV)

So when we believe on Jesus for salvation the issue of the dead spirit has been solved. Our bodies continue to deteriorate, but He has promised a resurrection body some day: “*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*” (Romans 8:11, NKJV)

The soul – our mind, will and emotions, were damaged by the fall. As we have grown up in our homes, we do not always respond in healthy ways to what is going on around us. The people around us are also fallen and so their decisions and their emotional state affects our own. So as we grow we develop habits and ways of thinking and reacting that may not be helpful to us. We won’t realize it, but things in life create unhealthy dependencies, bad habits, poor judgment and the like. Because our thinking is also damaged, we may not be able to see what is happening and take corrective measures.

However, when we trust Jesus Christ for salvation, He begins a renewing work in our lives. This is called Sanctification. It is the process of making us more and more like Jesus who, since He is God, has perfect thinking, perfect emotions and perfect motivation or the decisions of His will.

This process is not an instantaneous one. It takes time. We first need to learn to be skeptical of our thinking. I read the other day someone wrote that we should not believe everything we think. Our minds need to be renewed (Romans 12:2). This occurs when we take the time to meditate on the Word of God, the Bible. The Bible says, “*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*” (Psalm 1:1–3, NKJV)

So this is an important process. As you do this, you begin to recognize your habits, ways of thinking and reacting and attitudes that are not right and healthy. As God continues to work in your life, He will help you see that you need to put off what the Bible calls the “old man.” These are all of the old ways that are sinful and because of that are not healthy for you emotionally, spiritually and relationally. Right along with that should be the process of putting on the new ways of thinking and behaving. That means agreeing in your mind that what God says is true no matter what you may feel, and then behaving accordingly. The truth should come first, then faith in that truth which involves acting on it and then let the feelings follow after.

Let’s try a practical example. Let’s suppose that the children are having a bad morning and there is a lot of screaming and arguing going on. You feel like you are not going to be able to handle another minute of this. You are tempted to scream back at them, maybe even throw things yourself. But you have been meditating on scripture and most recently the passage that reads: “*No temptation* (or trial or test) *has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*” (1 Corinthians 10:13, NKJV)

So you recognize that the truth is that this is not a test greater than you can handle. So you take that truth and you believe it. “I guess I can handle this after all,” you say to yourself. Now you set aside your anger, impatience, and whatever other sinful attitudes and actions you feel coming on. You consciously set them aside. Then with God’s help you replace them with God’s peace, love, patience, longsuffering, etc. Depending on what the children have done there might be the need for specific discipline, but it should be motivated by the holy character of God and not by frustration and anger.

Now I realize it is not as simple as one short paragraph, but I’m not writing a book here. But this is the idea of what needs to take place in our lives. It needs to be practiced moment by moment throughout the day. If I’m late for work and a traffic light turns red, I feel impatience coming on. Reject the impatience based on the truth that God is at work on the day’s schedule for you. Then consciously take patience in its place. I think one of the best summary passages for this process is the following:

“*As the truth is in Jesus*, *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*” (Ephesians 4:21b–24, NKJV).

Remember that “*it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” (Philippians 2:13, NKJV).