

Body, Heart, Soul, and Spirit

Victory Over the Flesh

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All quoted scripture is King James Version (KJV) and is printed in *blue italic font*. The rationale for using KJV is listed below:

1. Man’s opinion has no eternal value.
2. All precepts (teaching, instruction) should be based upon, validated by, and tested against God’s Word.
3. It is much easier for the reader when relevant and supporting scriptures are provided before and/or after each precept.
4. The King James Version is in the public domain and may be freely quoted without restrictions.

However, KJV includes a small number of terms that are not commonly used today. To assist in reading and understanding, listed below are KJV terms with today’s meaning.

KJV Term	Today’s KJV Meaning	Helpful Notes
Thy and Thine	Your and Yours	Thy, thine, thee, thou, and ye may be simply interpreted as speaking to you.
Thee and Thou	You (one person)	
Ye	You (more than one person)	
Hath	Have	These words are fairly similar.
Saith	Say	
Believeth	Believe	These KJV words are also similar. Simply drop the letters “eth” as you read.
Bringeth	Bring	
Speaketh	Speak	

There is another benefit of the King James Version: the style of writing and grammar (written more than 400 years ago) will often cause today’s reader to slow down and sometimes reread content—resulting in more fully “digesting” deeper meanings of God’s Word. For God’s word is not meant to be simply read—but “chewed on” via Spirit-led study, contemplation, and reflection—resulting in a deeper understanding and revelation.

If a different version of the Bible is preferred, Bible Gateway (www.biblegateway.com) provides multiple versions of the Bible online. What’s more, the search function enables a quick and effective means to look up scripture. A link to the New King James Version on Biblegateway.com is provided. Simply click on the underlined reference for each quoted scripture.

Introduction

There are different aspects to our being that we know exist; but are difficult to understand and explain. For example, we have a body; we have a mind; we have emotions; and we have a free will.



However, there is more to our makeup, much more. There are components of our being that have a significant influence as to who we are, how we interface with the world around us—and most important—affects our relationship with God.

(By the way, if you're wondering about the relevance of the Snickers bar, the explanation is forthcoming.)

Scripture provides us with insight into these mysterious “internal” components of our design.

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. [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#)

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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. [Hebrews 4:12](#)

The above scriptures mention four different components of our being: spirit, soul, body, and heart. Some believe our design is two-fold (Dichotomous Theory): physical body and spirit/soul (spirit and soul are the same). Others believe in a three-fold design (Trichotomous Theory): body, soul, and spirit (soul and spirit are unique). This writer prescribes the Trichotomous Theory (with a modification explained in the paragraph below). My reasoning is based upon Hebrews 4:12, which reveals the soul and spirit may be divided by the Word of God. Therefore, since our soul and spirit are separable they are two distinct entities and not the same.

However, note how the discrete components of both theories seem to leave out a very important part of our being: our heart. As we explore scriptures we will find there are specific references to the unique and wondrous functions of our heart. As such (it is this writer's belief) our heart and soul are tightly integrated, interrelated, and inseparable; but each performs different functions. Simply stated, our heart can function at a “higher level” than our soul in that our heart may serve as a filter (or manager/gatekeeper) of what we do and what we say. As such, we will discover the overall function and importance of the heart as we explore scriptures.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. [Proverbs 4:23](#)

Physical and Spiritual Body

To facilitate understanding it is possible to segment the components of our body into two categories: our physical body (what we can see or touch), and our spiritual body (what we cannot see or touch). Each category is explained with greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Our physical body has:

- Flesh, bones, organs, and so forth
- Five different senses (or means) for external stimuli to enter into our spiritual body:
 - Sight (Eyes)
 - Hearing (Ears)
 - Touch
 - Smell
 - Taste

Our spiritual body includes our heart, our soul, and our spirit.

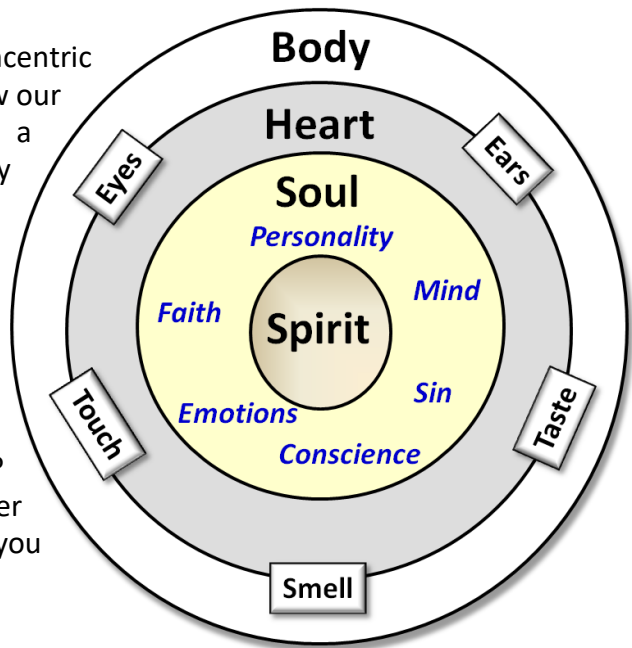
- Our heart:
 - Is mysteriously connected to (and interfaces with) our soul, spirit, and body
 - Receives input from our soul, spirit, and body
 - Encompasses:
 - Life-related thoughts (higher level, analytical, evaluative, and decisive)
 - Will (desire, determination, and willingness)
 - Is responsible for:
 - Management of our behavior and how to respond to situations (what we do)
 - Communication filter for the soul and spirit (what we say)
- Our soul includes the following components:
 - Faith
 - Sinful desires
 - Personality (including attitudes, disposition, and inclination)
 - Mind:
 - Uses the brain to function while living
 - Includes our intellect, memory, imagination, etc.
 - Conscience (sense of knowing right from wrong)
 - Emotions (fear, anger, joy, sadness, shame, etc.)
- Our spirit provides us with:
 - Spiritual understanding and knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:12-14)
 - Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12)
 - Communion with God (John 4:24)

One of my favorite candy bars is Snickers; which when you think about it is similar to our body, heart, soul and spirit. For example, the wrapper represents our physical body—or our “packaging”—which is least important part of the candy bar and is eventually thrown away. The candy bar represents our spiritual body: heart, soul and spirit. The outside chocolate layer represents our heart (which wraps around the caramel-covered nuts and nougat). The caramel-covered nuts represent our soul (the different nuts represent the different components of our soul). The nougat represents our spirit.

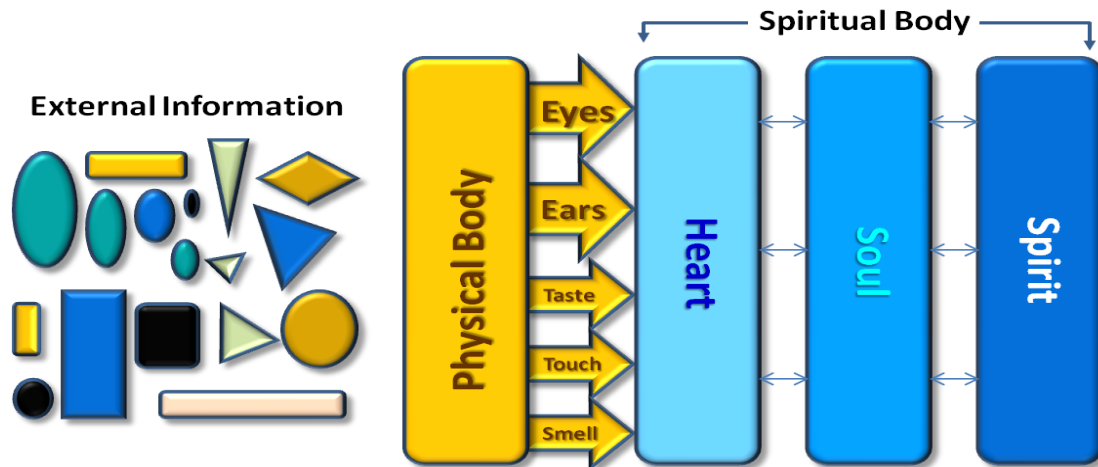


The graphic to the right also depicts (via concentric rings) our body, heart, soul, and spirit. Note how our senses (via our eyes, ears, etc.) provide a “communication link” between our physical body and our spiritual body. For example, what we watch and hear (sinful vs. moral content) has a direct effect upon our spiritual body—which can affect our physical body.

Ever wonder why you sometimes have a sinful thought or an urge to sin (even after you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord)? Well, it’s coming from your soul, and is either instigated by self or demonically inflicted. How you respond is determined by your heart.



For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. [Matthew 6:21](#)



The above graphic depicts the same components shown in the concentric rings. Different portions of this graphic will be used multiple times throughout this writing. Our physical body is represented in yellow, and our spiritual body (heart, soul, and spirit) are in different shades of blues. Moving from left to right, the graphic shows how external information enters into our spiritual body via one or more of our physical senses. External information—in all its various forms—is represented by the different shapes and colors. Some are valuable for spiritual growth, others are not, and some are detrimental. In addition, our eyes play a larger role of transferring external information into our spiritual body than our ears—and our ears transfers more information than our other senses—which is reflected by the larger fonts and arrows. As such, our eyes and ears are primary pathways for light and life of God’s Word; and the same senses Satan will use to darken and destroy. Therefore, it is imperative that we selectively watch and listen to that which is beneficial to our spiritual body.

Matthew 6:22-23 describes our eyes as a means to provide light and life, or darkness and death. In other words, what we allow our eyes to look upon has a direct affect upon our spiritual body.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! [Matthew 6:22-23](#)

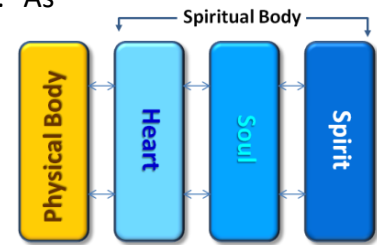
Jesus said in [Matthew 5:27-30](#): *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

Jesus metaphorically used descriptive terms such as “pluck” and “cut” to emphasize the importance of doing whatever is necessary to eliminate sources of external information that may

cause us to sin. He did not mean to actually pluck or cut our bodies. Besides, our bodies do not matter. What is important is our heart. For example, there are times when we need to immediately turn our eyes and walk away (remove ourselves from a situation) because an image that is entering our eyes is propagating inappropriate lustful thoughts—which is usually followed by an unwanted bodily response. The deliberate act of turning our eyes away will occur from our heart: when one's love toward God and the desire to please Him is greater than fulfilling the desires of our flesh.

Our Heart

Our heart is deeply intertwined with and inseparable from our soul. As such, there are attributes, functions, and outputs of our heart and soul that seem similar. However, there are many scriptures that reveal our heart functions at a “higher level” than our soul. In addition, our heart serves as an interface between our soul and spirit, and as an interface between our spiritual body and our physical body.



Listed below are comparative functions of the heart of a person that is not born-again, and the heart of a person that is born-again.

Functions of Heart	Not Born-Again	Born-Again
Coalesce (combine, unite, join) input from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components of the soul • Physical body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components of the soul • Physical body • Spirit • Holy Spirit
Central collection point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts & imagination • Attitudes • Desires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts & imagination • Attitudes • Desires
Core motivation	Self	Transitions from self to God
Manages what we do and say	Possible (if yes, less control)	Yes (increases via wisdom & self control)
Exercise apportioned faith	Possible (lacks Spirit influence)	Yes (increases via trials/tribulations)
Believe in God	Possible (lacks Spirit influence)	Yes (increases via revelation)
Trust God	Likely not	Yes (increases via trials/tribulations)
Repository of God’s Laws	Possible (if yes, less influence)	Yes (appreciative acceptance)

The following scripture provides additional insight into the importance of (and functions of) our heart.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [Genesis 6:5-6](#)

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. [Luke 6:45](#); [Matthew 12:34-35](#)

I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. [Jeremiah 17:10](#)

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. [1 Chronicles 28:9](#)

But thou, O Lord, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee. [Jeremiah 12:3](#)

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [Romans 10:9-10](#)

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. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil. [Proverbs 4:20-27](#)

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. [Matthew 5:8](#)

Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. [Psalm 62:8](#)

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [Proverbs 3:5](#)

Free Will

God has designed within our heart a free will: an ability to make individual and personal decisions that affect our lives, where we go, what we do, what we say, what we consume, what we believe, and so forth. We were not designed to function as pre-programmed “robots” that behave in a predetermined and specific way. (However, it may be argued this design was used by God for living forms other than humans.)

As we grow and mature in Christ our free will transitions from being self-focused to externally-focused. Instead of considering “what’s in it for me” we consider “what will this provide others?” In addition, as we grow in our love for God we also consider “will this please Him?”

A free downloadable concise writing on free will is available on my website:

<http://www.UniqueBibleStudies.com/>. Content includes:

- Why we have free will.
- How we make decisions.
- How costs and benefits influence our decision process.
- How to completely trust God when making decisions.
- The best and worst possible outcomes of our free will.

God's Laws Are Written On Our Hearts

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. [Hebrews 8:10, 10:16](#); [Jeremiah 31:33](#)

This promise from God occurs when we are reborn, and is a core component of our new nature—for the only means to truly change is from within.

Hardened Heart

It is possible for the heart to be hardened (“waxed gross” in KJV) toward God. In addition, if one’s heart is hardened toward God it is usually calloused toward the world. As such, a hardened heart becomes an “internal” barrier that will actively circumvent (repel, evade, thwart, stop) what the eyes see and what the ears hear; restricts spiritual awareness; and impedes reception of God’s grace.

Apart from God’s direct intervention (Exodus 9:12), there are three ways a heart will harden:

1. Sin
2. Works-based faith (i.e. someone that has not accepted God’s complete and unmerited grace in Jesus Christ). An example is the Pharisees who believed salvation was based upon adherence to religious laws and works. Read all of Matthew 23.
3. Unforgiveness

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. [Hebrews 3:12-13](#)

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. [Isaiah 6:9-10](#); [Matthew 13:15](#)

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. [Romans 2:5](#)

Softening of our hearts is a life-long process that occurs as we continually walk with Him. For example, the disciples were concerned about food soon after Jesus miraculously fed the thousands.

And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? [Mark 8:17-19](#)

Receiving forgiveness for our sins begins the process of softening one's heart. Receiving forgiveness occurs when we confess our sins to God; believe in and receive His absolute and unmerited grace via His Son, Jesus Christ; turn our heart away from sin; and direct it towards God. Our heart will also soften when we forgive someone else for their transgressions against us. For if we have been forgiven, how can we hold anger and judgment toward someone else? Whatever reasons our mind devises to hold on to unforgiveness—our unforgiveness will continue to harden our heart and hinder our spiritual growth.

Our Soul

Our soul encompasses our **personality**. Our soul is the source of our wide-array of **emotions**. Our soul is where our **sinful desires** are initiated. Our soul is where our **conscience** resides. Our soul contains our **mind**. Our soul is where our memories are stored (including joyous times and painful scars). Our soul is where God's apportioned **faith** dwells. Our soul is also the source of all the "**noise**" (or lack of internal peace). [Note: each component of our soul that is highlighted in **bold italic** above is explained starting on the next page.]

Praise God in that our soul is forgiven by and through the blood of the Lamb; and is cleansed of impurities by a determinate heart and the washing of God's word (Ephesians 5:26).

But what is even more important—is to fully understand—our soul will never die. Our soul is spiritual, eternal, and will live forever in one of two places: in absolute bliss with God in Heaven, or in absolute agony with Satan in the lake of fire. The ultimate outcome of our free will decision as to what we do with Jesus Christ (accept or reject Him as Savior and Lord) cannot be stated any simpler.

The Final Judgment

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:11-15](#)

Then said Jesus unto 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? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. [Matthew 16:24-27](#)

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. [Revelation 3:5](#)

Personality

Our personality is defined as our individual differences in how we think, feel and behave. Psychologists somewhat agree that there are five basic attributes of our personality (listed below). Each attribute defines opposite behaviors.

Personality Attribute	Behavior ←	→ Behavior
Openness to experience	Inventive/Curious Prefers novelty and variety	Consistent/Cautious Prefers routine
Conscientiousness	Easy-Going/Careless Spontaneous	Efficient/Organized Dependable, self-discipline
Extraversion	Outgoing/Energetic Assertive sociability	Solitary/Reserved Timid openness
Agreeableness	Friendly/Compassionate Compassionately cooperative	Analytical/Detached Suspicious
Neuroticism	Sensitive/Nervous Emotional instability	Secure/Confident Easily overcomes emotions

All of us can relate to each of these personality traits experienced at varying times in our lives, including the opposite behaviors of each defined attribute. What's more, not one attribute is particularly better than the other. The point here is each of us has unique and varied personality traits—which are an integral part of our soul—and which helps define who we are.

Emotions

An emotion is commonly defined as a feeling of joy, sorrow, fear, anger, love, and so forth. An emotion can range from a subliminal and unnoticeable influence, to a strong feeling, and to an overwhelming force. In addition, an emotion can arise without warning and forethought, and can cause one to behave in a way that has not been checked (and approved) by the heart. As such (and unfortunately) there are times when our emotions completely take over our thoughts and behavior, resulting in regrettable behavior. In addition, emotions can provide an opportunity for Satan to lead one astray, especially negative emotions.

A free study on emotions is available at: <http://www.UniqueBibleStudies.com/>. Content includes:

- Listing of different emotions we experience.
- How facial indicators can provide insight into emotions.
- How Satan can use emotions to lead one astray.
- Techniques to minimize anger, fear, and anxiety.
- Benefits of Godly fear.
- How to overcome demonic fear.
- Differences between sadness and depression.
- How our emotions and God's emotions are similar.

Sinful Desires

If you ask a diverse group of people to define the word “sin” you’d likely receive varying responses that range across an entire spectrum. For example, there are some that believe that there’s no such thing as sin. Others may define sin as behavior, such as murder, theft, sexual immorality, and so forth. Some may define sin as knowing what should be done, and not doing it (James 4:17). While others may define sin based upon thoughts.

Sin		
Does not exist	Behavior	Thoughts

God gave us the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5) as a “minimal benchmark” or “standard” as means to reveal our sin. But more important, He gave us the Ten Commandments because of His love for us. (Unfortunately, many fail to understand this and view them as a list of do’s and don’ts.) When you think about it, they are a list of logical, relevant and prudent behaviors that seem fairly easy to obey. However, every one of us has broken one or more. The reason: we are all born with a sinful nature—which has been passed down through the generations—starting with Adam and Eve. As an example, consider how a toddler (when confronted with something they have knowingly done wrong) will lie and/or blame others, and will continue to do so even when presented with the absolute truth (just like Adam and Eve). Read Genesis 2:15-25; 3:1-13

Additional information on sin is provided in my book *Foundation*; which may be downloaded for free from the following website: <http://www.UniqueBibleStudies.com/>.

Conscience

We are designed with a conscience. Our conscience provides us with an inner sense of right versus wrong. A person’s “benchmarks” of what is considered right versus what is considered wrong may be based upon behavior, thoughts, motives, outcomes, etc. What’s more, when we break our own personal standards (or God’s standards) we will usually attempt to justify our behavior via flawed human rationalization.

- I know it’s against God’s law to steal; however, it’s ok to cheat on taxes because the government gets too much of my money anyway.
- I know it’s against God’s law to lie; however, it was only just a little “white lie.” Besides, no one got hurt.
- I know I should perform the job to meet the required standards; but due to a competitive bid process there’s insufficient profit. So, I’ll cut corners.

Our conscience is comprised of ethical and moral principles that controls (or inhibits) what we say and do. What’s more, those that are reborn will find the focus of the conscience transitions from external behavior to the thoughts and motives of the heart.

Mind

The mind of our soul includes our intellect and memory. In addition, the mind generates “base” thoughts—including real and imaginary mental images. Due to our sinful flesh, these thoughts and mental images will often not align with God’s will. Based upon the intent and desires of the heart, the heart will either manage these thoughts (approve/disapprove, reposition/redirect, or bring to an end), or will simply let them “pass through” for immediate verbal expression and/or behavior without regard to consequences.

For example, think back to a situation when you were wronged or disrespected and you wanted to “unload” on the responsible person. Thoughts and images of what you wanted to say/do raced through your mind as your body’s stress and tension levels rapidly increased. However, you knew (via your conscience) what you were considering was wrong. So you “bit your tongue” and did not speak “your mind.” The fact that you “bit your tongue” and did not speak means your heart was in control. Your heart disapproved of what you were about to say/do and actively managed your response via a heart-directed consideration of (1) the negative consequences that may occur by allowing the mind and emotions to take control; and/or (2) the potential positive outcomes of a Spirit-led loving response. The heart of a born-again Christian (based upon spiritual maturity) will seek to turn this situation from self-preservation and vain retribution, to glorification of God.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. [Romans 12:2](#)

Mind vs. Brain

The physical brain is a “tool” (or “instrument”) that is actively used by the heart, soul, and spirit to interface with the physical world. The following will help explain this point.

Consider how a musician (i.e. our heart, soul, spirit) will use a piano (i.e. our brain) as a tool to make music. Both the musician and the piano work in unison to create wonderful sound.



Now consider the affect on the music if functional changes are made to the piano, including changing the tone of various keys and disconnecting others. While no change has been to the musician, the musician is unable to perform as intended, and the discordant sound may be caustic to our ears.

Likewise, when we introduce a drug into our brain it is akin to making changes to the piano. Like the musician, our spiritual body (heart, soul and spirit) are not affected by the drug. However, our heart, soul and spirit are not able to function as designed. A concerted but vain effort to gain control (over our physical body) may occur as discordant words and behavior are exhibited. Meanwhile, the affects of a drug will often weaken a resolute heart—thereby increasing the influence of our sinful desires.

Faith

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. [Romans 12:3](#)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. [Hebrews 11:1](#)

God apportioned faith within each of our souls. A very simple and basic definition of faith is our capability of believing that something exists—even if we cannot see, hear, touch, smell, or taste it. Think about it, if we were not designed with the attribute of faith we would be incapable of believing in God. Plus, when you think more about it, we need the basic attribute of faith when we interact with the world around us. For example (although it's unnoticeable) faith is exercised when we:

- Depend upon someone else to do something.
- Press the “send” button on an e-mail (we have a degree of faith in the Internet in that it will correctly deliver the message to the intended destination).

This apportioned attribute within our soul—faith—can magnify and transition within our heart into belief. But what is most important: belief can grow into trust.



In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. [Eph 1:13](#)

Trust is defined as a firm belief in the integrity, ability, or character of a person. However, it's more—much more. Trust is beyond faith. Trust is beyond belief. Trust involves extending an indescribable “internal part” of us to the object of our trust. Trust is the highest personal attribute one can give, and one can earn. However, trust is also extremely fragile. When trust is broken it “hurts” on the inside as we deal with our emotions. What's more, once trust is broken it will never achieve the same degree once extended/received.

God desires our whole-hearted trust. However, each and every one of us will encounter events in our lives that will challenge our faith, belief, and trust in God. It is inevitable. Reasons why may never be understood until we are with Him in Heaven. At a young age of 38 my father died

of lung cancer when I was 15-years old. And as long as I live on this earth I will never understand why. But deep in my heart I am confident I will know why when I see him again.

A wonderful article regarding this topic may be read on the following website:

http://www.lamblion.com/articles/articles_religious6.php

Noise

The analogy of the piano player also applies to the one whose soul is not at peace; which is often due to a significant amount of “noise” in the mind. The pressures of life—which drive the emotions of anxiety, anger, and so forth—can cause our mind to become overloaded with a vast array of thoughts that are difficult to bear (i.e. too many keys on the piano pressed at the same time). As noise increases our ability to communicate with God (and our relationship with Him) is proportionately hindered.

A peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7) will occur when we spiritually enter into the full realization that our Savior and our Lord God is in complete control—and we have nothing to worry about—and eternally important—our names are written in The Book of Life. This is when we can completely let go; and trust God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, and with all of our strength.

Jesus said...“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” [John 14:27](#)

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. [Psalm 46:10](#)

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. [Isaiah 32:17](#)

Our Spirit

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [John 3:3-6](#)

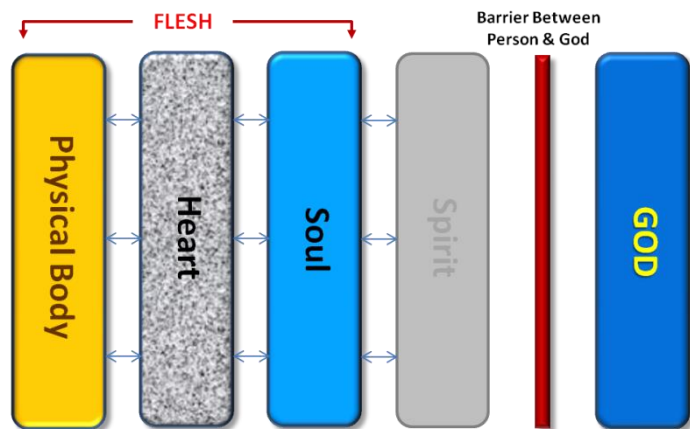
Not Born Again

From a spiritual perspective, those that have not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are:

- Not reborn in spirit.
- Not renewed in heart and soul.
- Unrepentant.

Additional characteristics include:

- Adheres to one's own views.
- Does not actively seek God.
- May be hostile towards God.
- May have a stubborn, rebellious, and hard heart.
- May have no consciousness of sin.
- Is focused on things of the world.



The above graphic depicts a heart of stone and a spirit that has atrophied to a point of near non-existence. But what's tragic is (1) a barrier exists between the person's spirit and God, and (2) they are blind to God's Truth.

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. [Ephesians 4:18](#)

Due to unforgiven sin and an unrepentant heart, persons are spiritually cut off and not able to communicate with God. These are they that:

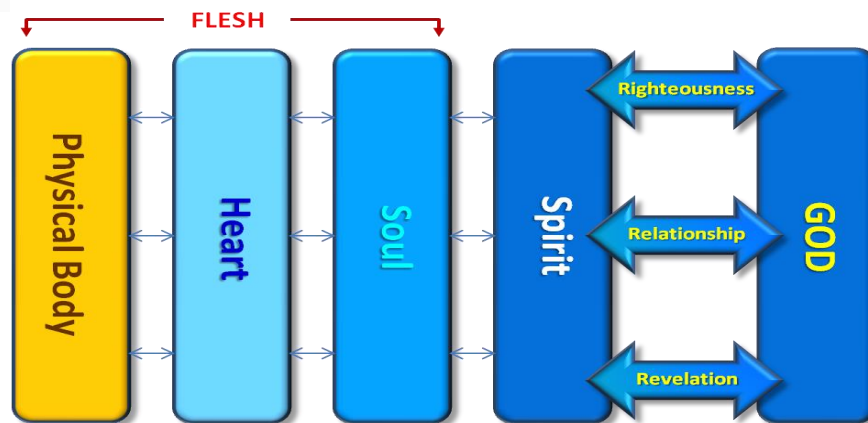
- Are not forgiven and are separated from the life of God.
- Are spiritually dead in transgressions and sins.
- Will continually seek means to:
 - Fill the voids that are within.
 - Follow and fulfill the desires of their flesh.
- Will believe (or vainly create) deceitful lies that provide justification for behavior.
- Are darkened in their ability (unable) to see things from God's perspective.
- Do not have the Holy Spirit's "enlightenment" when reading God's word.

Born Again

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. [Colossians 2:13-14](#)

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. [Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)



The moment we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord we are completely and forever forgiven for our sin. This is when we are born again—born from above as God gives us a new spirit: one that’s alive; one that connects with Him; and one that will change us from within. In addition, our heart will continually become “softer” and regenerated as we grow in grace and unmerited forgiveness. However, the born again person still has a sinful flesh (physical body and soul). But praise God in that the new God-given spirit (in collaboration with The Holy Spirit) will begin the process of changing the intent, objectives, and role of the heart in controlling the lusts of the flesh—while continually cleansing our soul of impurities. And there’s more:

- The Holy Spirit is God’s mark (seal) of God’s ownership.
- We are viewed as being righteous.
- The Holy Spirit will actively seek a personal relationship.
- The Holy Spirit will lovingly reveal God’s truths.

The Holy Spirit is God's Mark (Seal) of Ownership

When we purchase an expensive item (home, car, etc.) we are usually required to make a deposit (pay for a portion of the total purchase). The deposit represents the buyer's earnest desire to take ownership and commitment to pay in full. In a similar manner, for each that is born again, God provides the Holy Spirit, which represents:

- An earnest deposit (or portion) of our future inheritance.
- His mark of ownership (for we were already purchased—paid in full—by the blood of the Lamb)

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. [2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#)

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: [Colossians 1:12-14](#)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: [Romans 8:14-16](#)

Righteousness

When we take a serious and deep look at our heart, at our soul, and at our sinful flesh—we begin to realize how far we are from having the holiness of God. And in reality, it is impossible to attain His perfection because we are flawed to the core. This is where His grace makes up the “gap” between who we are and what we should be—in that we are forgiven: completely and forever. What's more (even if it does not seem possible from our perception) we are considered as having the righteousness of Jesus Christ because we are justified (just-as-if-I'd not sinned) by His grace.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. [Romans 3:22-24](#)

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. [Acts 13:38-39](#)

However, although we are forgiven for past, present and future sins—and viewed by God as being righteous—God’s grace does not give us a “free pass” to continue sinning. God’s absolute love, expressed by His forgiveness and grace, motivates us to change our behavior from fulfilling the desires of our flesh to doing that which pleases Him. Meanwhile, as we learn to trust and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we become increasingly righteous as we die to ourselves and become more like Jesus Christ.

Then said Jesus unto 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. [Matthew 16:24-25](#); [Luke 9:23](#); [Mark 8:34-35](#)

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. [Ephesians 1:6-7](#)

Relationship

The Christian faith is much more than just attending church; it’s an experience that involves a transformation of our heart and soul; and an enlightened perception of others (and of the world) as we follow Christ and allow Him to reshape us into the person He wants us to be. The Christian faith is also about growing into a trusting relationship with the Creator of the universe as we place our life completely in His hands, and as we rely upon Him—and Him alone—to protect and provide. This trust is reflected when a Christian prays: "Not my will, but Your will be done. I am no longer my own, I am Yours to be and do what You will."

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. [Romans 12:2](#)

God’s Truths

Our new God-given spirit enables us to view scripture from a completely different perspective as we discover God’s word speaking directly to our heart. The Holy Spirit will disclose (expose to view, uncover) that what has been hidden from those who are not born again. This is why the unsaved does not see—nor understands—God’s word; including the role, purpose, and deity of Jesus Christ. Human understanding of the Bible is defined by the god of this world (Satan); is hampered by sin; and constrained by flawed reasoning that is based upon the physical, while being oblivious to the spiritual realm. Simply stated, understanding and revelation comes only by the Holy Spirit and not by human effort and intellect.

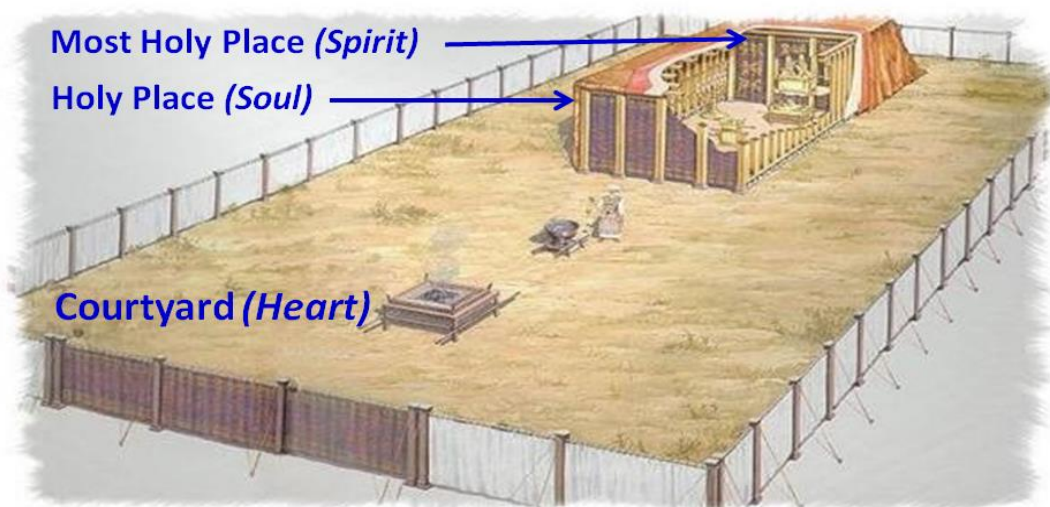
But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the

image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. [2 Corinthians 4:3-6](#)

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. [1 Corinthians 2:12-14](#)

Born Again Bodies are a Temple

The Tabernacle was a portable temple used by the Israelites as they wandered in the desert. God gave its very specific design to Moses. (See Exodus chapters 25-31, 35-40.) The Tabernacle is comprised of a Courtyard and the Holy Place. Within the Holy Place is the Most Holy Place.



And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. [Exodus 25:8](#)

And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God. [Exodus 29:45-46](#)

And so God dwelled among His people in the tabernacle in the wilderness. He appeared as a pillar of cloud over the tabernacle by day and a pillar of fire by night in the sight of all Israel. The people would not set out on their journey unless the cloud lifted. It was an unmistakably powerful visual statement indicating God's presence among them, and an example of daily walking with God.

The components of the Tabernacle (and Temple) may be correlated to our body (protective fence), heart (courtyard), soul (Holy Place), and spirit (Most Holy Place).

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [1 Corinthians 3:16](#)

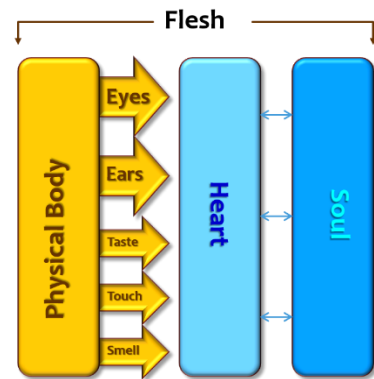
What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. [John 2:19](#)

Our Flesh

There are many scriptures that refer to our flesh, most with a negative association with sin. Based upon our four basic components, it is this writer's opinion our flesh is comprised of the physical body, heart and soul (and not the spirit). Whether or not the sinful demands of the flesh are fulfilled is dependent upon the desires of the heart.

In addition, our new born again spirit (in collaboration with the Holy Spirit) will be at "odds" against our sinful flesh.



This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth 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. [Galatians 5:16-17](#)

The Apostle Paul reflected upon this struggle – which he referred to (in 2 Cor. 12:7) as a “thorn in my flesh.” *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [Romans 7:15-20](#)*

Excluding demonic influence, our physical body and our soul are primarily responsible (i.e. the “culprits”) for the struggle with the Spirit. The mediator between the flesh and the Spirit is the heart. For example, our physical body can exert strong and inappropriate cravings (especially when someone is addicted). Our soul will instigate improper thoughts and desires. And sometimes our body and soul will cooperatively work together in an attempt to lead us down the dark hole of sin and shame. Meanwhile, the heart will do one of the following when the body/soul is at odds with the Spirit:

- Allow the cravings of our body and/or sinful desires of the soul to take control.
- Take charge, actively deny, and overcome by obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Note the optional responses for the heart is a free will decision. If sin occurs, it is because of a decision by the heart. Sin does not occur because we are forced into a sinning by a person holding a gun to our head telling us to sin or be shot, or completely overwhelming. *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. [1 Corinthians 10:13](#)*

Remember the following when you are confronted with sin.

1. Your temptation will not be greater than what you are able to overcome.
2. A way of escape will be provided.
3. This is when the flesh dies (and the Spirit of God is magnified) in victory.

The plain and simple truth is we sin because we decide to sin—as our heart steps aside and allows our body/soul take charge. When we fail—even for the same thing we have done before—we are still forgiven. Jesus revealed the heart of God when He answered Peter’s question about forgiveness. *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.* [Matthew 18:21-22](#)

Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive a brother when they sin against him. You’d think seven times would be sufficient. After someone sins against us seven times, to forgive them seven times should be sufficient, and we’ve accomplished “our part.” We should be “good-to-go” and able to check this off our “to do list.” Compared to worldly standards, forgiving someone seven times far exceeds human expectations and we should be “legally free” to be done with them. What’s more, we should be able to rightfully hold onto non-forgiveness from that point forward. Besides, most persons would not forgive more than one time—which is reflected in the adage: “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”

But Jesus said no. Jesus said we should forgive seventy times seven, or 490 times. This is a huge quantity! No one in their right mind would continue to forgive someone this many times! However, these words of Jesus reveal more than the number of times we should forgive—they reveal God’s heart. Jesus would have never asked us to do something that He is not willing to do. The response by Jesus conveys the number of times God will forgive us—which extends beyond 490 times and beyond human comprehension—because His love and forgiveness is infinite.

We will never be perfect. We will make mistakes. God understands. This is why Jesus Christ died for us. It is His love and unmerited grace that creates a deep desire within our heart to no longer sin; and seek to become more like Him in every aspect of our lives.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9](#)

As we come to our senses we will pray the following from our heart:

- Forgive me God.
- I made the decision to sin.
- I am responsible.
- I know what I’ve done is detrimental to me and others.
- Thank you God for my feelings of pain and shame, and for loving me.
- Thank you Holy Spirit for your guidance and truth.
- Thank you Jesus for dying for me, for who I am, and for what I have done.
- Help me Holy Spirit to listen and follow your lead when I confront this temptation again.

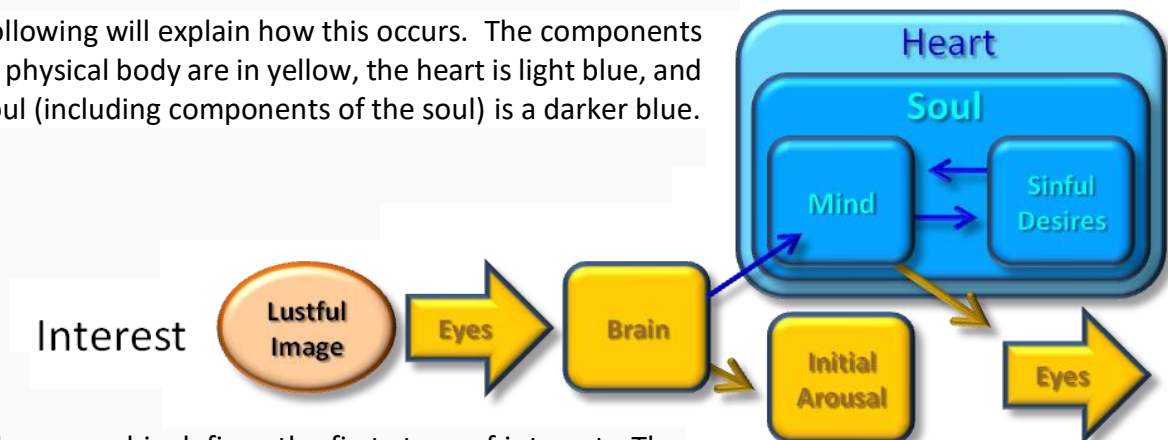
It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. [Lamentations 3:22-23](#)

Lust of the Flesh

Lust of the flesh may be defined as any desire that is contrary to the will of God. Examples include gluttony, greed, envy, pride, and addictions (drugs, alcohol, sex, etc.).

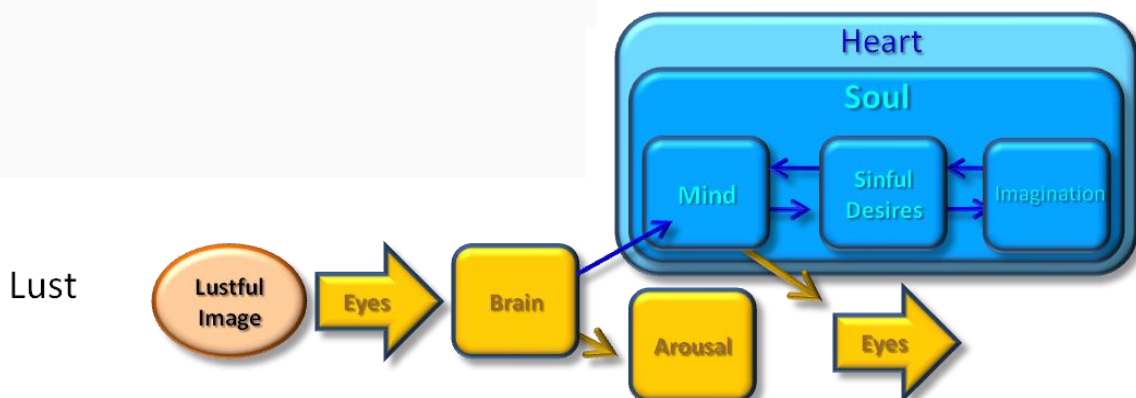
Jesus Christ declared adultery (one of the 10 Commandments) is not just a physical act—it may also occur in the heart. His words reveal sin on a whole different level by illuminating the nature and workings of our flesh. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* [Matthew 5:27-28](#)

The following will explain how this occurs. The components of the physical body are in yellow, the heart is light blue, and the soul (including components of the soul) is a darker blue.



The above graphic defines the first stage of interest. The lustful image enters the eyes and is forwarded to the brain and mind. The mind determines it is pleasing to look, it aligns with sinful desires and additional information is sought. The mind instructs the eyes to look at different aspects of the image. Meanwhile, an “automatic” and almost uncontrollable physical arousal may occur via the brain as the mind evaluates the image. The heart sees nothing wrong with what’s going on and does not attempt to stop it.

Additional information enters into the eyes and is forwarded to the brain and mind. As the mind continues to evaluate the images, imagination begins to create mental scenarios of desired sexual behavior. Meanwhile, physical sexual arousal increases. The heart approves what’s going on; the sinful flesh is in control; lust dominates the physical and spiritual body; and adultery is occurring.



God's Chastisement = Love

When a person is born again, God (via the Holy Spirit) "implants" within our physical body a new spirit with a new nature. Over time the Holy Spirit (in conjunction with our new spirit) will guide, instruct, and reward obedience. In addition, He will also correct via chastisement for disobedience. For example, when a born again believer sins they will experience the following within their heart:

- *Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross for me... FOR WHAT I JUST DID!*
- *Yes, I'm forgiven, but this feeling of guilt and shame hurts deep on the inside.*
- *God's presence is gone and I don't like how I feel.*



However, thank and praise God for the feelings of guilt, shame, unworthiness, loss of internal peace, and darkness—including the feeling of being disconnected from God as we seek to run and hide from Him (i.e. the behavior of Adam and Eve after they sinned).

We have a heavenly Father that loves us. These feelings and experience are His means to spiritually chastise, correct, and cleanse our heart and soul. All of this represents—and reinforces—we are His adopted children.

Consider the following: did you think and feel this way when you sinned before you were reborn?

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. [Hebrews 12:4-11](#)

Those that have a heart that yearns for righteousness will willingly pray: *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. [Psalms 139:23-24](#)*

5 Stages of Sin

There are 5 stages of sin. Each stage may occur within seconds, or occur during a longer period.

Stage 1 Redirection	Mental focus of what we're doing or thinking is redirected.
Stage 2 Interest	Visual or mental image creates interest (which generates a desire for more information)
Stage 3 Engagement	Hooked / locked in: consideration, evaluation, and imagination of potential benefits occur.
Stage 4 Struggle or Sin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Christian's heart will realize what's going on and seek to gain control (prayer, scripture, Holy Spirit).• If the heart does not take control, sin occurs.
Stage 5 Victory or Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Christian walks away in victory...or• Spiritual death occurs.

The first stage occurs when there is a redirection from whatever we're presently thinking about, to a mental awareness of the sin. The next stage occurs when either a visual image enters our eyes, or our mind creates an image of the sin. This image generates interest within our soul and creates a subsequent desire for more information. The next stage is engagement—when we begin to consider, evaluate, and imagine the potential benefits of the sin. The fourth stage will branch off into one of two directions. If the heart does not intervene, sin occurs followed by the next stage: spiritual death. If the heart of a Christian intervenes a struggle will occur between the demands of the flesh and the desires of the heart. Victory occurs through prayer, reciting scripture hidden in the heart for this type of encounter, and obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The 5 stages of sin are depicted by the very first sin that occurred in the Garden of Eden.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." [Genesis 2:16-17](#)

So, Adam and Eve are living in absolute bliss; experiencing life to its fullest potential; with only one mandate from God: do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Note the craftiness of the serpent (Satan) when he asked a very broad deceptive question designed to redirect. He did not specifically ask about the one tree. But rather, asked an open-ended question that required Eve to focus upon and explain what God said regarding the tree that is in the midst of the garden.

<u>Stage 1</u> Redirection	The serpent said “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman said “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which <i>is</i> in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”
<u>Stage 2</u> Interest	Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
<u>Stage 3</u> Engagement	The woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise.
<u>Stage 4</u> Struggle or Sin	She took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.
<u>Stage 5</u> Victory/Death	Spiritual death occurred.

Once redirected and focused upon the tree, Satan then stated a half-truth deceptive lie: “You will not die.” While she may not physically die, she would spiritually die. To generate interest and desire, Satan then defined potential benefits.

Eve is now hooked. She listened, considered, evaluated, and imagined what could occur if she ate. Her flesh was in control and her heart’s desire to obey God was non-existent. Consequently, Eve and Adam ate from the tree and experienced a spiritual death.

Victory Over the Flesh

There is a scene in Pixar’s *A Bug’s Life* that accurately depicts what happens when we are confronted with temptation, and when our heart “steps aside” and allows our flesh to take control.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTUQyEr-sg0>

The 5 stages of sin are accurately depicted in Harry's demise.

Stage 1 Redirection	Harry and his friend were just flying around doing what flies do...when the blue light caught Harry's attention.
Stage 2 Interest	The blue light looked appealing.
Stage 3 Engagement	Harry determined it was beautiful and he started to fly towards the blue light (even against the warning of his friend).
Stage 4 Struggle or Sin	Harry willingly flew into the light. His friend willingly did not look into the light and stayed away.
Stage 5 Victory or Death	Harry died. Harry's friend overcame the power of the light.

Harry's response to his friend's warning reveals his flesh was in control: "But, it's beautiful." "But" reveals he knew of the consequences. However, Harry found justification for his behavior (its beauty) and decided not to listen to the warning of his friend to not look at the light as he willingly moved towards his death.

Unfortunately, all of us can relate to Harry. All of us have willingly walked down this same path. We knew the consequences. We also knew the rewards of avoidance. But we decided to listen to our absolutely flawed human logic (and/or possible demonic influence) and devised justified reasons as to why we should fulfill the demands of our sinful flesh. Meanwhile, our heart stepped aside and gave control to the flesh as sin and death occurred. Like Harry, that which represented pleasure—resulted in death. That which seemed real—was a deceptive lie.

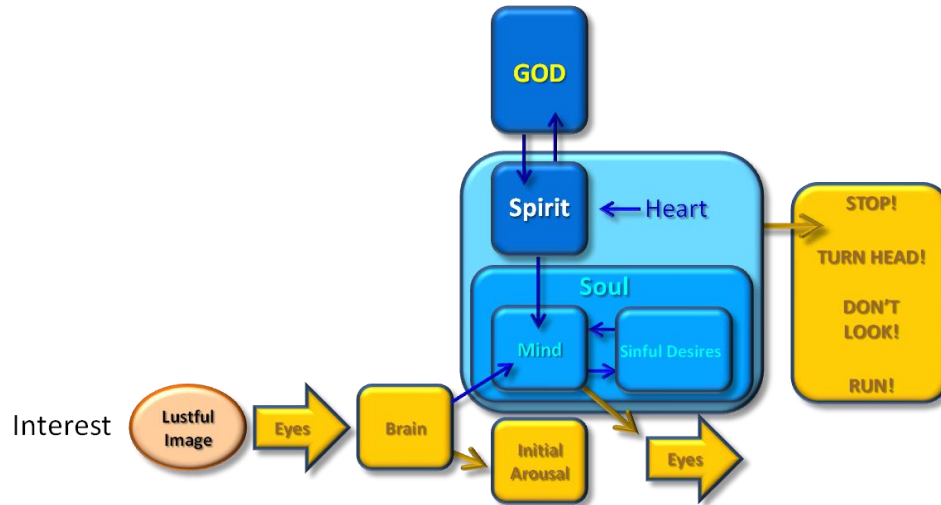
Praise God in that our salvation is not based upon what we do. Praise God in that we are saved by grace, and not our behavior. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:* [Ephesians 2:8](#)

Simply stated...we will continue in sin, and live in darkness, and suffer all of the consequences...until our heart makes the following decisions.

1. I want to live a life that reflects God's grace and love.
2. I no longer want to be bound by sin.
3. I will not be deceived.
4. I will take a proactive role by identifying and continually avoiding all that "feeds" my flesh.
5. I will decide how to respond in the future when tempted.
6. I will identify and store God's word in my heart that speaks to the sin.
7. I will monitor "keep an eye on" the status of my flesh.
8. I will avoid those areas in my life that lead to sin.
9. I will listen to the Holy Spirit when tempted.
10. I will obediently follow the way of escape.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [Ephesians 6:11](#)



For example, when a lustful image enters the eyes and is forwarded to the brain, the mind determines it is pleasing to look at and will direct the eyes to look at different aspects of the image.

- All of this occurs in a fraction of time, regardless if born again or not born again.
- Lust does not occur until the imagination “kicks in.”

When a proactively-prepared born again Christian encounters temptation, the heart will recognize what is occurring and will actively take control over the desires and demands of the flesh. This is where the “rubber meets the road”; where victory is achieved; and where the chains of sin are broken. A determined heart will:

1. Authoritatively declare: “Stop what you are doing! This is wrong! You know if you continue to look you will sin, and you will experience all of the negative consequences! Turn your head now and look no more. **DO IT NOW!!!**”
2. Deliberately remember (and consider) the spiritual price that was (and will be paid); including the separation from God, guilt, shame, darkness, doubt, emotional distress, and collateral damage.
3. Seek assistance from God in prayer.
4. Speak the word of God prepared in their heart for this situation:
 - *I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? [Job 31:1](#)*
 - *Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. [2 Corinthians 10:5](#)*
 - *Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. [2 Timothy 2:22](#)*
5. Obediently follow the means of escape given by the Holy Spirit.

Feed the Spirit, Starve the Flesh

As a Christian matures they will actively seek ways to feed their spirit and starve their flesh.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. [Romans 8:5-6](#)

Feeding the spirit magnifies the relationship with Jesus Christ via prayer, reading God's word, attending church, and socializing with like-minded committed Christians.

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. [1 Thessalonians 5:17-18](#)

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. [Jeremiah 33:3](#)

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. [Hebrews 10:25](#)

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. [Matthew 18:20](#)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. [Colossians 3:16](#)

Starving the flesh involves a deliberate avoidance of the snares and traps that result in sin.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. [Romans 13:14](#)

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. [Galatians 6:8-10](#)

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) [Ephesians 2:3-5](#)

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. [Galatians 5:24](#)

Are We Tempted By Our Flesh, Or Satan, Or God?

Let's start with God...Who does not tempt. *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* [James 1:13-14](#)

Satan is referred to in the Bible as the "god of this age" ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)); and "the prince of the power of the air" ([Ephesians 2:2](#)); "the ruler of this world" ([John 12:31](#); [John 14:30](#)); and "the abomination that causes desolation" ([Daniel 9:27](#); [Matthew 24:15](#)).

Satan's position in the world was also revealed when he tempted Jesus. *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* [Matthew 4:8-9](#)

It is important to understand that God is still sovereign. God has limited Satan's power and influence throughout time. However, Satan's power will be increasingly unleashed during the last days.

To gain an understanding of Satan's influence, first consider the sin in the world that (1) is addicting, (2) destroys lives, and (3) separates us from God (drugs, alcohol, and porn). Now think about the past failed attempts of government to outlaw (or at least control) each one. Now consider how drugs and porn have increased in availability and accessibility during the past few years. Those addicted to porn once had to drive to a store to fulfill their sinful flesh. Now it's just a click away in the home. Also consider the number of states that have recently legalized marijuana—including those states that are in the process of seeking legalization.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. [Ephesians 6:12](#)

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: [Colossians 1:13-14](#)

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. [1 John 5:18-19](#)

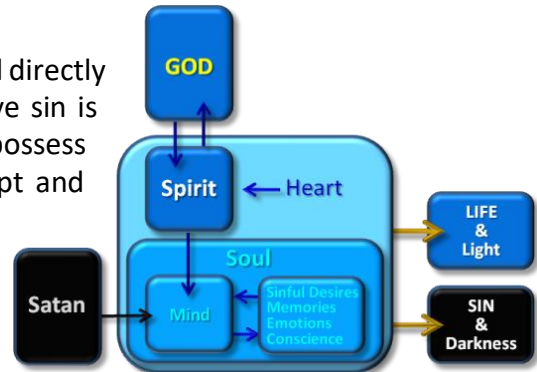
And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. [Ephesians 2:1-3](#)

As such, when you consider things from a very high level (and spiritual) perspective, Satan has continually improved access to things our sinful flesh desires: that which destroys and desolates. Take a serious look at what's in the media today and ask the following question: Does this represent the life and light of God; or does this convey messaging that speaks to our sinful flesh? What's more, compare what's depicted in television and movies—including sin-biased slanted reporting by news organizations—versus just a few years ago.

So, although indirect, it may be said that we are tempted by Satan when we see or hear something (via the media: Internet, television, movies, print, radio, and so forth) that stimulates our sinful flesh.

However, it is also possible for a Christian to be tempted directly by Satan or a demonic entity—especially if a repetitive sin is occurring. Please note it is impossible for a demon to possess a born again Christian. However, a demon can tempt and oppress, which may include:

- Feeling as if you are being pulled/pressured into sin.
- Hearing voices and/or having negative, persuasive, or commanding thoughts to sin.
- An overwhelming feeling of oppression/depression.
- A heightened emotional experience of anxiety or fear.
- A desire for isolation.
- Finding it difficult to pray.
- A lack of desire (possible repulsion) of going to church/spending time with Christians.



If the aforementioned is occurring, every born again Christian has the authority and power to take spiritual control over darkness by:

1. Confessing the sin to God.
2. Using the power given by the Holy Spirit and by the Blood of the Lamb.
3. Exiting the situation via the direction provided by the Holy Spirit.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. [1 John 4:4](#)

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. [Luke 10:18-20](#)

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 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](#)

Prayer for Satan / Demonic Attack

Heavenly Father, in name of Jesus Christ, I approach Your throne of grace and ask for your forgiveness and help. I confess and repent of my sin. (Be specific and speak from your heart!)

Thank you Jesus—my Savior and Lord—for dying for me. Because of your blood that was shed upon Calvary I am redeemed, justified, cleansed, and sanctified. With all of my heart, with all of my soul, with all of my mind, and with all of my strength I place my trust wholly in You Lord, in your grace and love.

Lord, protect me and deliver me from every evil spirit and evil influence that is afflicting my life. I humbly ask and seek your presence. I ask for the wisdom and power of your Holy Spirit, and for angelic hosts to help in this matter.

I plead the blood of Jesus Christ over my life to protect me from the evil one, and I claim the power of the Holy Spirit over all of the kingdom of darkness, for greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world.

Satan, you and your minions have no authority in my life! I break the power and stronghold of every principality, rulers of darkness, spiritual forces of evil, and all work directed against me in the Name of Jesus Christ! I command you, evil spirit (s), to go in the name of Jesus Christ! Now GO!

Heavenly Father...I give you glory, and honor, and praise for protecting me. I thank you God for giving me power to overcome darkness, and setting me free. Thank you Jesus because my name is written in The Book of Life!



For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: [Colossians 1:9-14](#)

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

[Revelation 22:12-14](#)

It is my prayer your path is illuminated by God's Word; your fear is overcome with the peace of His promises; and your life eternal with Jesus Christ.

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Please write. Your comments and/or questions are warmly appreciated. Be assured, I will not respond unless asked to do so.

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All for the Glory of Jesus Christ,

Harold D. Thomas