

The Spiritual Man

What does it mean to be a spiritual believer?

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- Introduction
 - As born-again believers we can be either spiritual or carnal.
 - The carnal believer is walking by means of the flesh and its empowerment.
 - The spiritual believer is walking by means of the Spirit and His empowerment.
 - Unbelievers cannot be spiritual since they do not have a living human spirit and they are not indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.
- The Natural Man
 - The natural man is unregenerate because he has never placed his faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior [Acts 4:12].
 - The natural man is a slave to his sin nature and is susceptible to Satan's counterfeit systems of "truth" [1 Tim 4:1-2, Rev 2:24].
 - The natural man does not accept the deep things of God because they are foolishness to him [1 Cor 2:10-14].
 - Therefore, though possibly well advanced in the wisdom of this world, the natural man's opinions are of no value in spiritual matters.
 - The natural man is in desperate need of gospel hearing that he might be born-again through faith in Jesus Christ [John 3:7-18].
 - Satan understands that need and blinds the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel [2 Cor 4:3-4].
 - God removes that veil whenever the natural man turns to the Lord [2 Cor 3:15-16].
 - This turning to the Lord takes place as the natural man's heart is softened when the Holy Spirit convicts him concerning his sin of unbelief [John 16:8-9] and the Father draws him [John 6:44].
 - Thus convicted and drawn, the natural man must choose to believe in Christ [Acts 10:43].
- The Carnal Man
 - The carnal man is a believer who is walking according to the flesh rather than according to the Spirit [Rom 8:5; 1 Cor 3:1].
 - The carnal believer cannot handle the solid food of God's word [1 Cor 3:2].
 - By walking according to the flesh, the carnal believer is acting in a way that is no different from a natural man [1 Cor 3:3] in doing the deeds of the flesh [Gal 5:19-21].

- The carnal believer has quenched the Holy Spirit [1 Thess 5:19] by suppressing Him and failing to yield to the revealed will of God in presenting himself as a living and holy sacrifice [Rom 12:1].
- In his suppression of the Holy Spirit, the carnal believer is being conformed to this world rather than being transformed by the renewing of the mind [Rom 12:2].
- The carnal believer has also grieved the Holy Spirit as a result of sin in his life [Eph 4:30].
- While quenching and grieving the Holy Spirit the carnal believer will not be filled with the Holy Spirit [Eph 5:18].
- However, no matter how long a believer remains in his carnal walk, he will never lose the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which is permanent [Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19].
- Though He is quenched and grieved by the poor choices of the carnal believer, the indwelling Holy Spirit ministers to the child of God by convicting him of his fleshly walk.
- The carnal believer needs to respond to this convicting ministry of the Spirit, change his mind (repent) regarding his present fleshly walk and be restored to fellowship with God through confession of sin [1 John 1:5-10].
- Once restored to fellowship, the believer needs to yield to the Holy Spirit and to the will of God for his life by following Christ's example [Matt 26:39; Heb 10:7].
- Once restored to fellowship and yielded to God, the believer needs to recognize his complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit and walk accordingly [Gal 5:16].
- The Spiritual Man
 - The spiritual man is a believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit [Eph 5:18] who is manifesting His fruit [Gal 5:22-23] in the life of the believer because He is unhindered by the temporal effects of rebellion and sin.
 - The spiritual believer is able to discern spiritual things [1 Cor 2:15-16] and thereby grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ [2 Pet 3:18].
 - The spiritual believer is empowered by the Holy Spirit to live up to the heavenly standard which is required of members of the Church [John 13:34; 14:15; 15:12; 2 Cor 10:5; Eph 4:1-3; 5:20; 1 Thess 5:16-17].
 - The spiritual believer is strengthened with God's might to stand up to the spiritual forces of wickedness by wearing the full armor of God [Eph 6:10-17; 2 Cor 10:4].
 - The spiritual believer is walking by faith, not by sight [2 Cor 5:7], resulting in a walk that is worthy of the Lord who called him [Eph 4:1; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12; 1 John 2:6].
 - The spiritual believer needs to keep his eyes fixed on Christ [Heb 12:2] – abiding in Him [John 15:4-5] – and continually walk by means of the Spirit so he does not succumb to sin [Gal 5:16].

- Spiritual Maturity
 - Spiritual maturity is not the same thing as being spiritual.
 - ✦ A brand new believer can be spiritual since he is indwelt by the Spirit and has the ability to be filled by the Spirit and walk by means of the Spirit.
 - ✦ A spiritually mature believer can be carnal if he fails to keep his eyes fixed on Christ and ends up walking according to the flesh resulting in sins and the production of human good.
 - Spiritual maturity is the result of sustained spiritual growth by a believer.
 - ✦ We grow spiritually as the Scriptures teach us, correct us by exposing our sins, and train us in the way of righteousness [2 Tim 3:16-17; Col 1:28].
 - ✦ We grow spiritually when we humbly receive the word of God implanted in our souls, dwell on the things we have learned, and live our lives accordingly [Jas 1:21-25; Col 3:16-17].
 - Spiritual maturity comes about as a result of a change in our thinking which is wrought by God [Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 14:20].
 - God's plan for our lives is that we grow to spiritual maturity and He supplies everything we need (including gifted men) so that we can be built up in the faith [Eph 4:11-16].
 - After we have been taught the foundation of the elementary things of the faith we must then choose to press on toward spiritual maturity [Heb 6:1-2; 1 Tim 6:10-12].
 - One of the key aspects of spiritual maturity is humility and a truly mature believer will not evaluate himself as having obtained maturity in the faith [Phil 3:12-16; 1 Cor 8:1-2].
 - As believers mature in the faith they can begin to "eat" the solid food of the word of God and, as they apply this teaching in their lives, they become more able to distinguish between good and evil [1 Cor 2:6; Heb 5:14].
 - Spiritually mature believers understand the word of God to the degree that they have the capacity to teach others what they have learned [Heb 5:12-13].
 - Spiritually mature believers are oriented to the race which God has set before them [Heb 12:1; Phil 4:11-13] and they seek to do the works which God prepared for them beforehand [Eph 2:10; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14].
 - Spiritually mature believers are established in the truth [2 Pet 1:12] so that they are not susceptible to being blown around by every wind of doctrine [Eph 4:14].

- Conclusions
 - Unbelievers are unable to understand the spiritual things of God's word because these things are spiritually appraised.
 - Therefore, unbelievers need to hear the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ so that, believing, they will be born-again.
 - Believers can be either carnal or spiritual.
 - A carnal believer is one who is walking by means of the flesh, not the Holy Spirit.
 - A carnal believer is still indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but because he has quenched/grieved the Spirit his life will yield the deeds of the flesh (sin/human good) rather than the fruit of the Spirit.
 - A spiritual believer is filled with the Spirit and walking by means of the Spirit.
 - Being filled with the Spirit is not a feeling, not a "second blessing" nor a matter of maturity.
 - A spiritual believer will abide in Christ and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.
 - Spiritual maturity is not the same as being spiritual.
 - Spiritual maturity comes through spiritual growth as the word of God changes us.
 - We will grow spiritually as we live out the things we have learned from God's word.
 - It is God's plan for each of us that we learn the foundational things of the faith and then press on to spiritual maturity.
 - A spiritually mature believer is humble and is focused on God's will rather than his own.
 - A spiritually mature believer will be able to communicate the things he has learned.
 - A spiritually mature believer stands firm and is not easily led away from the truth.
 - A spiritually mature believer has his eyes fixed on that which is eternal, not temporal.
 - A spiritually mature believer will seek to do the works which God is blessing rather than asking God to bless whatever he is doing.
 - A spiritually mature believer will have the humility to realize that he remains vulnerable to stumbling into sin and must always submit to God and utilize His strength to succeed.