

Of Spirit

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“For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)

The Bible reveals that humanity was made in the image and likeness of God. Since God is Spirit, we are of Spirit.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said it in this way: We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

We are hybrids of God; Paul says we have a spirit, a soul, and a body. The soul of man is actually the mind of man. The soul is comprised of the mind, the will, the intellect, our memories, and the emotions. The human soul is where the human being acquires knowledge. It is a storage and operational area for information, learning, logic, and reason.

It is at the soul level where we fight our moral, ethical, and social battles. *22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

When the Bible speaks of the mind, it is the soul that is referenced. We are to fill our soul/minds with the Word of God: God’s ideas,

teachings, and truth – and not the traditions of humanity and what the world and ego want us to pay attention to. In Hosea 4:6 God says, “My people perish for a lack of knowledge.” More specifically, we perish because we do not apply God’s instruction.

The body is a dwelling place and a vehicle of expression for the human spirit. The spirit actually gives animation to the body. The body is not the real person. However, in order for the spirit to live in the Earth realm it must be contained within a human body.

The spirit of us is who we truly are. Job 23:8 says: *But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty that gives them understanding.*

It is through Spirit that God communicates with us because we are spiritual beings. God exists in the spiritual realm, so our communication with God is done spiritually. God does not communicate through our souls or bodies, but through Spirit.

When we speak about being born again or the new creation, we are speaking in spiritual terms, not the soul or the body. At the moment of our physical expiration, when we drop the body, our spirit, the spirit of us, the spirit of Patrick in my case, departs the body and enters pure spirit, the realm of God.

2Corinthians 5:8 states: *Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.*

OK, my argument is made: we are spiritual beings living out a human existence. With that point having been proffered, it is our challenge to live as spiritual an existence as we can, despite the physical worldly context in which we find ourselves.

It is this struggle ... this dichotomy of existence, that leads us to our most important and valuable lessons.

For instance, there is a definite difference between religious protocol and spiritual practice. Religions are man-made constructs, teaching a jargon and specific set of rules exclusive to their religion. This is their dogma, an incontrovertible set of principles.

As an example, within the vast spectrum of Christianity, depending upon our specific denomination, we are to think of God in only the terms taught by our church. We are to think of Jesus and the relationship between God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and humankind in only one particular way, as taught by the minister. If we think anything else, we are heathens, sinners, unsaved, and in many cases ... off to Hell we go.

Religion is a human fabrication based upon collaborative rules, ideas, and practices. They vary from religion to religion, denomination to denomination, culture to culture, even locale to locale.

This is unlike spiritual lessons or ideas. They don't vary much even between religions. Christ came to teach love, forgiveness, and the acceptance of others. The spiritual ideals of Buddhism are:

compassion, loving kindness, honesty and tolerance. That sounds very Christian, doesn't it?

Christ taught spiritual values, not religious dogma. It is we humans who turned what he taught into a nest of buzzing turmoil and unrecognizable mischief.

Jesus Christ taught of the value of Creation and people. He taught of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. He taught of hope, doing what is right, and putting God first. These are spiritual ideals. This is not dogma or rules or protocol. These are attributes that emanate from Spirit and are lessons learned by the mind or soul.

One of the greatest gifts that our savior Jesus Christ has given us is the ongoing existence of the Christ presence within us. Christ described himself – his Christ nature – as the way, the truth, and the life. Christ is the bridge between the worldly life we are inclined towards and the spiritual truth of who we really are.

A bridge connects two distinct objects. The world's largest bridge is the Danyang-Kunshan Grand Bridge in China; it is 102.4 miles long. The shortest bridge in our lives is the one that connects our heart to the heart of Christ; from our spirit to the spirit of God. There is no distance at all; they exist simultaneously.

It is our neglect that causes the turbulence in our lives. We neglect to listen to God, to pray, to meditate, and to bring our awareness

exclusively to the Divine. We perish because we lack the knowledge that God is Love, God is Spirit, and God is All.

God has provided many bridges for us that can connect to the infinite Love of Spirit. I've mentioned prayer and meditation. In addition, our faith and confidence are bridges from despair to hope, illness to healing. Wisdom and Love are bridges through the changes we meet in life.

A smile and a kind word can serve as a bridge in social settings. There are bridges available to us for all of our life needs. They come to us through Spirit.

Many bridges exist, but we have to choose to use them. We can connect or divide; relate or disassociate; harmonize or disarrange. We can build walls or bridges; chasms and valleys or overpasses of love and tolerance with our thoughts, actions, and words.

Jesus was a bridge builder; he created links, ways for people to connect with God, put God first, and achieve God awareness. Spiritual values – love, wisdom, patience, tolerance, loving kindness - form a bridge over any troubled waters that we might encounter. These values transcend all religions, all cultural differences, political differences, and speak to the spirit that we are – the child of God – our true identity.

It is my prayer that as we walk this earth in these bodies, we see them as the tools they are. They are carriers of our spirits. We are 'of Spirit', not of this world. I pray we understand that as diverse

as these bodies and our cultures and religions may be, who we truly are can communicate love through our spiritual natures. I urge us all to be still in moments with God, and to continue to love, appreciate, accept, forgive, and spread joy and peace no matter what catastrophes, disappointments, heart-aches, and calamities the world presents.

God is here, with us at all times. The love, joy, and peace of Christ is within us at all times. That thought alone can reconnect us to our spiritual nature and to the peace we seek.

Let us pray....