

Session # 1

The Explanation of Spirituality and Counseling

Introduction

- A. It has been said that we are the citizens of two worlds, the "natural" (or seen world), and the "spiritual" (the unseen world). In actuality there is only one world. Our fallenness has limited us to the world of sight.
- B. If we are to understand reality, ourselves, one another, and how to live, we must accept the perspective of divine revelation. Our fallenness also pushes us to interpret life "naturalistically."
- C. True spirituality is not impractical, irresponsible, overly individualistic, mystical, nor does it deny the values and truths of general revelation.

I. A Provisional Definition of Spirituality

Spirituality is the quality of life in the believer who sincerely struggles by faith, hope, and love to worship God, live in harmony with the Bible, and practice in all areas of life the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit developing in the believer the character and the potential of the new birth. Spirituality describes that quality in the believer which causes him or her to have a greater desire for and joy in prayer, Bible study, worship, and Christian service, than a desire for and joy in money, sex, acclaim, self-improvement, or success.

II. A Picture of the Spiritual World

- A. The man Job: "...perfect, upright, feared God, forsook evil." Job 1:1
- B. The accusation: "Doth Job fear God for nothing?" Job 1:9
- C. The issues: Job's life was a battlefield reflecting the conflict of God and Satan. His values and choices had profound spiritual implications.
- D. Job's affirmation: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."
"When he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." Job 1:20-22; 23:10

Conclusion:

- 1. Job believed the truth even though God appeared to be his enemy. He believed God was good and what He did was goodness. His daily decisions were very valuable and powerful in the progress of God's kingdom.
- 2. Every believer is as intimately involved in this spiritual world as was Job. Consider carefully the following passages: Daniel 10:1-21; Luke 9:1-6; 10:17,18; 15:7; I Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 6:10-18; Phil. 2:9-11; I Peter 5:6-9. We may not live as though our daily life were meaningless. If a believer refuses to accept the reality of the spiritual world his or her spiritual life and usefulness will be greatly limited.

III. Spirituality and the Believer

A. The basis of spirituality in our creation.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion ... in the image of God created he him, male and female, created he them. Gen. 1:16,17

1. We must begin with our creation for only here can we begin to understand who we are. Since God is a person of infinite perfection -- to be created in His image means we are persons of great potential and value.
2. As a person we have many rights given to us by God. We have the right to be recognized as a person, to be loved, to be heard, to feel, to express our emotions, to have needs, to have our needs met, to have our own opinions, to learn, know, develop our potential, to assume responsibility, and to enjoy life.
3. The term "spiritual" would designate the kind of a person we are. We are not basically body, mind, emotion, will, or simply a social creature. God created us "spiritual" in that He made us to know Him, to love Him, to fellowship with Him, to serve Him. We have been given the ability to walk and talk with God and perform spiritual functions. We are by creation a sacred person. We commit a profound sin when we do not develop our potential and live as though life and meaning were simply physical or social. Note these passages: Ex. 19:5,6; Deut. 7:6-8; 14:2; Is. 43:1-7,21, Eph. 1:18; 4:24; Col. 3:10.
4. Once we accept error about ourselves, and we all have due to the Fall, then we will always use that error to interpret (misinterpret) the events, relationships, and opportunities of life -- as well as ourselves. Without realizing it we bring confusion and failure into many of the areas of our life. By such error we deny who we really are and thus contradict who we are by how we live.
5. One of the clearest evidences that we do not know, accept, and practice the Biblical truth of our own self-worth, is seen in our response to the Bible. Too often we read the promises and say, "I can't be like that." Or we read the commandments and say, "I can't do that." When we live with such unbelief and error in our life the result can only be some form of bondage, confusion, discouragement, anger, and bitterness.

B. The basis of spirituality in the New Birth.

We are told in Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10 that we were reborn, in the new birth, according to the pattern of our original creation.

IV. Spirituality and Counseling

If we have been created in God's image -- and we have, and
If we are fallen people -- and we are, and
If we are living in our Father's world -- and we are, and
If Jesus Christ is our Redeemer -- and He is, and
If the Bible is God's Word to us -- and it is, and
If we are not wrestling with flesh and blood -- and we are not, then
good counseling must take spirituality into account.

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