



An undenominational publication devoted  
to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles  
and dedicated to those who seek the truth.

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## What Is True “Spirituality”?

Even though a recent poll of Americans indicated that 24% consider themselves to be “spiritual but not religious,” few have given thought about defining “spirituality.” Cultural definitions include things such as (1) Living an ascetic lifestyle (2) Depriving oneself of family relationships, speech or money, (3) Warm-fuzzy feelings, (4) Reading a good book, (4) Praying when one feels a need. Would it surprise you to learn that none of these fits God’s description of “spirituality”? Since God gave us the Scripture to be our spiritual guide, it would be beneficial to let God Himself describe how people become truly “spiritual.”

**GIVE GOD CREDIT FOR HIS BEAUTIFUL CREATION.** Jesus spoke about God’s hand in creating and maintaining all of life. He challenged us to “*consider the birds of the air*” and the “*lilies of the field*” (Matthew 5:25-34). Giving Him credit for the beautiful world is an important step toward becoming spiritual.

**LISTEN TO GOD’S VOICE IN SCRIPTURE.** Psalm 119 is full of spiritual insights into the value of Bible-reading. Read this psalm, it will help you distinguish spirituality from things that are superficial.

**BE DETERMINED TO OVERCOME YOUR SINFUL-NATURE.** Reading the Bible will help you understand what sin is. When one understands what offends the Creator, he can repent of those things; life can change by His power. Everybody needs to turn from his sins, even the person who does not know what his sins are! A good Scripture to read is Galatians 5:19-26.

**WORSHIP GOD AS HE DIRECTS.** The Heavenly Father seek worship brought to Him “*in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24). Worship which is “*in spirit*” is sincere, heart-felt; worship “*in truth*” is in keeping with His instructions given in the Bible.

**BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR SOUL.** It is our hope that by reading this little booklet you will learn that your soul will live forever. Jesus said: “*What can a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Matthew 16:26). Ask for free materials on becoming spiritually-minded by contacting us today. The choices you make will determine where you spend eternity.

— David Tarbet, Minister of Personal Evangelism  
Church of Christ, New Milford, Connecticut

# Religious or Spiritual?



There is a very real possibility that these two concepts may not be related at times, even to the point of one being opposite to the other. Often I find myself in a conversation with someone who considers himself to be “religious”. This assessment is usually based upon criteria such as church affiliation/attendance, prayer habits, moral values as well as adherence to a specified set of beliefs, usually taught in childhood. “Spirituality” is usually viewed as something a bit deeper, often driven by one’s innermost feelings as they relate to matters that go beyond what is experienced by merely going to church.

If we define “religion” as a system of belief, we find many religions out there. This is nothing new for the Apostle Paul nearly 2,000 years ago addressed the people of Athens as “religious” when it was obvious that they lacked knowledge of the true God (Acts 17:22). As for those who consider themselves to be “spiritual,” we find people adhering to a variety of beliefs spanning a spectrum as wide as the day is long.

Each of us needs to understand being “religious” and being “spiritual” as defined by God in His word, the Bible. We must go about achieving things that are religious and spiritual in a way that honors God through Jesus Christ His Son.

Do you wish to be “religious”? True religion is driven by a desire to please God in all we do, think and say. Are you making sure that your religion is centered in the truth found in the Bible that Jesus is the Son of God — that He is God in the flesh, and that He died for our sins and was raised from the dead? If we really believe that, it will result in a level of faith and obedience to God characterized by a lifestyle that is undeniably that of a true Christian. False religion is fueled by a source that is outside the scope of obedience to Jesus!

If the source of our spirituality is not God, life is empty. The Author of “spirituality” in our lives is God’s Holy Spirit. When God’s Spirit is found residing in His people as a result of their having obeyed His gospel in baptism (Acts 2:38), His Spirit fills life with “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Galatians 5:22-23). In other words, truly spiritually minded people seek to have the mind and heart of Christ. A true child of God can be both *religious* and *spiritual*.

—Anthony Melakian, Minister of Evangelism  
Church of Christ, Manchester, Connecticut

# Attitudes for Spiritual Growth

Are you growing spiritually? Did you know that you can read your Bible and still not grow? Sadly, a person may be in Christ for many years, and yet still be an infant. How does this happen? How can one read the Bible but not grow?

The Lord gives us the answer! Paul writes, “*I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready yet for it. Indeed, you still are not ready...*” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Paul wanted to give these brethren some spiritual insight, but they weren’t able to receive it! Something had stopped their spiritual progress. They were still infants! What kept these Christians from growing? We find the answer in verse 3: “*You are still worldly....*” Worldliness stops spiritual growth in its tracks! It doesn’t matter how much we think we know about the Bible, how much we read or how long we’ve been in the church, the truth is, if we’re not willing to live what we read and put away sinful thoughts and actions (worldliness), we simply won’t grow. Why would God grant spiritual growth in someone who doesn’t unite His word with faith and practice it?



Contrast the situation in Corinth with what we find in Thessalonica. Paul preached the word to those believers and they accepted it as the word of God, “*which is at work in you who believe.*” (1 Thessalonians 2:13) The word of God only performs its work in those who believe. *Believing* is the key to growth. Believing, of course, is much more than just reading. To believe means that we read the word of God and trust it—so much that we live it! *We put it into practice!* It is then and only then that the word will perform its work in us. It is only then that we will grow spiritually.

When you read your Bible, don’t read lightly. Unite what you read with faith and say to God, “I hear You and I will put Your word into practice!” Let’s live what we read and let God work in us causing us to grow like never before!



—Scott Colvin, Minister  
Church of Christ, Arudel, Maine

## “The Second Coming of Christ”

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# Obedience: The Test of Spirituality



In Matthew 5:17-20 Jesus says: “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*

*Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Jesus showed us how to obey God by demonstrating perfect obedience with His life. He was tempted in every way, just like we are, yet He did not sin (Hebrews 4:15)! One example of this temptation is provided in Matthew 4:1-11, when the Devil tempted a very-hungry Jesus in the wilderness. Even after 40 days without eating, Jesus pursued the will of God reasoning through each temptation by the strength and wisdom of God’s word. After following God’s law His entire life, Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law perfectly, nailing them to the cross in His death.

Man, on the other hand, has struggled with obedience from the beginning. Even, in the Garden of Eden he failed to obey God when enticed by Satan. Sin entered the world. It marred our relationship with the Creator. Since that day, all men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Yet, He still wants to adopt us through His Son. In this way, God could maintain His requirement for righteousness by making us perfect through Jesus. Jesus on the cross completed what we could not do for ourselves. He has fulfilled the law and extends His perfection to “*everyone who believes*” (Acts 10:43).

What does “*everyone who believes*” have to do with “*obedience*”? In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus explains that our position in the kingdom of heaven is connected with obedience. We must pursue God’s heart if we want to be recognized by Jesus and this pursuit includes faithfully following His law. Remember what He said: “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*” (Matthew 7:21).

—**Tony Black**, Minister  
Church of Christ, Melrose, Massachusetts

# What Will Spirituality Do For Me?

Becoming a “spiritual” person has a tremendous affect upon one’s life! In being obedient to God by being baptized for the forgiveness of sins makes one a new person (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4). This new person lives a different life, one with peace, hope, and freedom from guilt.



Being this new person does not mean that I remove myself from society, my family or those with whom I work. It means my life is now dedicated to God and His will for me. It means that I live a life that reflects the Lord to those around me, I become “*a light on a hill*” (Matthew 5:16). It means finding true happiness in this world and when this life is over, it means I will have a home in heaven with God, (Romans 6:23). Being in Christ is the greatest life one can have!

Moses learned what is most important: “*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ greater value than the treasures of Egypt; because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible*” (Hebrews 11:24-27).

Those who live in sin will reap the consequences of sin (Galatians 6:7-8). “*Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). When I became a Christian all of my sins were washed away (Acts 22:16), and now I live in Christ and free of these sins. When I stumble I repent of what I have done, confess my sins to God and I ask His forgiveness (I John 1:8-10). Living the spiritual life is the best life; it is the greatest life on earth.



— Dennis Rosenbaum, Minister/Elder  
Church of Christ, Poughkeepsie, New York

**“What Baptism Can Do For You”**

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# Dying to Self – Living for Jesus

True spirituality deals with one's relationship with the one true God and His Son, Jesus Christ. The greatest roadblock to enjoying the peace and happiness of a meaningful spiritual relationship with God is self.

Jesus requires this surrender of self. Our Savior stated: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me"* (Luke 9:23). The apostle Paul stated the same principle when he wrote: *"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20). Paul clarified what must be eliminated from one's life when one dies to self. He urged Christians to put to death *"sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire and greed . . . anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language"* (Colossians 3:5-8). The new life in Christ is one of *"compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience"* (Colossians 3:12). Paul admonished the early disciples to have love, *"which binds them all together in perfect unity"* (Colossians 3:14).

Jesus stated His vision for His followers. The Lord said, *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"* (John 10:10). This *"full life"* can only come about when one completely surrenders his life to Christ. This necessarily involves saying "no" to sin and "yes" to imitating Christ. In order to imitate Christ, one must love Jesus with *"all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind"* (Matthew 22:37). To love God with the totality of his being will bring one a life of peace, joy, and happiness.

Human beings often think that happiness can be found in possessions, wealth, beauty, fame, power, or social status. However, none of these will ever bring lasting happiness, because happiness is a spiritual quality, and physical things or human desires cannot bring about a spiritual state.

Have you surrendered your life to Christ? If you will accept that Christ is the way to true happiness by dying to self, you can find the peace, joy, and contentment for which you are searching. The essential step is to die to self. When one does this, he can be free to live for Christ. Christ can change any person's life.



—David O'Connell, former Minister  
Church of Christ, Concord, New Hampshire

**"Fundamental Questions for Starting a Spiritual Journey"**

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