

## A THREE DIMENSIONAL BEING

I am a being with self-consciousness, which means I am aware of my existence. I live in a physical body, which is in the physical world. I can intuitively know things that are beyond my mind's ability to validate. I think, feel and decide. Through my body I can act in this world on the decisions I make with my will. Before anything in this book can make sense, we need to look at what God's Word says about the questions and nature of our existence

It is fitting that in the first chapter of the Bible, God starts answering these questions related to our existence. In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness". Notice that He said, "Let us make man". This can only mean that the three members of the Godhead (God The Father, Jesus The Son Of God, and The Holy Spirit) were participants in our creation. This verse also states that we were patterned after each of them, when God said "in our image, in our likeness". Accordingly, our nature should reflect somehow each member of the Trinity. In I Thessalonians 5:23 God, through Paul confirms our triune likeness to Them. He said, "May your spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ". God is three in one and so are we. Could it be that what is meant here is that we have a spirit made in the likeness of the Holy Spirit; that our bodies are similar to the one that Jesus emptied Himself into at His incarnation; and that the faculties of decision making, thinking and feeling within our soul correspond to God The Father? I think so, but I know that He clearly states that we are somehow made in their image.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT

We have not had a problem understanding the nature of the soul and body, because their faculties are easily discernable. We live in our bodies, and within the faculties of our soul we make decisions with our will, think with our intellect/mind, and we feel with our emotions. What has been poorly understood and often overlooked is the role and function of our spirit. **Many of us have either overlooked the spirit altogether, or confused its activity with either the mind or the emotions.** For me it was the latter. From an early age I sought intuition, which I now recognize as my spirit and tried to use this faculty in living my life. However, I soon found out that it is so hard to separate intuition generated in my spirit from emotions, perceptions, bodily sensations and thought processes. Mary, the mother of Jesus, seemed to have a clear understanding of the presence of her spirit and its difference from her soul when she spoke what we call the Magnificat or Mary's Song in Luke 1:46-47. The angel Gabriel had just told Mary that she was going to conceive a child as a virgin and that Elizabeth her relative was pregnant. Mary then went to see Elizabeth and the Holy Spirit moved Elizabeth to prophecy over Mary. Elizabeth said in Luke 1:42, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" It is here in Mary's response to Elizabeth, that she demonstrates her discernment of the

difference between her spirit and soul. In Luke 1:46, she said, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior". As a teenager, Mary was self aware that through her soul and its faculties of mind, emotions and will she was glorifying God by a decision of her will. The Greek word used here for glorify also is translated praise. In her spirit she was rejoicing in God and the Greek word for rejoice also means experiencing exceeding joy. In her spirit she was experiencing the "joy of the Lord" and she was expressing this joy through her soul by praising God. Such maturity from a teenager to be so precise in her communication of what was going on inside of herself! How did she become so self aware and mature beyond her years?

In the book of Hebrews there is a clear statement that might begin to answer the question of how Mary was able to have such ability to discern the difference between her soul and her spirit. Here the scripture seems to state that the Word of God helps us separate the activities of our spirit and soul by having His word go so deep within us as to make this separation. Hebrews 4:12 states, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit." Faith is the "knowing" feature of the spirit that grows in response to God's Word. This is stated in Romans 10:17, "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ". I wonder if it is the process of developing faith in our spirit that gives us the ability to better discern the difference between our spirit and soul. As the knowing (faith) becomes stronger in our spirit we can more easily perceive our spirit and its difference from our soul. Whatever this process entails, Hebrews 4:12 does say that the Word of God goes deep within us to separate the spirit and the soul.

These scriptures clearly state that our spirit is separate and distinct from the faculties of our soul, which are the mind, emotions, and the will. The next question here is "how can we identify the activities of our spirit?" Again the word of God has an answer for this question. I Corinthians 2:11 states "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?" We may think with our mind, and feel with our emotions and make decisions with our will, but we **know** with our spirit. This scripture states that a person can know his thoughts through their spirit. Our spirit gives us the ability to step back and observe the activities of our soul and in this example it is to monitor our thought process. A real life example of this is during the times when we catch ourselves in self-deception. About 25 years ago I had a shocking experience when I was preparing to do a lecture on the necessity of rigorous honesty in recovery from addiction. I really came to grips with how dishonest I could be with myself and how dangerous this is to myself and to others. Of course I already had a lot of experience catching myself in self-deception, but this was a time when I was able to see the broad implications of what seems to be a normal human character trait. For sure we can use our minds to attempt to evade the truth, but our spirits can act as a "watch dog" for us if we tune into this knowing sense. As we are in the middle of lies, half-truths and rationalizations we get an uneasy sensation from deep inside our being and suddenly we come to our senses and confront ourselves for attempting to evade the truth with self deception. This is the

distinction between knowing and thinking and has been called our conscience. This sense of knowing occurs when we are listening to our spirit. Maybe Mary consistently spent time in God's written word and in meditation and reflection and that was how she became good at listening to her spirit. About 20 years ago I seriously considered leaving the Drug and Alcohol Treatment field. I philosophically pondered what exactly I did in my job duties. One of the job objectives I identified was that I helped many people get in touch with what they already knew, but didn't want to acknowledge and accept. Their love affair with mood altering substances was destroying their lives along with their significant others lives. We called this process of accepting the truth as breaking through "denial" or identifying "Thinking Errors". At times it feels like this job task is like that of a rodeo cowboy roping a steer and wrestling it down to the ground and in my profession's case we try to hold them still in the truth enough for them to face what they are running from. Eventually they need to get up and go on with their life, but at least we facilitated their stopping long enough to consider the road they were heading down. Like the fool in Proverbs 14:8, many people do not want to be shaken from their self-deception. "The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception". How a person handles an intervention on their self-deception says a lot about their character and spiritual condition. How easily do they reconnect with their spirit and get re-centered in truth. Below is a diagram of how the Bible describes our various parts and the function for each.

**Spirit** - This is our sense of "Knowing" and the ability to step back and observe the activities of our soul. This is the primary area that we connect and experience God.

### **Soul**

**Will** – This is our ability to make decisions. Through our will we decide to put our life in subjection to God and commit to follow the leading of truth perceived in our spirit.

**Intellect** – This is our ability to analyze information, and it is meant to be under the control by the will.

**Emotions** – This is the ability to feel the passions and sentiments within the heart of God and within our own soul. They are to be managed under the control of the will and understood by the intellect.

**Body** - It is the spirit's instrument in the physical world and needs to be in subjection to the will.