

Understanding Your Spirit, Pt. 1

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[0 : 00] Let's find 1 Thessalonians tonight. I want to start in chapter 5, and this is really just a launching point. And I'll warn you right now, we're going to turn, and we're going to be in the Bible.

And so if you scribble notes, then you might have to write fast and turn fast. But we're going to be looking at something tonight. We'll start right here in 1 Thessalonians 5.

I, my intention was to get somewhere with this, and it looks, I just feel like we're not going to get as far as I'd like to, and may probably carry over into another Wednesday night.

But we'll get as far as we can, and see what we can learn. So the verse I want to point out is in verse 23. So nearly the end of the book, verse 23, the Apostle Paul says, And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.

And I pray, God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless under the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. So this is a great verse to understand the three-part, or they just call this the tri-part or trichotomy of man.

[1 : 13] These three parts, body, soul, spirit, all three are expressed in this one verse. That's not always the case. When you look through your Bible, do you see all three parts of man?

And there's confusion about this, and there's a few different teachings about this. But there it is, spirit, soul, body. Now your body forms in the womb, and you may not know or understand, and that's fine.

It's a miracle, it's what it is. But that's, you know, cells are joined and split and just grow and multiply, and in months' time, this body is formed.

But where do you get the spirit from? Where does the spirit, you've got a spirit, and where does that come from? And I'm not really going to deal with the word soul so much at all, and not intentionally. But where do you get your spirit? And what is it anyway? I don't know if your mind ever just parks on things like this and tries to understand or meditate certain things and parts that just are kind of outside of your scope of understanding.

[2 : 24] And the word of God is, thy word is truth, and if there's anything to learn or to know, it's going to come out of the Bible. Now if you do any studying or researching or just even listening to anybody that doesn't have a Bible and tries to explain to you what the word spirit is or means, they're going to get into this inner meditation, nirvana, separate this and that, and a connection to an ego, and it'll get into just some...

To Bible believers, it's just whack terminology and belief, but it's the best they can do. And it's a life energy, and it can't be displaced, and there's teachings, and you'll see people meditating, and it's all this spiritual experience, but they truly don't know what the spirit is.

And I'm asking you the question, exactly what is a spirit? I mean, if you had to define it, could you define what a spirit is? And so what I'm going to show you is something. Specifically, we're talking about your spirit.

That's what Paul says, your whole spirit and soul and body. So your spirit. There's a lot of Bible expositors that will come to this passage and really emphasize that there's three parts, because it's spelled out there very clearly.

And they'll spend a lot of time talking about Hebrew or Greek words even of soul and spirit, showing they're different, they're different, which is great, because you need to know they're different.

[3 : 50] There's some places where they seem to be similar, or you could almost teach that they are, but here they're not. And Bible expositors spend a lot of their exposition explaining the difference of what a soul is, and it's not the same as the spirit, but then when they hone in on what the spirit is, they don't really give a clear explanation or even just kind of follow one vein of thought that just isn't enough.

It's not satisfactory, it's not sufficient, and it's even misleading, in my opinion, as I've studied some of the material that's out there and takes or beliefs on spirit or what the word is.

And so I've come to believe something, and I'm going to try to teach as best I can part of this tonight, is that the word spirit can mean or refer to more than one thing.

And I'm going to show you this is very obvious and evident in the Bible. So tonight we're going to start this, at least, a study on that word spirit, and show that it's used in at least three different ways, at least three different categories.

And I'm going to try to help you understand that tonight, and I hope this study will provide some clarity as well as some, in the end, some application to your personal Christian life, because we're going to really be focusing on your spirit.

[5 : 14] And that's what you want to have control over and rule. You remember the proverb that he that hath not rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls?

And so we're going to get to that kind of in the end of something that you can apply to your own Christian life. But before we can ever get there, we're going to have to look at some things, some categories, and try to understand the word.

So we're not going to look at every mention or every use, but I want you to get out of this how it applies to you. There's a lot of mentions of the words. There's like 500-some mentions of the word in the Bible.

A lot of times it's a reference to God or to the spirit of God. But there's other spirits, and there's other references to a spirit of wisdom or a spirit of jealousy or a lying spirit or things like that.

And we're not going to get into every single thing, but I'm trying to keep this as it applies to you. So let's look at the word. I'm going to give you what I've come to understand from the Bible about this.

[6 : 16] And I love to say this. I'm putting an asterisk beside my teaching tonight that I don't know if I've got all this down right. I feel like there's something, and I'm glad to maybe have an extra week to get into something else that I'm not satisfied on completely.

Because I find that this is not an easy study to perfect definitively. It's tough stuff. It's over my head, and it's easy to make mistakes.

So I'm going to give you what I got, and I hope it benefits your understanding. And I'm just going to call this Understanding Your Spirit. Now, let's start with category number one. We're going to go through three of them, probably one or two tonight if we got the time.

But come back to Genesis chapter 2, and this is where we're going to start with just a reference that I need to begin with so that we can kind of lay some groundwork to this first category of the word spirit.

So in Genesis chapter 2, you're not going to see the word in verse 7, but just look at what it does say.

[7 : 30] This is a creative act of God forming man. Adam, the first man. The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground. So at that moment, man was a formation of dirt.

That's all he was. He was comprised of that very formula. And so then God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

So he uses this term, the breath of life. No mention of spirit yet, but what I want to bring out here is that this connection that we're going to need to see in a moment to the word breath.

This is the breath of God. God breathed into dirt, and it became living, a living soul. And he calls it the breath of life.

All right, now let's turn to Ezekiel 37. This Bible is put together in such a way that you're going to have to be familiar with the first book.

[8 : 36] And some of the major prophets, and some of the poetical writings, and then even some of the new tests. It's just the way this book is. So find Ezekiel 37, and remember that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Well, what is that? It's God's breath. But does God breathe air? Does he breathe in, out, inhale, exhale? The Bible says God is a spirit.

So then what is the breath of God then? That's kind of, these are questions that you don't necessarily have to answer, but as you read your Bible, learning and having understanding helps.

All right, so Ezekiel 37, I cannot give you, take the time to read the passage, but giving you just verse number one, the hand of the Lord was upon me, carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of a valley, which was full of bones.

And what God does is he asked the prophet a question, and he says, can these bones live? He's like, Lord, thou knowest. And God says, look, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to put these bones together. I'm going to put sinews upon them.

[9 : 45] They're all going to come all the way back together, a resurrection. And he does that. And he tells the prophet to prophesy for, let's find this place here.

I'll start in verse eight. When I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above. There was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds.

Oh, breath and breathe upon these slain that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me and the breath came into them and they lived. Now let's skip down. He's, this is a prophecy of the house of Israel mentioned in verse number 11 and look at verse 13 and 14.

Ye shall know that I am the Lord. When I have opened your graves, Oh, my people and brought you up out of your graves and shall put my spirit in you. And ye shall live.

And ye shall live. So the picture is, it's a, it's a vision of bones and, and them things all collecting and coming together and looking like a standing human beings, a full army of them.

[10 : 53] And then the, the breath, the wind is told and commanded to go into them and they came alive. And God says, the vision is this. I'm going to resurrect Israel out of their graves and I'm going to put my, doesn't use the word breath this time, but he says, I'll put my spirit in you and ye shall live.

So what are we talking about? All right. The first category of the word spirit is referring to a best way I can describe a life force from God identified also as the breath of God or the breath of life.

This is why you're alive right now is because you have the breath of life in you. You have spirit in you. It is a life giving entity that comes from God to give you life.

And it returns to God when your life expires. And in my opinion, it just, this is just my words. I don't see this in the Bible, but I, I come to believe that this just, it seems to me that spirit in this context or category is the very essence of life itself.

And I'll show you that without spirit, there is no life. Here he says that I'll put my spirit in you and ye shall live. He breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life, and he became a living soul.

[12 : 14] All right. You're in Ezekiel. Now flip back to the left, to the book of Job and two chapters here, Job 33 and Job 34. Job 33 and verse number four.

And take a look at this, considering what we've already covered, spirit and breath are synonymous words, and they give life. And they give life. So verse number four says, the spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty hath given me life.

Spirit, breath, hath given me life. Now let's see how this works in the next chapter. 34 and verses 14 and 15.

This is referring to God from verse 12. And in verse 14, if he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, notice it's not a capital S.

It's not like his Holy Spirit that is working and moving men and calling men to preach. And it's not that. It's his spirit. It's the breath of life. Verse 14, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

[13 : 45] The exact same thing he was made from until the breath of life entered him. Once that breath of life leaves him, you know as well as I do, you just break down and you turn right back into it.

And that's biblically stated and it's scientifically displayed. All right, turn to your right again. Now get past Proverbs to the book of Ecclesiastes. Still looking at this first category of the word spirit and saying that it's referencing a life force from God.

It is something that gives life. It is the essence of that life itself. When the spirit departs, so does the life. Ecclesiastes 8, and notice verse number 8.

8, 8. There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit. Neither hath he power in the day of death.

There is no discharge in that war. Neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. So there's no escaping this. You can't fight it.

[15 : 00] When death is there at your door and it's in the room, you're powerless. When the spirit leaves your body, you can't cling on to it and I'm just going to stay alive another day. It's not happening.

Man doesn't have that power over the spirit to retain the spirit. So when the spirit departs, man dies. That's death in the context.

Look at chapter 12 of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes 12 and verse number 7. And the first passage is about growing old and dying.

And verse 7 says, Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

So far we've learned that if God would pull back his spirit, if he would gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together.

[15 : 57] And here's a case when someone does die or expire, and you can hear in the word spire, expire, the S-P-I-R, the spirit leaves, the spirit returns to God who gave it.

So let's take a look at an example of somebody who did just that. Look at Luke chapter 23. Luke chapter 23.

And so the Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to a cross, and there's certain words that he cried out while he was on that cross.

Now come to verse 46. Luke 23, 46. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

And having said thus, he gave up the ghost. And from then on, he's a dead carcass or body hanging on that tree.

[17 : 09] His soul departed, the spirit returned to God, like Ecclesiastes said, who gave it. Why? Because that is a life force within a physical body, giving that body life.

And that's how the word spirit is used. In many of these verses, it says spirit, spirit, spirit. So one more about this category. Come back to the back of your Bible to James, right after Hebrews, and find James chapter 2.

Hebrews, James, and the very last verse of the chapter. And look what this says. James 2, 26.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, as just a matter of fact, it's using that truth to make a point about faith.

Faith without works is dead also. So if that first part isn't true, then the second part isn't. So the first part is a matter of fact. The body without the spirit, spirit, dead.

[18 : 15] No life. So the body needs spirit in it to be alive. All right? So category one, spirit is used to refer to a life force from God.

It is given from God to allow or give life into something. And it can be, and it is rescinded or taken back to God when that person, as we'll call it, departs or dies.

In Numbers chapter 27 and verse 16, this happens twice in Numbers with Moses talking. He says, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.

He's called the God of the spirits of all flesh. Paul says in Acts, I'm not sure the chapter right off the top of my head, 17 or 19, he says that for in him we move, or we breathe, in him we move and breathe and have our being.

Is that right? We live, move, and have our being in him. We live. And so when he takes back that spirit and you can't retain that, you don't have power over the spirit to retain the spirit, it goes back to God when he calls for it back.

[19 : 32] So a conclusion that we can draw on this first one is that some appearances of the word spirit in your Bible are referring to the quickening life force or breath of God.

Without it, these bodies are just, they're just clay. They're just dust of the ground and that's exactly where they go. Now along this same thought, in John 6, 63, remember we studied this in Sunday school, Jesus Christ said, it is the spirit that quickeneth.

The flesh profiteth nothing. It is the spirit that quickeneth. Again, it wasn't the capital S Holy Spirit, it's just, he's making a statement of fact as he's talking about, I'm not talking about bread that you can cook or bake in your oven and then eat, the bread of life.

He says, it's the spirit that quickeneth. You guys know that, it gives you life. It's the spirit. And the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

Those two things you can't have one without the other. Now as a side note, and I won't spend time with this, but I've said this before, when preachers teach that a lost man has a dead spirit, that's just something I personally have trouble understanding, how that's possible.

[20 : 49] Now they say that the Holy Spirit has to quicken our dead spirit, but I feel that putting dead and spirit together is kind of what we call an oxymoron, like it's self-defeating terminology

because life and spirit go together, but death and spirit don't go together.

Without the spirit, the body's dead, and so that makes sense, but to say that you have a dead spirit, you can't find that terminology in the Bible. It never says you have a dead spirit.

It says you're dead in your trespasses and sins, and you hath he quickened who were dead, and always a reference to the person that's being dead.

I think that's the soul, but that's another study or thought. So, 2 Corinthians 3, verse 6 says the spirit giveth life, and it's talking about comparing the New and Old Testament, but it uses that statement, the spirit giveth life.

So it seems that this spirit we're speaking of, I think it's limited to the physical body that it quickened. God gives spirit to a body of clay and quickens that body and gives life to that body.

[22 : 04] I believe, though, in studying this, that the spirit of man that's in him is limited functionally in his operations or to his senses, and he's called the natural man, but to say he has a dead spirit just doesn't resonate with me.

I could be wrong about that. People believe that, but I come to believe that that's not the case. The life or the spirit that God gave to a physical being has the ability to function and has the ability to relate and to understand within the physical realm that he was created to operate in.

And if he wants to operate into a spiritual realm, then God's going to have to put something else in him, and he'll do that by putting his spirit in a man.

Now, category one, I hope that part makes sense to you, that that spirit is life, and that spirit is what gives life to the body, and that's what it's called, spirit. So that's one way the word's used, but not every time do you see the word is it talking about that.

And so I think I see a second category. And flip back to Isaiah for this one, and we're going to start the second category in Isaiah chapter 31.

[23 : 16] The word spirit in your King James Bible can also refer to something that is of a spiritual nature. It is something that's opposed to physical nature.

It's spiritual nature. Often the word flesh is used when it speaks of a physical nature, and then spirit is used when it speaks of a spiritual nature.

And so you're either flesh or spirit, or you're physical or spiritual, and in this category, I think this is the one that gets missed or overlooked. And when it does, then some things get misunderstood, and I'm not claiming to have cleared up all of the mess.

I'm just saying I'm going to show you this as a separate category from the first one for sure. And so I think this example, this first example is an easy one, but it will help us to see this.

So Isaiah 31, and look at verse number 3. Now the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit.

[24 : 25] So we don't really have to go past that. You see the word spirit there. What is he saying exactly? Now if you're going to, now just look at the word spirit and just think, okay, well what's a spirit?

If you start coming up trying to think on some spiritual realm of a thing or an angel, he maketh his angel spirits. Does that, what is a spirit? You could think of an unclean spirit.

I mentioned earlier a lying spirit. God put a, well, so what is that? Well, I'm not even wanting you to think on what that is.

I'm showing you the contrast from physical and spiritual. For instance, you don't need to fear the Egyptians. They're men. They're not God. They're flesh.

They're not spirit. What he's saying is they're physical. They're not spiritual. Now watch this, a cross reference here.

[25 : 21] You can skip, you can lose your place there and go back to 2 Kings chapter 2. 2 Kings chapter 2. I believe this second category is using the word spirit to refer something to something of a spiritual nature, a spiritual makeup as opposed to physical or flesh.

All right, remember this where Elijah is taken up and Elisha is there with him. Remember what he sees in that moment, verse number 11? And it came to pass as they still went on and talked that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and parted them both asunder and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Horses of fire. What would you say that is? That's, I just say that's spiritual. If we want to call it spiritual horses or it's horses that are of a spiritual makeup or nature.

They're not flesh. These are horses of fire that are carrying this man being translated out of this universe or out of this physical universe into another.

I'll show you another case here, a very similar thing. Look at a couple chapters away. Where is that? I have it marked. Chapter 6. Flip over to chapter 6. 2 Kings 6.

[26 : 50] And so Elisha goes on with his ministry and finds himself surrounded by an army. And notice in verse 15.

When the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold, and host come past the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master, how shall we do?

He sees physical horses of flesh. And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elijah prayed and said, O Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see.

The Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about. Elisha. These are not horses of flesh. They were not bred in Egypt or purchased with money.

These are spiritual beasts that God had placed there to protect his man. And so there's physical horses and there's spiritual horses in the same scene.

[27 : 56] Now back, you don't have to turn, but back in Isaiah when he said, Don't be afraid of the Egyptians. They're men, not God. Their horses are flesh, not spirit. Is he saying they're a spirit that takes on the form of a horse?

I believe he's saying they are spiritual in nature, but he uses the word spirit. So, from that, I want to believe and teach in a category here that the word spirit can be referring to something of a spiritual nature.

And for that, if you can, if you see that there in that case, I think it's kind of clear, then look at John chapter 3. Here's a passage where a lot of people teach that it is the spirit that has to be born again or quickened or made alive because it uses the word spirit.

But I believe in this category that, or this falls into the category of spiritual nature. John 3, verse 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. spirit. So, if we understand that he's contrasting physical and spiritual, this is where somebody says, no, it says spirit.

[29 : 16] If you're born of the spirit, it is spirit. It doesn't say it is a spirit or it doesn't say it is your spirit that gets born again. It never says that. That which is born of the spirit is spirit.

Comparing it with that previous passage and staying in the same vein of thought there, I believe he's saying that which is born of the flesh is flesh, aka physical, and he's showing him that you're not getting born from your mother a second time.

This is a spiritual birth, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. That is a spiritual birth, and I would argue that the soul is that spiritual birth, but that could be, I could be wrong on that.

Nevertheless, I believe the word spirit there refers to of something of a spiritual nature, not necessarily that part of man, body, soul, spirit, and he's saying, oh, that spirit has to be born again.

I think there he's saying that it's a spiritual encounter or contrast to physical. I'll show you another one. Look at 1 Corinthians 15.

[30 : 21] 1 Corinthians 15. This is category number two, and we're running out of time so fast, and I'm never going to get to the rest of it.

1 Corinthians 15, and come down to verse 44 is where we'll start. This is a resurrected body.

I'll back up just a little. Verse 42, so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption. It is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor.

It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. That's my natural body, but it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body.

Notice now, it is raised a spiritual body. There the words say it clearly, a spiritual body. There's a natural body, and there's a spiritual body. And so it was written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul.

[31 : 20] Genesis chapter 2. The last Adam was made a quickening spirit. So the question comes, is it referring to the quote-unquote body-soul spirit?

Or is it rather referring to verse 44, a spiritual body, when it uses the word spirit? Verse 46, it continues, how be it, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward,

that which is spiritual.

spiritual. So he says that second's a quickening spirit, he's referring to a spiritual body. And so you have a spiritual beast, a spiritual birth, a spiritual body in this category.

And I think this is just plainly using the word spirit to refer to something of a spiritual nature, as opposed to physical. Not flesh, but spirit. Not physical, but spiritual.

spiritual. And so while I'm saying this, I am not trying to change the Bible, I'm not trying to change the words of the Bible where it says spirit to say, oh no, it should say spiritual.

[32 : 32] What I'm interpreting the word spirit with cross-references, saying that it's referring to something of a spiritual nature or makeup when it uses the word spirit.

perfect. So I hope I'm being clear on what I'm doing with that and not confusing and not just sounding like I'm changing it. Don't want you to think that. And if I'm not being clear, forgive me. Just ignore it. So briefly reviewing the first two categories, and we have run out of time to get into the third one. The word spirit, the same word, can be referring to different things.

And so far, it can be referring to that life force from God without which you're dead because the body without the spear is dead. But it can also be referring to something of a spiritual nature, something that is not physical or not flesh, but rather a beast, a birth, or even a body.

Now where I want to go with this, and I'm going to have to wait until next week, is another category where it's identifying and really digging into your personal spirit.

[33 : 38] And how this looks, it looks like it's, for instance, the first mention of it that relates to a person is Pharaoh. It says that his spirit was troubled because he had a dream and he couldn't identify and wake up and just his spirit was troubled.

And speaking of Jacob, a little later in Genesis, it says that the spirit of their father revived when he heard good news that his son was alive, when he saw the wagons, the spirit revived.

That's not his life and that's not a spiritual nature, but that is about his spirit. And so we're going to study that. It's, I'll just give you the thought here. I'm calling this the personality of a living soul.

Not the new man, not the life God gives to the body, but more specifically an attitude or a disposition or a temperament that you possess. and this is where it's going to hit and land in your Christian life because you're told to rule your spirit or to submit that to the Lord.

And you can have an angry spirit or a humble spirit or a proud spirit and a haughty spirit and all of these things you can possess or project from the inside out.

[34 : 54] And so that's the third category. But I had to cover the first two to kind of get them out of the way to show that there's, it's the same word, but it, it, it seems like it's referring to different things.

And I don't know how else to say it. I can't come up with a definition that says, well, spirit is this and then I can't seem to do that. So all I can say is it's the same word. God uses it to refer to different things.

And so I'm using categories to help to distinguish that. And there's something I'm still kind of fighting with and trying to make sense of here. And if I figured it out, maybe by next week we'll be able to do two more categories, definitely one, and try to really put it on you and help you see how you're, what you're allowing of your spirit.

Remember what Paul said that we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. So we'll get to the meat of it next week, Lord willing.

This one was kind of just getting some of the teaching and doctrine out of the way. And I hope that maybe as you read through your Bible and you see these things that it doesn't, you know, trip you up. I did skip a verse I wanted to.

[36 : 07] I just remembered the verse so it's probably too late now to go back to it and tie something up. But I feel like I left open but so be it. That's just the way this stuff goes. So all right, let's transition from this to the thought of tomorrow night.

Again, I want to remind you that please be here in time as best as you can and be prepared. I do have tracks for some of you who don't have them and you need them. I have some here ordered ready to go.

And then let's just be in prayer that the Lord uses this, that he's pleased with it and that our efforts and energy and money and outreach goes to glorify him in some way.

So all right, let's be dismissed. I'm going to ask John, why don't you dismiss us in prayer, please?