

CLASS NOTES -- True Spirituality

(See the book "True Spirituality" by Cornelius R. Stam)

1A. What is spirituality?

1B. Negative.

1C. It is not putting everything out of the mind and throwing the mind open to every suggestion from the "spirit." Compare 2 Cor. 10:3 - 5 with Eph. 6:14 - 17. See Phil. 4:8 ("**Think**" on these things); 1 Tim. 4:15, 16; 2 Tim. 3:14 - 17. Notice specially 1 John 4:1.

2C. It is not just a lot of zeal. See 2 Kings 10:16, 30, 31; Rom. 10:1 - 4.

Illustration: A first year medical student is so zealous to heal people that he leaves medical school, gets himself some medicines, and goes to work. He is very zealous, but who would want **him** for their doctor?

3C. It is not freedom from "worldliness." Lack of worldliness comes as a **result** of spirituality, but it is not, in itself, spirituality (Col. 2:20 - 23). Notice verse 23 in the NASB, "*These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of **no value** against fleshly indulgence.*" Just as the easiest way to remove all of the air from a glass is to fill it with water, so the best way to remove worldliness from the life is to fill it with loving service for the Lord. It is not **isolation from** the world, but **ministry to** the world, which indicates spirituality.

4C. It is not possession of spiritual gifts. Contrast 1 Cor. 1:7 and 14:12, 26 with 1 Cor. 3:1. Paul's most "spiritual" books were written when he was not healing (Phil. 2:26, 27, 30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20) nor being miraculously delivered from prison (Phil. 1:13, 14, 19 with Philemon 22).

5C. It is not mere activity. Matt. 7:22, 23; 1 Cor. 3:12 - 15.

6C. It is not being "religious" -- either following man-made "ordinances" (Col. 2:20 - 23) or God given "ordinances" from another dispensation (Col. 2:14 - 17). However, spirituality should result in what James calls "pure religion and undefiled" (James 1:26, 27).

7C. It is not maturity -- though it **leads to** maturity. 1 Cor. 3:1, 2; Phil. 3:12, 13 and context; Heb. 5:11 - 14. Illustration: A small cup will **hold** less water than a large one -- but, once it is full, it will **overflow** just as much as the large one. A small cup overflowing pictures one who is spiritual but not mature (1 Thess. 1:6 - 10). A large cup full but not overflowing portrays one who is mature but not spiritual. A large cup overflowing speaks of one who is both mature and spiritual. This is God's ideal. God can do what we cannot do in our illustration, He can cause the cup to **GROW AS IT OVERFLOWS!**

8C. It is not sentimentality (though it **produces** a soft and responsive heart. See "tears" in Acts 20:19, 31 and "gently ... cherisheth ... affectionately ... dear" in 1 Thess. 2:7, 8).

9C. It is not emotionalism. Compare Elijah (1 Kings 18:30 - 38) with the priests of Baal. They were "praying through" (1 Kings 18:26 - 28). The word of God should touch us emotionally from time to time, but emotions must be real and a result of the Spirit's work, not something produced by man.

10C. It is not a lot of shouting "Praise the Lord" etc. (1 Cor. 14:26). Notice 1 Cor. 3:1 - 3. Man may say "Praise the Lord!" -- and still be **putting God down** in his **theology** if he thinks that Christ needs our help to save us, or keep us saved. Does he think that God is not as good a Father as our earthly fathers (for they do not disown us when we disobey, as the Arminian thinks God does to His sons)? In the Psalms the expression "Praise the Lord" is found

often, but it is an exhortation to men to praise God. The expression itself is not that praise. We praise Him, in response to the exhortation, when we tell something of who He is or what He has done for which He deserves our gratitude.

2B. Positive.

1C. "Spirituality is that relationship between us, as true believers, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, which enables Him, operating in strict conformity to His word, to transform us from worldliness (world-likeness) to godliness (God-likeness)." -- W. P. Heath. See Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.

2C. Our relationship with the Holy Spirit.

1D. We are indwelt by the Spirit (true of every genuine believer -- Rom. 8:9). See 1 Cor. 3:16.

2D. The Spirit is to be **Lord** in our lives (2 Cor. 3:17). This results in **liberty**. When we want **only** what **He** wants we can "do anything we want."

3D. We should be filled with (under the control of) the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). This results in joy, thankfulness and submission to one another (Eph. 5:19 - 21). Being filled with the Spirit involves:

1E. Being yielded to the Spirit, submissive to His word -- particularly His word to this dispensation (1 Cor. 14:37). We should **read** His word (Eph. 3:3, 4; Col. 4:16; 1 Tim. 4:13), **study** it (2 Tim. 2:15), **meditate** on it (Psa. 119:15, 99, 148; 1 Tim. 4:15), **memorize** it (Psa. 119:11) and **obey** it (Rom. 6:16; 2 Cor. 2:9; Gal. 5:7; 2 Thess. 3:14; James 1:22). Notice the importance of the "practical" parts of Paul's letters where he tells us how our doctrine should affect our lives.

2E. Being led by the Spirit -- so not under the Law (Gal. 5:18; 1 Tim. 1:9).

3E. Walking in the Spirit. If we walk in the Spirit:

1F. We will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16, 17).

2F. We will be free from pride and envy (Gal. 5:25, 26).

3F. The **righteousness of the Law will be fulfilled IN us** (Rom. 8:4).

4F. We will mind the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5).

2A. Yieldedness. Rom. 12:1 "Present your bodies." ("Present" and "yield" are the same word in the Greek)

1B. The meaning of the word "present" is "to place alongside." See Acts 1:3; 9:41; 23:24 (translated "provide"), 33; 24:13 (translated "prove"). It is an active yieldedness -- like the word "offer."

2B. Use of the word in Romans. Yield the **members of your body** (Rom. 6:13, 19); yield your **bodies** (Rom. 12:1); yield **yourselves** (Rom. 6:16).

3B. Use of the word elsewhere. 2 Cor. 4:14; 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22.

4B. Importance – It is the **yieldedness** that counts!

3A. Spiritual attitudes.

1B. Putting others first. Phil. 2:3, 4. "Joy" may be spelled, "**J**esus, then **O**thers, then **Y**ou."

2B. Willingness to **confess when we are wrong.** Some things are hard to say in English: "analgesic-sodium-acetal-salicylate," "Antidisestablishmentarianism," and the long Disney word, "Supercalifragilisticexpialidoshus." **BUT**, there are three things much **harder** to say in **ANY** language: "I was wrong," "I am sorry," and "Please forgive me."

3B. Willingness to **forgive** (Eph. 4:31, 32). Notice how we are to treat our "enemies" in Rom. 12:19 - 21. Compare David's kindness toward his enemy, Saul.

4B. Willingness to **restore** the erring brother. See Gal. 6:1; John 13:3 - 10 (the washing of feet was used by Christ to show them they needed daily cleansing of their walk, and needed to help one another walk clean before the Lord -- John 13:14, 15; 21:3, 15 - 19; Mark 16:7. Peter may have felt he was no longer welcome in the group because he had denied Christ). In John 21:15 - 17, Christ lovingly dealt with Peter, and restored him to fellowship and service. In this conversation two Greek words are translated "love." The one used by Peter can be translated "care for." If we give attention to the way Christ used these words, we see an outstanding example of loving restoration. Follow the conversation (with Christ's words in Italics) "*Do you love me?*" ... "I **care for** you." ... "*Feed my lambs. Do you love me?*" ... "I **care for** you." ... "*Shepherd my sheep. Do you CARE FOR me?*" ... "I **care for** you." ... "*Shepherd my little sheep.*" (Little sheep" does not mean "lambs" but rather "**Dear** sheep" -- a term of endearment) Peter is no longer boasting of his love for Christ (as he seems to be doing in Mark 14:29), but even if he is only willing to say "I **care for** you" he still is an apostle and is to serve the Lord.

5B. Willingness to **LOVE** the brethren (Gal. 5:13 - 15; 1 Pet. 1:22). Notice Paul's loving treatment of Barnabas after their quarrel (Acts 15:36 - 41). Years later he respected him as a man of God (1 Cor. 9:6). Also, after Paul scolded Peter in front everyone (Gal. 2: 11, 14), he still respected Peter (1 Cor. 3:22; 9:5) & Peter also respected Paul (2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

6B. Willingness to be **APPRECIATIVE**, to say, "Thank you." It is true that every good gift comes from God (James 1:17), but we must not fail to thank the human instrument God uses to deliver it to us (Phil. 4:18 and context).

7B. TEACHABILITY (Acts 17:11). The following object lesson should be instructive. **Objects needed:**

- * An empty glass.
- * A pitcher filled with water, with some small chips, straw or other floating and solid impurities in it. Also, put some ice cubes in the water -- if available.
- * A strainer.
- * A large pan to put under everything to catch any spilled water.

The lesson:

If the glass is to receive any water from the pitcher it must be below it. So we must humbly "sit at the feet" of our teacher if we would learn anything from him. However every teacher (being human) will eventually teach some things that are not true. These things are illustrated by the chips and straw in the water. We can avoid getting the impurities by putting a strainer between the pitcher and the glass. So we must filter the teaching through the Word of God. We must study to see if these things are truly so. The ice cubes are retained by the strainer also. But if the ice cubes are left for a time in the strainer they will gradually get through it, for they **are** water. Some things the teacher says may seem wrong to us at first, even when they are truth. If we spend time in the Word concerning them, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, we will eventually see the truth -- **IF** indeed it **IS** truth.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

A well known chorus begins, "Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me." It is suggested that a small change in the words would make it more accurate Scripturally. Try singing it this way:

Spirit of the Living God, have Thy way with me.
 Spirit of the Living God, have Thy way with me.
 Melt me, mold me,
 Fill me, use me.
 Spirit of the Living God, have Thy way with me.

Rom. 6:13 and 19 speak of yielding our bodily members to the Lord for His use. We could search through the word of God to see what He has to say about each of our bodily members. Here are some of the verses we would discover if we did this concerning our **eyes**.

Gen. 3:5 - 7. Notice the place occupied by the eyes of Eve. She **saw** it was pleasant to the **eyes**. Not everything that is beautiful is good.

Gen. 13:10. Lot **saw** the well-watered plain of Jordan that it was like Egypt. Remember that Egypt is a type of the world.

2 Sam. 11:2. David **saw** a woman. It was not just a passing glance, he feasted his eyes on that which was not his, and it led him to sin and tragedy for himself and others.

Job 31:1. (NASB) "I have made a covenant with my **eyes**; how then could I gaze at a virgin?"

Psa. 119:18. "Open Thou mine **eyes** that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law."

Psa. 119:37. "Turn away mine **eyes** from beholding vanity and revive Thou me in Thy way."

Rom. 3:18. (concerning the unbeliever) -- "There is no fear of God before their **eyes**."

1 Cor. 2:9, 10. "**Eye** hath not seen, nor **ear** heard, neither have entered into the **heart** of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Several members of our body are spoken of in this verse.

1 Cor. 12:21. A believer is thought of as an **eye** in the Body of Christ. If we were Christ's **eye** -- what should have our attention?

1 Cor. 15:52. "In the twinkling of an **eye**" -- The Rapture will take place so fast that we will have no time to quickly turn our **eyes** from the lustful picture we may be looking at, or the worldly book we may be reading, and begin reading the Bible.

Gal. 3:1. "--Before whose **eyes** Jesus Christ hath been openly set forth, crucified."

Gal. 4:15. What the Galatians had seen with their spiritual **eyes** made them willing to give their physical **eyes** for Paul.

Prov. 4:20 - 27. The **ear, eyelids, heart, mouth, lips,** and **feet** are listed here, but not our **HANDS** ("To the right hand nor to the left" -- v. 27 -- has to do with the direction taken by the feet, not the activity of the hands). But if our eyes are seeing what He wants us to see, our ears hearing what He wants us to hear, our heart meditating on what pleases Him, our mouth speaking what He wants us to say, and our feet taking us where He wants us to be -- we will have no trouble with our hands doing what He wants us to do!

THE MARRIAGE OF DOCTRINE AND GODLINESS

God's pronouncement concerning marriage is, "*Let no man put them asunder.*" Today, when differences are discovered, the couple separates. They should consider the possibility that they may be intended to complement one another. Together they might be more productive than either of them could have been alone.

For example, a dreamer marries a doer. The dreamer, left to himself, may have wonderful ideas -- but little would be accomplished. The doer would have few challenging, exciting or profitable things to do. Together they can dream dreams -- and see them realized as they work together, each recognizing and utilizing the other's talents. So a thrifty mate may be able to limit the spender, while the spender could motivate the thrifty to generosity. Likewise a time-conscious member of a marriage helps to keep appointments and schedules, while the people-oriented member, if allowed to function in the union, gives real meaning to time by investing it rather than merely rationing it.

It is not accidental that "opposites attract," but tragically they often fail to remain together and make the most of their complementary characteristics.

Scripture sets forth a marriage between doctrine and godliness; between teaching of truth and application of it in the life. Here, too, "*What God has joined together let no man put asunder.*"

There has been a strong tendency to pit the one against the other.

Some are so concerned about doctrine that true godliness falls by the wayside. This was a large part of the problem experienced by the Pharisees of Christ's day. They believed the word of God, they believed in angels, and in resurrection -- but their lives were a stumbling block to the Gentiles (Rom. 2:24, with verses 17 - 23). "*The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:*" Christ said, "*all therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not*" (Matt. 23:2, 3). Today it is sadly possible to know and teach that every believer is in the Body of Christ -- while failing to recognize brotherhood with those saints who are weak in doctrine or lax in living for Christ. We can preach grace -- without being gracious, or teach the imminence of the Rapture -- while thoughtlessly laying up luxuries for ourselves, allowing the missionary outreach of the Body of Christ to sag for lack of funds.

To the other extreme there are some whose eyes are fixed on the daily life of the believer while ignoring, neglecting or even deploring strong doctrinal teaching. "As long as one is kind, broadminded and loving, the doctrine is of no real importance" seems to be their thought. This often results not only in weak doctrine but also, eventually, in false doctrine.

God does not evaluate a saint only on the basis of his knowledge of doctrine, nor only with regard to his godliness. It is a combination of both. **God's true message is based firmly**

on objective and vital truth, and should result in subjective and vital living for God.

The normal growth of the believer is a balance between doctrine and godliness. Consider some of the verses that teach this. 1 Tim. 6:3, "*Doctrine according to godliness;*" Gal. 2:14, "*Walk uprightly [godliness] according to the truth [doctrine];*" Gal. 3:1, "*Obey [godliness] the truth [doctrine].* Also see " Titus 1:1, "*Acknowledging of the truth [doctrine] which is after godliness.*" In Titus 2:1 Paul instructs this young pastor, "*Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine,*" and the "things" he has in mind have to do with godliness, according to verses 2 - 6. Titus was further exhorted to show himself a "*pattern of good works [godliness]: in doctrine showing uncorruptness*" (Titus 2:7). There are many passages!

It is the doctrine that must support the godliness, as 1 John 3:3 indicates, "*Every man that hath this hope in him [doctrine of the Second Coming] purifies himself [godliness].*" But, according to Titus 2:10, it is the godliness which commends and justifies the doctrine. There Paul says, concerning believing slaves, "*Showing all good fidelity [godliness] that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*" Witnessing or preaching without godliness is similar to fishing without any bait on the hook. Doing so with godliness but without sound doctrine is like fishing with good bait -- but no hook!

Godliness without doctrine is a recommendation for ignoring or rejecting doctrine. Over a period of time whatever godliness is there will collapse for want of a basis in objective facts, and result in mere emotionalism.

Doctrine without godliness has nothing subjective to commend it and it will eventually be rejected or become an empty creed, and will foster intellectualism.

I do not recall Paul ever speaking of godliness apart from a firmly laid doctrinal foundation. Also he never teaches doctrine without utilizing it to define, promote and enhance godliness.

"Godliness" without sound doctrine will:

- * Drift toward legalism as its incentive.
- * Look to the kingdom program for its content.
- * Look to the coming in glory and the millennial kingdom as its hope.
- * Tend toward eccumenicalism for its fellowship (sacrificing doctrine for unity).

Doctrine without godliness will:

- * Become ever more minutely and dogmatically defined, unnecessarily dividing believers over issues of very secondary importance.
- * Cause us to be more concerned with "setting the brethren straight" than winning the lost. Growth of congregations will be more due to "sheep stealing" than evangelism.
- * Result in doctrine being debated with bitterness (see the warnings in 2 Tim. 2:14, 16, 23, 24-a). This will lead to more ungodliness (2 Tim. 2:16). Instead, doctrine should be patiently taught in love (Eph. 4:15), in meekness and gentleness, with a view to restoring men to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 2:24 - 26). This approach requires true godliness in the teacher.
- * Tend to weaken our recognition of the "unity of the Spirit." This is a unity that is

absolute and unchangeable. It is founded on the absolute unities for this age as revealed by the Spirit (Eph. 4:3 - 6), not our work in preaching them. This is strong doctrine, but it can only be kept (as the great foundation of all our doctrine and practice) when, "*with all lowliness, with longsuffering,*" we forbear one another in love (Eph. 4:1, 2).

Satan hates both sound doctrine and true godliness. If he can, he will separate the two (which belong together) so he can easily defeat a godly man for his lack of doctrine, or a good theologian for his lack of godliness! **We dare not minimize either!**

--- William P Heath

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