

Lessons on the Normal Christian Life

Lesson 2

The Key to Experiencing Christ as Life—Our Human Spirit (Part 2)

V. We exercise our spirit by exercising the three functions of the spirit:

A. Conscience:

1. The conscience is the representative of God's ruling within us; it regulates us by accusing or excusing us—Rom. 2:15.

Rom 2:15 Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness with it and their reasonings, one with the other, accusing or even excusing them)

2. We exercise our conscience by confessing our sins and by not forsaking its feeling—Acts 24:16, note 16¹; Rom. 8:16; 9:1; 1 John 1:7,9; Eph. 4:19, note 19¹; Titus 1:15, note 15³; 2 Tim 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:19, note 19¹; 3:9; 4:2, note 2².

Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a ¹conscience without offense toward God and men.

note 16¹ After man's fall and his being sent out of the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:23), God in His dispensation wanted man to be responsible to his own conscience. But man failed to live and walk according to his conscience and fell further into wickedness (Gen. 6:5). After the judgment of the flood, God ordained that man should be under human government (Gen. 9:6). Man failed in this also. Then, before fulfilling His promise to Abraham concerning the blessing of the nations in his seed, Christ (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8), God put man under the test of the law (Rom. 3:20; 5:20). Man failed this test utterly. All these failures indicate that man has fallen from God to his conscience, from his conscience to human government, and from human government to lawlessness; that is, man has fallen to the uttermost. Hence, to conduct oneself in all good conscience before God, as Paul did, was a great return to God from man's fall. Paul spoke this word to vindicate himself before those who accused him of being a lawless and even reckless person. In his defense he referred again to his conscience in 24:16. This showed his high standard of morality, in contrast to the hypocrisy of the Jewish religionists and the crookedness of the Roman (Gentile) politicians. See notes 12¹ in this chapter, 2¹ 24¹ 26¹ and 27³ in ch. 24, and 9¹ and 13² in ch. 25.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

Rom 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit,

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Eph 4:19 Who, ¹being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.

note 19¹ *Feeling* here refers mainly to the consciousness of one's conscience. Hence, *being past feeling* means not caring for one's conscience. After man fell, God ordained that man should be under the ruling of his conscience. But instead of regarding his conscience, fallen man gave himself over to lasciviousness and greedy lust.

Titus 1:15 All things are pure to the pure; yet to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their ³mind and their conscience are defiled.

note 15³ The mind is the leading part of our soul, and the conscience is the main part of our spirit. If our mind is polluted, our soul is spontaneously polluted; and if our conscience is defiled, our spirit is unavoidably defiled. This is all due to unbelief. Our faith purifies us (Acts 15:9).

2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

1 Tim 1:19 Holding ¹faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

note 19¹ Faith and a good conscience (see note 5³) go together. Whenever there is an offense in our conscience, there will be a leakage, and our faith will leak away. A good conscience accompanying faith is needed for warring the good warfare (v. 18) against the different teachings (v. 3) in a troubled local church.

1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

1 Tim 4:2 By means of the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, of men who are ²branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron,

note 2² The conscience of hypocritical liars has lost its sense, as if branded with a hot iron. This book strongly stresses the conscience. In the church life the love that is contrary to envy and discord is out of a good conscience (1:5). Those who thrust away a good conscience become shipwrecked regarding the faith (1:19). The serving ones in the church must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (3:9). To keep a good and pure conscience is to keep the conscience sensitive in its function. This will safeguard us from the demonic and hypocritical teachings of deceiving liars.

B. Fellowship:

1. To have fellowship with God is to contact Him, worship Him and enjoy Him—John 4:23-24; Phil. 2:1; 1 John 1:3.

John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Phil 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

2. We can exercise to have fellowship with God by praying, by calling on His name and by enjoying His Word—1 Thes. 5:16-18; Rom. 10:12; Eph. 6:17-18; John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:16-18.

1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,

1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,

1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

C. Intuition:

1. The intuition is the sense coming directly from God in our spirit; it is not influenced by anything outward—1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8; 2 Cor. 2:13.

1 Cor 2:11 For who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In the same way, the things of God also no one has known except the Spirit of God.

Mark 2:8 And immediately Jesus, knowing fully in His spirit that they were reasoning this way within themselves, said to them, Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?

2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

2. We exercise the intuition by obeying the sense of life and peace which issues from the anointing—Rom. 8:6; Col. 3:15-16; Luke 7:50; 1 John 2:27.

Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Col 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

Luke 7:50 But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the three parts of the human spirit?
2. What is the function of the conscious part of the spirit and how to exercise the conscious?
3. What is the function of the fellowship part of the spirit and how to have fellowship with God?
4. What is the function of intuition in our spirit and how to exercise the intuition?

HYMNS: E493 (C371, S207, G493), E746 (C544, S310), E866 (C628, S396), C487

E 493	G 493
1 O Lord, Thou art the Spirit now That gives us life and quickens us, With all Thy riches strengthening, O how divine and glorious!	1 Herr Jesus, Du bist nun der Geist, Der Leben gibt und mich erfrischt, Mit Deinem Reichtum stärkt Er mich, Wie göttlich, herrlich dies doch ist!
2 O Lord, Thou art the Spirit now That with Thy power liberates; And by Thy liberation true The law of life now regulates.	2 Herr Jesus, Du bist nun der Geist, Mit Deiner Kraft Er mich befreit; Und Dein Gesetz des Lebens lenkt Mich innerlich nun allezeit.
3 O Lord, Thou art the Spirit now That transforms us and saturates, And to Thine image true conforms And with Thy light illuminates.	3 Herr Jesus, Du bist nun der Geist, Er wandelt um, mich ganz durchtränkt, Mich gleichgestaltet Deinem Bild, Das Herz erleuchtet unumschränkt.
4 O Lord, Thou art the Spirit now Who in my spirit make His home; He mingles with my spirit too, And both one spirit thus become.	4 Herr Jesus, Du bist nun der Geist, Der Wohnung macht in meinem Geist; Mit meinem Geist vermengt Er Sich, So werden sie zu einem Geist.
5 Lord, teach me how to exercise My spirit now to contact Thee, That in Thy Spirit I may walk And live by Thy reality.	5 Herr, lehr mich, wie ich üben soll Den Geist, um Dich zu kontaktiern, Zu leben im vermengten Geist, In Dir mein Leben stets zu führn.