

(The following materials appear in The Grace Discipleship Course by Lee C. Turner, PhD, published by Grace Discipleship Ministries, Sun City, AZ and are provided with permission.)

From the Foreword of The Grace Discipleship Course

The term discipleship has all but come into disrepute in recent years. It has fallen on hard times in great measure because its heart has been cut out, causing it to be lifeless. According to Luke 14:27, the experienced Cross is to be the core of discipleship teaching: "And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

Despite this clear teaching, much of the material utilized by evangelical and/or fundamental Christianity is woefully weak on the teaching of the Cross. Some would **refute** it and hold our crucifixion with Christ to be a judicial or positional concept. Others would **dispute** the clear teaching of scripture based on a particular view of sanctification propounded by man. Still others would **dilute** it such that a definite illumination by the Holy Spirit and consequent transformation of the life is not remotely considered. Finally, there are those who would **pollute** it with an admixture of humanistic psychology and behaviorism where reformation, rather than transformation, is the end product.

Rightly understood, discipleship should result in revival, with the believer being released to manifest the fruit of the Spirit and Spirit-empowered ministry. The disciplines of the believer's walk may subtly be substituted for learning the walk in the Spirit, thus resulting in the flesh being strengthened and subverting the discipleship process.

In the ***Grace Discipleship Course***, Dr. Turner has taken a quantum leap back to first century Christianity by his emphasis on grace, identity and the Cross. These have been the emphases of Grace Fellowship International since its inception in 1969. God has been faithful to his call in the transformation of thousands of lives in this and other countries. How I praise God for His leading brother Turner to develop this comprehensive material to ground believers in the Word of God, the walk in the Spirit, and service that will redound to His glory.

The material contained herein is consistent with my books, the first of which, ***Handbook to Happiness***, is incorporated by reference in the early chapters. Nearly 300,000 copies of ***Handbook to Happiness*** have been sold, and it is estimated that 3,000,000 people have read it.

It is my prayer that those whose lives have been impacted by the Holy Spirit through my books will form a vanguard which will seize the opportunity to place the Grace Discipleship Course in the forefront of small group activity and individual study.

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Acts 20:32

Charles R. Solomon, Ed.D.
Founder and President
Grace Fellowship International

GRACE DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

ASSIGNMENT ONE

YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE, TEMPORARY VS ETERNAL LIFE

Memorize, personalize and meditate on the following verse:
I John 5:13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name
of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE

What is life? Many people wander through life without asking the important question, "What is life all about?" Men have tried to find the answer through pleasure, power and prosperity—yet are still frustrated and unhappy. Why?

1. GOD'S PURPOSE

Real purpose in life begins with God. God's original purpose of creating man was **to bring glory to himself** and **to bring pleasure to man** by living in fellowship with him. In the Garden God placed man in a perfect environment; there was no sin or the results of sin – wars, hospitals, jails, etc.

A. In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let us make man in our _____, and in our _____."

What does it mean to be made in God's image? It doesn't mean that we are gods but that God made us after His design. God is one being existing in three distinct persons. We call this the **trinity**. The three persons are called the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We know that they are not three gods but one God. In a similar way, God created man to be a **tri-unity**. Man is one being, or essence, existing in three distinct levels of life. **Man is made up of spirit, soul and body. The image represents what we are in spirit or nature.**

What does it mean to be made like God? The Hebrew word for image and the word for likeness have slightly different meanings. **The image is the more essential part of being, while the likeness is a copied representation. The likeness represents what we are in soul or personality. Before the Fall, or sin of Adam, man was said to be in both God's image and His likeness** (Genesis 1:26).

B. What did Adam and Eve hear in Genesis 3:8 _____?

God created man as **a living soul** so that He could **fellowship with man**. God thinks, so He made us with a **mind**, in order that we could **think and converse with Him**. God takes action by means of His will, and so He made us with a **will** in order that we might **willingly choose to submit to Him**. God has emotions, so He made us with **emotions**, in order that we could **love and enjoy Him**.

In Genesis 1:26 God also said, “. . . and let them _____ over the fish of the sea . . .”

God designed man for significance and achievement. Adam literally was the king of the Earth. In the beginning, all of man’s needs were fulfilled. Man realized the full potential that God had planned for him. **After the fall, man has lost the image of God but retained the likeness** (Genesis 5:1). **Now**, man has the image and likeness of **fallen Adam** (Genesis 5:3).

There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.” --- Pascal, the French philosopher

Through the new birth God has restored man to a place of fellowship with himself. Once again we can experience his blessings in our life. However, we must be certain that we have experienced his redemption and belong to him.

Construction on a new bridge was moving slowly because several men had fallen to their deaths. The men were working very cautiously out of **fear** and were not free to do their best. The foreman had a safety net suspended under the bridge to catch any man who fell. Immediately, the work progressed at twice its former speed.

A Christian needs to settle the matter of assurance of salvation if he is to be free to go on to growth and ministry. If he is always worrying about whether he is a Christian, he will dissipate his spiritual energy in the wrong place.

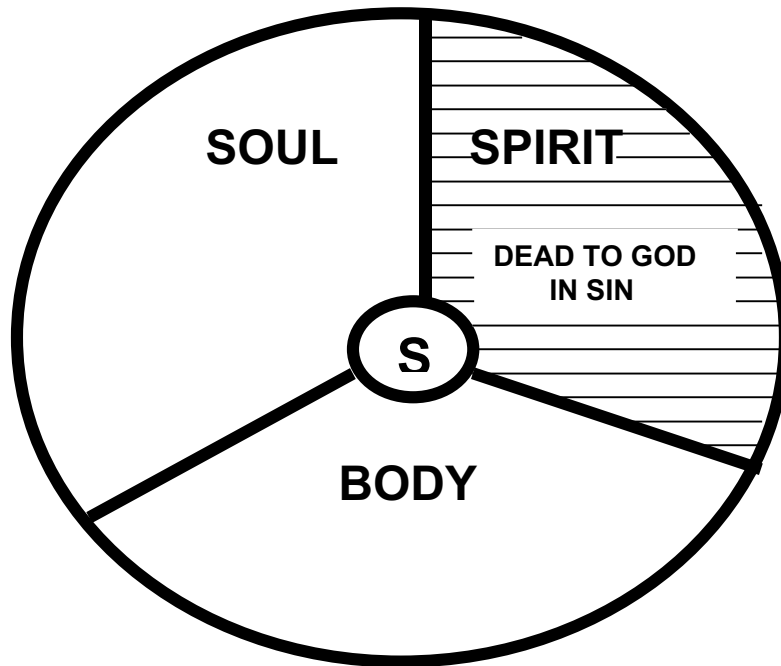
John said, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). If there is any doubt about your salvation, we want to change your **think so** into a **know so**.

2. GOD’S HOLINESS

God’s holy nature required him to separate himself from sinful man.

A. In Genesis 2:17 God said that Adam would _____ (in the day – KJV) he ate of the tree.

If man is a **tri-unity**, what part of him died? **First**, Adam and Eve did not die **physically the day they ate** of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **In fact, Adam lived in his body for more than 900 years.** **Secondly**, they did not die **psychologically** that day; **Adam continued to think, feel and use his will for another 900 years.** Their bodies **began** to die, but their **souls (or personalities) still functioned, even though they were affected by sin.** Obviously, the part of them that **died that day was the spirit.** **They died spiritually!**



- B. What happened to separate man from God? Romans 5:12 _____
- C. Who was death passed on to? _____
- D. Is man born with a sinful nature? Psalm 51:5 _____
- E. According to Ephesians 2:1 man is born _____
- F. What are the wages of sin? Romans 3:23 _____
- G. How many people have sinned? Romans 3:23 _____

Dead men need life! Man is born spiritually dead and separated from a holy God. The question isn't how little a man sins or how many good works he does; **he needs spiritual life!** Man is helpless; **he cannot cleanse himself from sin, and he cannot give himself spiritual life.**

3. GOD'S LOVE

Because God is holy he must judge our sin. He would cease to be God if he didn't. However, there is **another attribute of God that found a way** to redeem us without violating his holiness—**his love**.

- A. How did God demonstrate his love toward us? Romans 5:8 _____

- B. What was laid on Jesus? Isaiah 53:6 _____

- C. God placed all our sins on Christ. What “**small sin**” is mentioned in the following verse? Matthew 12:36 _____
- D. What did Christ **become for us**? 2 Corinthians 5:21 _____
- E. What do **we become in him**? _____
- F. What have **we been made** through the sacrifice of Christ? Hebrews 10:10 _____
- G. If Christ’s death took away our sins, what **problem** do we still have? Romans 6:23

- G. If someone is **dead**, what is his **greatest need**? _____

Christ’s sacrifice takes care of our first problem, the cleansing of sin that separates us from God. But what do we do about death?

4. GOD’S GIFT

- A. What does God **offer** us in Romans 6:23? _____
- B. What did Jesus **claim to be** in John 14:6? _____

Half of the good news of the gospel is that Christ died to cleanse us from our sins; the other half is that he offers us his life.

- C. Romans 5:10 says we have been **reconciled to God by the death** of his son, but **we are saved** “_____”.
- D. Romans 6:23 says he offers his life as a “_____”
- E. Ephesians 2:8 says that salvation is a “_____”

If a man could do something to earn the gift of eternal life, it would no longer be a gift. The very **nature of a gift** means that it must be bestowed and **not earned**. We would be offended if we gave someone a gift and they tried to pay us for it.

- F. What does Isaiah 64:6 say that our good works are? _____

It is startling that God doesn’t say all our sins are like filthy rags, but rather our **righteous acts**. God sees us holding up our good works and saying, “I’m good enough to go to heaven.” **God sees our good works in competition with the finished work of Christ**. This why, in his sight, they are as filthy rags. **If we could get to heaven by good works, then Christ would not have had to die!**

There are multitudes of people in the world who may know that they are sinners—know that Christ died for their sins and that if they receive him as their personal savior they will have eternal life. However, **they are not saved until they reach out and receive his gift of eternal life.**

5. HOW DO WE RECEIVE THIS GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE?

- A. We must meet **two conditions**. What are these two conditions as stated in Acts 20:21? _____ and _____

Repentance and **faith** are like two sides of a coin; you can't have one without the other.

- B. **Repentance** means to **turn around** and face God. It is a military term meaning **about face**. What does Isaiah 53:6 compare us with?

Repentance is not trying to remember every sin we ever committed, but realizing that we **were going away from God; and now we are turning toward him.**

- C. How does Ephesians 2:8 say that we are saved? _____

Faith is transferring our trust from ourselves to Christ. We no longer rely on our own works, but rather the finished work of Christ on the cross.

- D. What does James 2:19 say about Satan and his demons? _____

Faith is not mere **intellectual** assent. Obviously, Satan and his demons are not redeemed just because they believe in God. Yet, many people have believed **intellectually** in Christ but have not received him as their savior; therefore, they are not saved. **Saving faith is trusting Christ alone for our salvation.**

If you came home extremely tired, you might look at a soft overstuffed chair and say, "I believe that chair would hold me. If I sat down in it, it would give me rest." But you would not have the benefit of rest until you put your full weight down on it and rested. Many people could believe that Christ was a historical person, but that wouldn't save them anymore than believing in Abraham Lincoln or Alexander the Great. **Saving faith is transferring your trust from good works, (church membership, baptism, etc.) and resting completely in Christ's finished work.**

Have you (or can you) met these two conditions of repentance and faith? _____

You can receive this gift of eternal life by saying a prayer similar to:

“Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner and turn from my sin. I thank you for dying upon the cross for the forgiveness of my sins and offering me your resurrected life. I now, by faith, accept you as my savior and surrender to you as my Lord. By your Holy Spirit now dwelling in me, I want to live a life pleasing to you. Make me the kind of person you want me to be.” Amen

6. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

A. According to I John 5:13 can you **know** that you have eternal life? _____

There are two people you could doubt concerning this promise:

- 1) **God**—who made the promise.
- 2) **Yourself**—the person who prayed to receive Christ.

We should not doubt God because **he cannot lie**. The only person you could doubt is yourself. **Did you really mean it when you prayed?** _____

If you answered “yes,” then **that settles it!** You may wake up in the morning and say, “Surely I don’t have eternal life just because I prayed?” To chase the doubts away, repeat this verse (memorize it) and say, **“There are only two people I can doubt; God and myself. God can’t lie, and I meant it when I prayed, so that settles it.”**

B. **Who** else will give us assurance that we are God’s children?

Romans 8:16 _____

There will be the **confirming** work of the Holy Spirit in your life. You will see things differently than before. Emotions are healthy if they are a result of God working in us by his Word and his Spirit. However, **we must always base our salvation on the facts of God’s Word.**

C. **Facts** are what the Bible says about you. Will the **facts** of God’s Word ever change?

Matthew 5:18 _____

D. **Faith** is believing in God’s Word.

E. **Feelings** change. Feelings are based on our thinking and on circumstances. They are only **responders**.

1) If we put our **faith in feelings** which are determined by circumstances, what will our faith do? _____

2) If we put our **faith in the facts** of God’s Word, what will our faith be like?

You need to quote I John 5:13 when doubts arise. **Assurance must be based on God's Word. Don't trust in your emotions** because they will change with circumstances.

Watchman Nee tells of three men who were walking along on top of a board fence. The first man was named **fact**; the second was named **faith** and the third was named **feelings**. Fact was leading the way with faith second and feelings following faith. They walked along confidently without wavering as long as **faith** kept his eyes on **fact** and **emotions** kept his eyes on **faith**. However, when **fact** turned around and looked at **faith**, and **faith** turned around and looked at **feelings**, they all began to waver and fell off the wall.

The believer by an act of the will must make his **feelings** respond to **faith**, which in turn must be based on the **facts** of God's infallible Word. When the believer looks at feelings doubts will arise.

7. POSSESSING OUR INHERITANCE

A. Complete the sentences that reveal what we have in Christ in 2 Peter 1:3,4:

- 1) Verse 3, "His divine power has given us _____."
- 2) Verse 4, "He has given us his very great and _____."

A last will and testament is used to leave people something when a person dies. The Bible is made up of the Old Testament and the New Testament. God's Word tells us of all the riches bequeathed to us by Christ's death. They are called "**precious promises.**" **If we know and claim them, we will experience lives of joy and victory. They are not automatically given to us; we must know and claim them.**

If a rich uncle died and left you ten million dollars, that would be something to get excited about! But, if you just sat and looked at your bank book and never withdrew any of your wealth, you could die in poverty. **You would have to possess what is yours to get any benefit from it.** The purpose of this *Grace Discipleship Course* is to help you claim all the precious promises that Christ wants to give you.

B. What kind of life does Christ want us to experience? John 10:10 _____

8. A SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP

A. have you received the eternal life that Christ offers? _____

In the year 1829, a man named George Wilson of Philadelphia robbed the U.S. mails, killing another person. He was later arrested and brought to trial. He was found guilty, and the judge sentenced him to be hanged. Some friends intervened on his behalf and were finally able to obtain a pardon for him from President Andrew Jackson. But when he was informed of this, George Wilson refused to accept the pardon! The sheriff was unwilling to act; for, he reasoned, how could he hang a pardoned man?

An appeal was sent to President Jackson. The perplexed President turned to the United States Supreme Court to decide the case. Chief Justice Marshall gave this ruling: **“A pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated.** It is hardly to be supposed that a person under the sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon; but, if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged.” George Wilson was executed, although his pardon lay on the Sheriff’s desk.

B. According to John 3:18 we are condemned because we have not _____

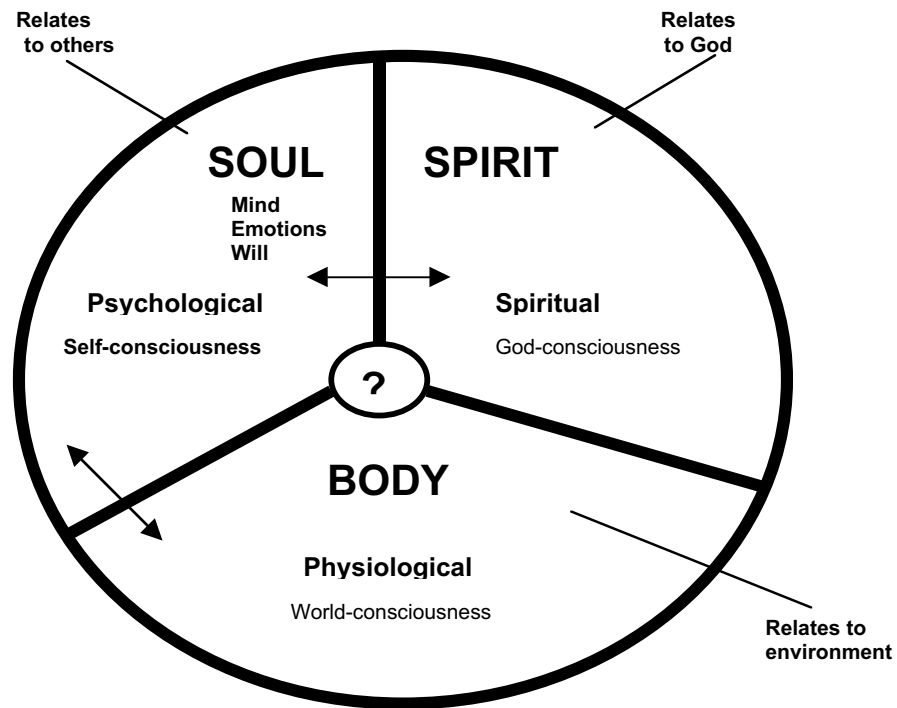
C. According to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 people are punished because they do not obey _____ . Have you? _____

If Christians have received Christ through his Holy Spirit, why do they still have problems with sin and with interpersonal relationships?

You are starting a spiritual adventure to discover all the riches you have in Christ. The concepts in the following three diagrams will take on added meaning as we progress through the discipleship training.

Man is made up of three parts: spirit, soul and body. Our **SPIRIT** is our God-consciousness by which we relate to God. Our **SOUL** is self-consciousness, and we use it to relate to ourselves and to other selves. The soul functions are composed of our **mind**, our **will** and our **emotions**. The unique functioning of these constitutes our **personalities**. Our **BODY** is world-consciousness, and we use the body to relate to our environment through our five senses. These parts interrelate and are not easily divided. When there is a problem in one area it may impact the other two.

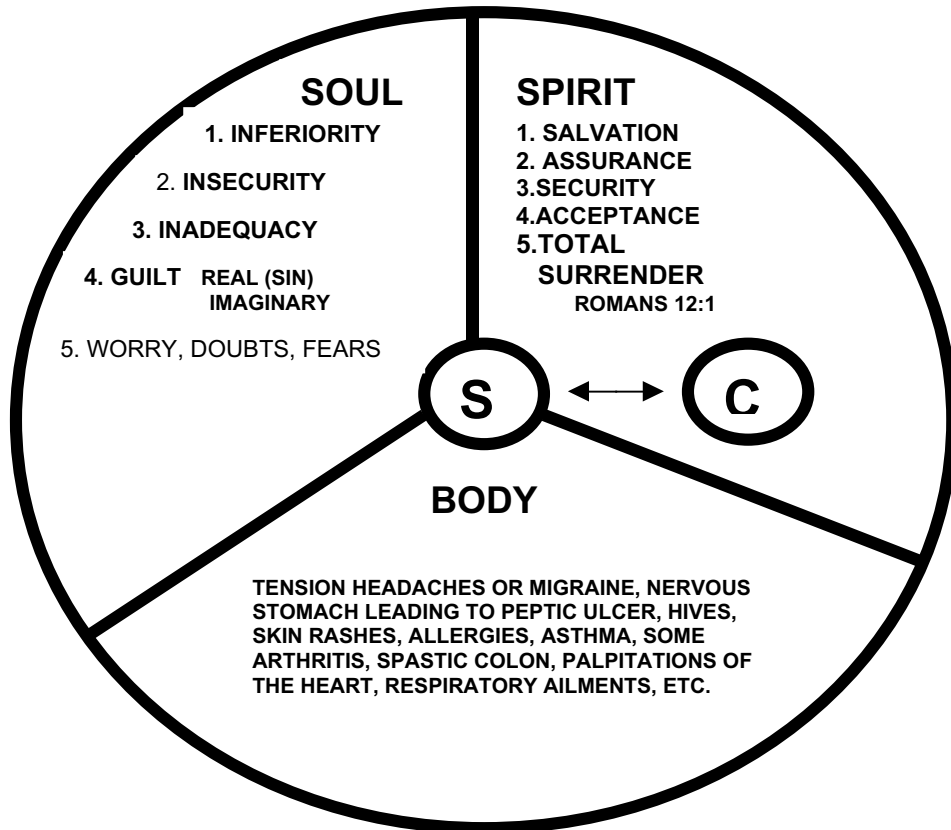
In the **first diagram** you see man as designed by God. This is Adam’s design prior to the Fall. You will notice that there is a “?” **mark** in the center of the wheel. **The question was: would Adam allow God to be the center of his life, or would Adam become self-centered?** Satan deceived Adam and Eve into independence, depending upon their own resources rather than relying upon God. Satan promised them that they could “be like God” – deciding for themselves what was good and evil. (Genesis 3:5)



When a person receives Christ as Savior, he becomes spiritually alive. The diagram below illustrates this. The Spirit of Christ is represented by the “C” shown in the spirit part of man.

I. “SPIRIT”

When “S” (**self**) is in control of our life instead of “C” (**Christ**), we cannot function as God designed us. All five areas of our spiritual lives must be in order for us to enjoy all that God has for us.



1) SALVATION – We must know that we have entered into a personal relationship with God through personal faith in Jesus Christ. We must become spiritually “born again” (No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” John 3:3). We are born again when we receive the Holy Spirit of Christ. (“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12)

2) ASSURANCE – Assurance must be based on the facts of scripture rather than on fluctuating feelings (“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have eternal life.” I John 5:13). We may have questions in our minds, not feel saved in our emotions, or still rebel at times with our wills; but the scripture says that assurance is spiritual – not psychological. (“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” Romans 8:16).

3) SECURITY – We must know that we received eternal life and that this life is forever. We cannot lose eternal life or else it would not be eternal! (“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall **not perish** but have **eternal life.**” John 3:16).

4) ACCEPTANCE – We must be assured that we are unconditionally “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6 KJV). Because we are in Christ, God loves us exactly as much as he loves his Son, Jesus Christ. (“I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have **loved them even as you have loved me.**” John 17:23).

5) TOTAL SURRENDER – The scripture uses the terms “yield” and “surrender” to describe our total dependence upon Christ (Romans 6:11; 12:1). The surrender of our will to Christ should result in his becoming the center of our life, as we will see in the final wheel diagram. The problem is that we often change our minds and will to take back control of our lives. **To experience Christ as our very life, we must come to know that God has already changed our identity and given us a new nature.** We cannot make this real in our life by an act of our will alone. **We must commit our will to the work which God has already accomplished on our behalf at the cross of Christ.** Before we can will something, we must know and have faith in the truth. We will discover in assignment three that the fallen, Adam-powered “old man” was crucified with Christ in order that we might center our lives in the risen, Christ-powered “new man.” Christ becoming the center of our lives is contingent upon total surrender, although it is not always simultaneous.

II. SOUL

Our SOUL is our personality, made up of our mind, will and emotions. When **self (represented by the “S” in the center of the wheel)** is in control of our life, we have a chain reaction of negative things which can happen in our soul, or personality. The “S” does not represent the personality but a self-centered condition of the personality known as the **FLESH.**

- 1) **INFERIORITY** – We feel inferior to other people which may hinder relationships and performance at work or in the home. We feel that we do not measure up in comparisons.
- 2) **INSECURITY** – We are filled with fears and doubts about ourselves and what might happen to us in the future.
- 3) **INADEQUACY** – We do not feel adequate to meet demands upon us and fear circumstances over which we have no control.
- 4) **GUILT** – We feel guilty even after we have confessed and repented of our sins. We fear that we have offended God and imagine that God is angry with us. This guilt may spring from a feeling that God does not love us and has not totally forgiven and accepted us. Conviction over sin is proper for the believer but guilt is not.
- 5) **WORRIES, DOUBTS AND FEARS** – We are filled with inner turmoil. We may believe that Christ will take us to heaven someday, but not have faith that he can provide for us today. We may be unbelieving believers!

External problems and circumstances come against us through our families, work and other adverse conditions. We feel inadequate, inferior, insecure, etc.; and this results in great frustration. When frustration strikes the self (circled as “S”) the result is hostility. It is like striking a golf ball with a live center; it will react with the club head and travel a great distance. If the center is dead, not much will happen. But, when self is in control of our life, we are apt to project hostility. The release of this hostility may be psychologically helpful, but it is not spiritually mature, nor is it socially acceptable. We are apt to displace the hostility by dumping it upon some innocent person. This may give momentary relief but only adds guilt. We might keep the hostility within ourselves; and, instead of giving others ulcers, we may give them to ourselves!

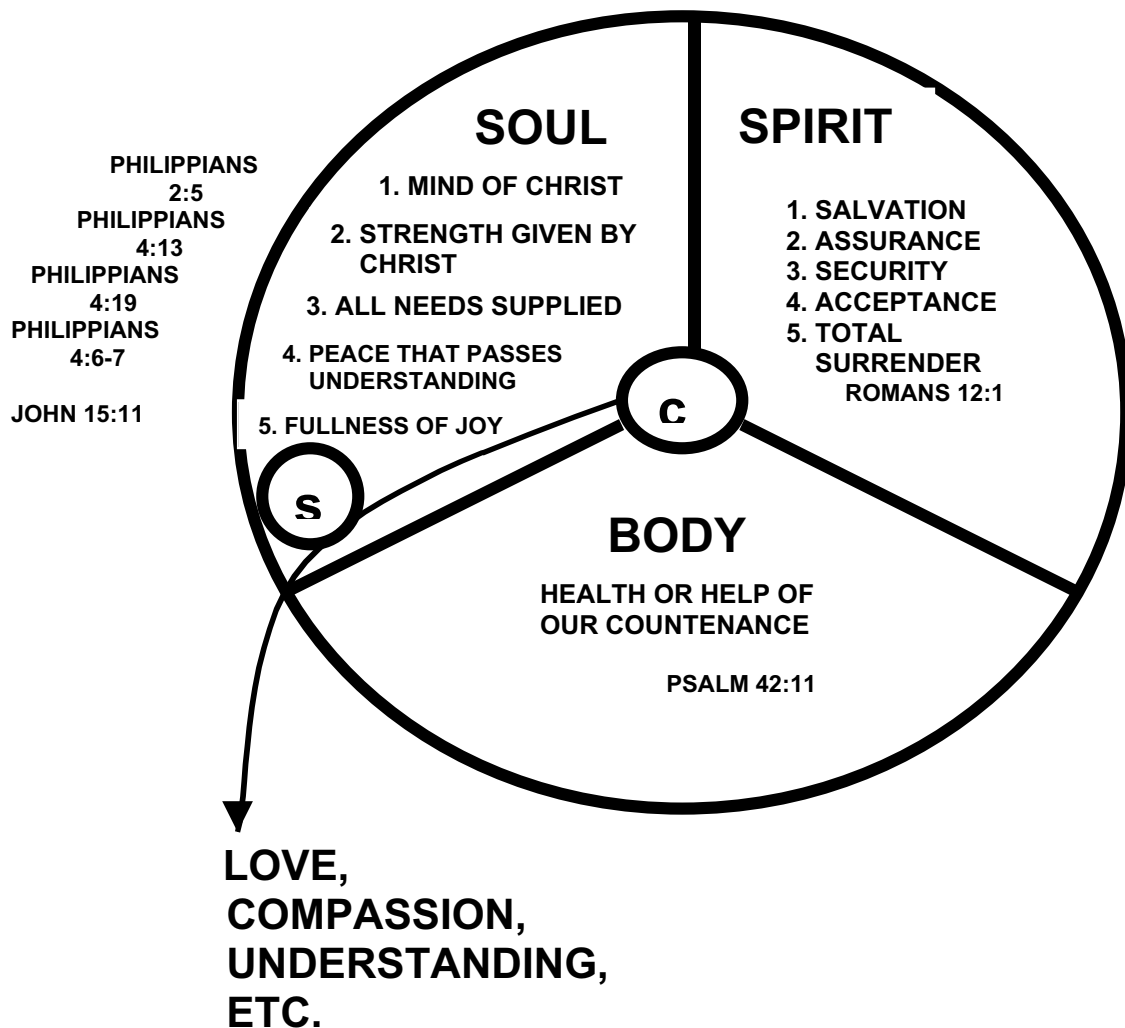
Trying to contain this hostility can affect the **MIND** with: **1. Fantasy** – spending time

thinking how we would like things to be. **2. Psychoses** – a seriously disorganized personality. **3. Paranoia** – Extreme suspicion and delusion that someone is out to get us. **4. Obsessive thoughts** – persistent thoughts and uncontrolled impulses which may lead to compulsive performance of a certain act.

These aberrations are usually not mental illnesses, but are mental symptoms of a deeper problem – self at the center of life. In addition, frustrations and the resulting hostility can affect the **EMOTIONS** with **1. Depression** – caused by anger and frustrations held inward. **2. Anxiety** – being uneasy, apprehensive or worried.

III. Body

After the anxiety and depression can no longer be contained inside **it may manifest itself in the body as a psychosomatic symptom**. Many of these are listed. This chain reaction may continue while self is in control of the life. **Man was not designed to handle these problems independently of God. Self will prevent Christ's resurrection life from bringing relief through his power.** Not all illness, however, is based on a soul problem. A Spirit-controlled Christian may experience normal physical disease and illness, some of which can cause mental and/or emotional disturbances.



Once the control of the life is turned over to Christ, self-control (or flesh) no longer holds sway. The flesh is not eliminated in the believer; but we can be empowered, moment by moment, by the life of Christ within us. We not only receive his eternal life but also the very **quality of his life**. With Christ in control of our lives **an exchange takes place**. Instead of inferiority, for example, we have the very mind of Christ. When stresses occur with Christ at the center of life, we don't have to react with frustration and hostility; but we may exhibit just the opposite – love, compassion, understanding, etc.

OUR SOUL LIFE MAY TRULY PROSPER WHEN WE HAVE:

- 1) **THE MIND OF CHRIST**, allows us humbly to accept God's plan for us, to overcome **inferiority**, with the tendency to compare ourselves unfavorably with others.
- 2) **THE STRENGTH GIVEN BY CHRIST** enables us to do all things, and to overcome **inadequacy**, the fear that we may fail.
- 3) **The promise that God will SUPPLY ALL OF OUR NEEDS**, allows us to overcome **insecurity**, the fear that we may have to go without a daily supply.
- 4) **THE PEACE THAT CHRIST GIVES** in the knowledge that we are reconciled to God allows us to overcome feelings of **guilt**—a fear that God will condemn us.
- 5) **HIS PRESENCE GIVES US FULNESS OF JOY**, which will overcome **worry, doubt and fear**. These three negatives come from not understanding that Christ will never leave us or forsake us.

The next assignment will cover the exciting truth that you are **totally forgiven**. You will discover that you not only have a new future, but **you also have a new past!**

(Diagrams with minor modifications from Handbook to Happiness, Dr. Charles R. Solomon, Grace Fellowship International, Box 368, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, 37868. Used by permission)

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