

Christian Maturity

Understanding the Reality of Christ Being Formed in You

Man Became a Living Soul

- God formed a three part man
 - **Genesis 2:7 (NIV)** the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. [SOUL—*nepesh*]
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NIV)** May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Man walked in spirit, incredible mental capacity, and was to some degree unaware that his physical state (being naked) might be a source of shame.
 - **Genesis 2:19-20 (NIV)** ¹⁹ Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.
 - **Genesis 3:8-11 (NIV)** ⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." ¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"
- Sin caused death in his spirit
 - **Genesis 2:17 (NIV)** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
 - **Ephesians 2:1-5 (NIV)** ¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

How Does this Relate to Us After Christ Came

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

If we are truly saved...

If whom the Son sets free is free indeed...

If we have been born again...

Then how do we explain the un-ignorable lack of Christ-likeness in ourselves?

- Adam's spirit died. It was separated from God.
- His body did not die.

- His soul didn't die; however, it gained something that it had not had before to some degree: The Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:9, 2:17)
 - Saved:
 - We are saved.
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)** ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - Our spirit was brought back to life and made One with God's Spirit (1 Cor. 6:14-17)
 - We are being saved.
 - **1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
 - Our souls are being saved (continual daily process)—Eph. 3:14-19
 - We will be saved (Romans 8:18-27)
 - Our bodies are waiting.
 - **Romans 8:23 (NIV)** Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Being Saved

It is the "being saved" part of this process that directly relates to our maturity in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:17 (NIV) But he who unites himself with the Lord is **one** with him in spirit.

However, why does the scripture say things like this:

Christ Formed in You

Galatians 4:19 (NIV) My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 3:14-19 (NIV) ¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

How Do We Let Him Be Formed in Us?

Fellowship with God

1 Corinthians 1:9 (NIV) God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

It starts with simply Trusting, Resting, and not Striving.

It can be a difficult thing to learn to allow our hearts to be quieted before God, and to truly turn the mind onto the things of the Spirit.

Can this be Easy?

Yes, it can be.

HOWEVER, I believe this process is made easier when we FIRST realize that our spirit really is at one with God, and we really are saved—now we are just fellowshiping with Him so that Christ can be formed in our soul and that we can have all the fullness of Him.

And He enjoys the journey with us, and he enjoys us in the journey.

The Spirit Mind

Romans 8:5-8 (NIV) ⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

In a practical sense we are talking about being transformed to the point that we no longer have to grit our teeth and bite our tongue to keep from retaliating, but that our first reaction from our spirit through our soul is “Father, forgive them” before ever even becoming offended.

Spiritual Disciplines: Prayer, Study, Fasting, Meditation, Service, Submission, Simplicity

Practical Things:

- Turn off the TV
- Free up your schedule (168 hours)
- Put others first—you would be surprised (Taking up the cross)
 - **Matthew 16:24 (NIV)** Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 (NIV) ⁴I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-- ⁶because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIV) May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.