

Module : The Spiritual Man**Session 3** : Three Kinds of Sons Hear the Word

Continued directly from Session 16 – Part 2

Paul distinguished between three kinds of states in reference to sons of God, i.e. **spiritual** (1 Cor. 2:10-13), **natural** (1 Cor. 2:9,14) and **carnal** (1 Cor. 3:1ff). It is a choice we make as to which one of these states we function in. Each state will have a serious positive or negative impact on how the Word of God is heard and received, with differing outcomes/results.

The **CONTENT** of what GOD chooses to release in His speaking, your **HEARING** of God's Word and the resultant intended **OUTCOME OF OBEDIENCE**, is seriously influenced by whether you are as a son of God function 'spiritually', 'naturally' or 'carnally'.

1 Cor. 2:9-15

- 9 but just as it is written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.
- 10 **For to us God revealed them through the Spirit;** for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
- 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.
- 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, **but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,**
- 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.
- 14 But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God,** for they are **foolishness to him;** and **he cannot understand them,** because they are spiritually appraised.
- 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.
- 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ

THE NATURAL MAN :

Natural = *psuchikós* = pertaining to or governed by natural instincts; pertaining to the natural as distinguished from the spiritual or glorified nature of man. (Zodihates)

Note the condition of the NATURAL MAN described in verse 9: his eyes have not seen, neither have his ears heard, nor has it entered into his comprehension the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. This is not the reality of the SPIRITUAL MAN, who can access the things freely given by God. God has already deposited things (1 Cor. 2:9) into the spirits of those who love Him and who are 'spiritual'. **An unrenewed soul, still in a position of dominance and ascendancy over a renewed spirit, represents a barrier to actualise these things - spiritual resource - freely given to us through the Word of God.**

The natural man has two barriers that prevent him from accessing things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14):

- His low estimation of spiritual things: They are foolishness to him - thus he cannot accept them
- His inability to appraise spiritual things because he functions predominantly with the mind of his soul : They are spiritually appraised - thus he cannot understand them.

Firstly, **you cannot receive something that you do not highly esteem**. If something is reduced to foolishness in your estimation, your opinion regarding it poses a barrier to your acceptance of it.

Secondly, **spiritual things are to be understood with the mind of the spirit if you are to comprehend the fullness thereof**. The natural mind attempts to engage spiritual realities with aspects of his soul which are still unrenewed. He is largely a 'soulish' man. His environment and context significantly influences his processing of eternal spiritual things. Thus, when spiritual words from the Word of God come to him, he 'cannot accept them' and cannot understand them, because **he is employing the wrong instrumentation within himself to receive and encode a frequency of God's speaking from the unseen dimension of Spirit**.

The discourse of Jesus in John chapter six, cited in our two previous sessions, highlight a practical example of many 'disciples' (John 6:66) who functioned as natural men and not as spiritual men. They could not understand and accept what they described as a 'hard' or 'difficult' teaching (John 6:60). Refer to Session 15 (pages 5 – 7) and Session 16 (page 4).

THE SPIRITUAL MAN:

Spiritual = *pneumatikós* = Used of persons who are spiritual, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, enjoying the influences, graces, gifts of the Holy Spirit

Consider:

1 Cor. 15:44-45: "it is sown a **natural body**; it is raised a **spiritual body**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life- giving spirit."

The term 'spiritual' is also used to describe aspects pertaining to the specific nature in which we function in our bodies, e.g. 'a spiritual body' - as contrasted to a 'natural body' - (1 Cor. 15:44). A **spiritual body (pneumatikon) is one, which is governed by the Spirit of God functioning within his spirit**. A 'natural body' (psuchikon) is one, which is largely governed by one's natural and fallen instincts or soul.

The Spirit of God is the agency through which things prepared by God for those who love Him are revealed and freely made available to them (1 Cor. 2:9). The Spirit of God alone knows the 'depths' of God' (1 Cor. 2:10) and the thoughts of God (1 Cor. 2:11). We have the Spirit of God, and not the spirit of the world, and thus are privileged to know these things. He, the Spirit of Truth, leads and guides us into truth. By the Spirit who dwells within us, we are able to know the mind of God, for the Spirit alone knows the thoughts and depths of God. He, the Spirit, enlightens and imbues our spirits with the secret things of God.

Deut. 29:29 The **secret things** belong to the Lord our God, but the **things revealed** belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may **observe** all the words of this law

Note – the purpose for revelation of hidden things is obedience, “that we may OBSERVE all the words”. Those things, which we may know by the Spirit within our spirits, empower us to walk practically in it. Every revelation must be incarnated within us. There is attendant with every revelation, GRACE, which affords us the ability to actualise and express/demonstrate truth in lifestyle and behaviour. The spiritual man is able to decode the secret things of God.

Note two things about the Spiritual Man (*things that are unattainable by the natural man*)

(1) The spiritual man, unlike the natural, **can appraise spiritual things and so understand them**. He has the technology for engaging eternal things and resource or revelation that God desires to show to him. This technology is **an acutely developed spirit consciousness within him. His spirit is intensely connected to the Spirit of the Lord through the Word of the Lord.**

Further to this, his spirit is **developed in dominance over the potential rivalry of the soul and potential opposition of fleshly carnality** (which the spiritual man has put the death through the Spirit of God). In Colossians 1:9, Paul prayed that we would be ‘filled with the knowledge of His will in **SPIRITUAL** wisdom and understanding’.

Col.1:9-12

- 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will** in all **spiritual wisdom and understanding**,
- 10 so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously
- 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light

There is wisdom and understanding that is spiritual in nature as contrasted with understanding and wisdom that is natural or sensual. The outward behavioural manifestation of natural/sensual wisdom has elements of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition (See James 3:13-18).

James 3:15 This **wisdom** is not that which comes down from above, but is **earthly, natural** (i.e. *psuchikos*), **demonic**

(2) Also, the spiritual man, unlike the natural man, **has an affinity and high estimation for the worth of and value for spiritual things - and so he ‘accepts them’ - they are not foolishness to him**. He delights in the Word of God, which is spirit and life. Apart from the mere capacity to know and understand the things that God reveals to him through the Word, the spiritual man possesses an unquenchable enquiry into things not yet known or revealed in his time. This disposition within the spiritual man is a necessary principle by which God works in order to activate HIM (i.e. God) to dispense further revelation of hidden things within HIM (i.e. God) to the spiritual man.

Prov. 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the **glory of kings** is to search out a matter

The spiritual man is a 'king' who searches out the deep things of God - which is a description of the Holy Spirit's activity in reference to the God-head Himself. Kings rule and have dominion. **Our dominion and rulership in this life will thus be contingent upon the extent to which we search out and know the things that God has freely given to us.**

The spirit of man is the only capable entity or mechanism in man that is able to know the thoughts of man. Your spirit is also the vehicle in and through which things from the unseen eternal heavenly dimension are received, transacted and communicated to your entire being, i.e. that which is received in the spirit is transmitted to the soul and manifested in attitude and behaviour in one's body.

Prov. 20:27 The **spirit of man** is the **lamp of the Lord, Searching all the innermost** parts of his being.

The Spirit of God interacts with our spirit by the Word of God, which carries GRACE. This grace represents the substantive nature of God imparted to us through His Word. **The Spirit of God engages the spirit of man, through the impartations of GRACE vested within the Word of God**, and this medium of Spirit-Word or Grace-Word has all the resource ('things') that God has prepared for those who love him. This is the preserve of the spiritual man, whose spirit is poised in its position of ascendancy over the unrenewed aspects of the soul (natural man), as well as dominating and holding in check the inclination of the flesh to sin (carnal man).

1 Cor. 14:37,38 **If anyone thinks he is** a prophet or **spiritual**, let him **recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lords commandment**. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

Note here Paul asserts that anyone who in his own estimation, regards himself as 'spiritual', will recognise his teachings and determine its origin or source from the Lord - i.e. "the Lord's commandment". Failure to do this annuls his claim to be spiritual. Perhaps the person may still have an unrenewed aspect of his soul in dominance or strong fleshly carnality present that prevents his regard for Paul's word as God's commandment. The natural, soulish or fleshly man cannot access spiritual things.

A BRIEF ASIDE :

The spiritual man must be aware of subtly descending into a natural or carnal platform of function. Consider the following case study briefly:

Matthew 16:15-17; 21-23

- 15 He said to them, But who do you say that I am?
- 16 Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.
- 17 And Jesus said to him, **Blessed are you**, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not **reveal this to you**, but My Father who is in heaven. ... (verse 18-20 omitted) ...

- 21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
- 22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.
- 23 But He turned and said to Peter, **Get behind Me, Satan!** You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are **not setting your mind on Gods interests, but man's**"

Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God and was commended for that fact that the Father, and not flesh and blood, revealed this to him. Jesus then proceeded to make plain to the disciples the fact that He would die. Peter opposes Christ's intention in submitting Himself to death. For this, Jesus rebukes him for permitting his thinking to be influenced by satan. The phrase '**setting your mind**' is '**phroneo**' and means 'to exercise the mind; to entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; to be mentally disposed in a certain direction'. Peter's **spirit accessed an accurate revelation but the mind of his soul did not understand the practical outworking and implications of this revelation.**

Peter, in the space of a few moments went from being commended ('Blessed') for accessing deep revelation from the Father, to being reprimanded for allowing his mind to be influenced by a satanic thought.

In this, is another example of how we can know the will of God, yet fail to understand its practical outworking. At all stages of engagement with God for His will to be effected, we need to be on guard that we do not drift from being led by the Spirit in and through our spirits, to being led by inaccurate preconceived notions or expectations within the unenlightened areas of our souls.

Peter's inaccurate position was probably motivated by two factors:

- (a) genuine concern for Jesus' welfare and
- (b) misunderstanding of Jesus as a political deliverer from Roman oppression

Like Peter, whenever we still function with ...

- (a) an undue focus on personal security or self-preservation, and
- (b) a preconceived idea of the outworking of God's plan according to our own thinking ...

... we risk the potential of allowing satan to influence our thinking. These factors affect how we HEAR the Word of God and threaten our accurate obedience thereof.

In one conversation, Peter vacillated from being a 'spiritual man' to thinking as a 'natural man'. We must be careful of this tendency. Consistent exposure to and reliance upon God speaking through His Word (and other mediums) for the content and methodology of His will is essential. Stated differently, His Word will reveal both His WILL and His WAY. The 'WHAT' of His will and the 'HOW' of His way is to be known. Accessing revelation and administrating revelation is equally important.

THE CARNAL OR FLESHLY MAN:

Carnal = sarkikos = Fleshly, pertaining to the flesh or body; The tendency to satisfy the flesh, implying sinfulness, sinful propensity, of things (1 Pet. 2:11, carnal desires, having their seat in the carnal nature). [Zodhiates]

In the carnal man, the fleshly nature of sin has dominance and finds expression through his physical body. He is consumed by a love for the world and its lusts.

1 Cor. 3:1 NKJV) And I, brethren, **could not speak** to you as **spiritual** people, but as to **carnal**, as to babes in Christ.

The carnal man is one who has **not permitted his spirit to configure his soul, and so his flesh (body) is left disempowered to war off various subtle temptations**. These temptations manifest in multiple and varied forms and are designed to cause him to sin - in violation of clear biblical principles by which the kingdom of God functions. The sad thing is that **this condition inhibits what God would like to reveal to this man through the Word**. Further, even if this man is exposed to certain profound teachings intended to mature him, the **carnality within him will impede the reception of this Word**. Unchecked habitual expressions of carnality have a serious impact upon the CAPACITY OF ONE'S SOUL AND SPIRIT - particularly on the ability to HEAR spiritual words accurately. This is briefly demonstrated below and will be further explored in our next session.

Romans 8:1-8

- 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
- 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
- 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- 5 For **those who are according to the flesh** set their **minds on the things of the flesh**, but those who are **according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit**.
- 6 For the **mind set on the flesh is death**, but the **mind set on the Spirit is life and peace**,
- 7 because the **mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God**; for it **does not subject itself** to the law of God, for it is not **even able to do so**,
- 8 and those who are in the **flesh cannot please God**

Note :

(1) Spiritual men deliberately **SET** their minds on things of **the Spirit**. [verse 5b]
The mind set on the Spirit is **LIFE and PEACE**. [verse 6b]

(2) Carnal men deliberately **SET** their minds on things of **the flesh**. [verse 5a]
The mind set on the flesh ...

- a) leads to **DEATH** [verse 6a]
- b) is **HOSTILE** toward God [verse 7a]
- c) **DOES not** subject itself to God's Word [verse 7b]
- d) is **not ABLE to** be subject to the Word [verse 7c]
- e) **Cannot please God** [verse 8]

If you feed the carnal nature, it grows in strength and dominance in your life. This leads to spiritual death and decay. The danger is that the carnal man develops hostility towards God and His purposes. **He may sit under the sound of God's Word and not SUBJECT himself to it simply because he IS NOT ABLE to.** He does not want to, and even if there is a slight inclination to do, he is not able to. This is a dangerous position to be in.

Carnality must be checked and be repented of as soon as it is detected so that it does not pose this kind of threat to God's Word. Ultimately the carnal man cannot please God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The HEARING of God's Word generates faith. Carnality in the carnal man negates the development of faith within him because he subconsciously develops a dislike for the HEARING of God's Word.

CARNALITY IS A BARRIER TO HEARING

A serious barrier to obedience to God's Word received in the spirit, to which the soul is aligned, is a **preoccupation with the flesh or carnal nature.**

1 Cor. 3:1-4

- 1 And I, brethren, **could not speak to you as to spiritual men**, but as to **men of flesh**, as to infants in Christ.
- 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you **were not yet able to receive it**. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,
- 3 for you are **still fleshly**. For since there is **jealousy and strife** among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?
- 4 For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not mere men

Note here that Paul states emphatically that his speaking to the Corinthians was conditioned by their state of carnality. He could not address them as 'spiritual' men, but only as 'carnal men'. Much would have been lost if he spoke to them in mature terms as spiritual men. Their carnal state forced him to speak to them on a level that their chosen condition of carnality could comprehend. Context must not prescribe what the preacher of God's Word releases to people, yet the condition of the people limit what God would like to share.

An examination of 1 Cor. 3 will reveal that **Carnality refers to:**

- Unchecked sin and unbridled **fleshly lust**
- The state where **spiritual infancy is a preferred condition** with **no desire to proceed toward maturity**.
- Conditions of **strife, jealousy and division** - which manifest as **relational tension** and breakdown.
- **Sectarianism and schismatic tribalism**, based on loyalty to different spiritual fathers/grace carriers to the degree where it becomes divisive.

Jude 1:19

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

All the factors above impede the accurate hearing and reception of God's Word.

1 Cor. 2:1-7

- 1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.
- 2 For I determined to **know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.**
- 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,
- 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
- 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.
- 6 **Yet we do speak wisdom** among those **who are mature**; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;
- 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory

At Paul's first encounter with the Corinthians which lasted about eighteen months, he only spoke of 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified'. He could not speak beyond this focus or content since they were immature. Immaturity can inhibit God's speaking at more profound and deeper levels. His speaking, based upon where they were in reference to their maturity, was rather accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit and power. Signs and wonders always follow the Word. But in this case, his speaking was limited by their inability to access a higher wisdom in the Word. Paul asserts, YET WE DO SPEAK WISDOM – but only AMONG those who are MATURE. This speaking is beyond elementary things of our salvation, like the crucifixion. There are mysteries embedded within God's Word that we still need to unlock and disclose. This will demand that we proceed toward greater maturity.

May our present position of immaturity not in itself hinder the release of profound levels of God's wisdom through the declaration of His Word. The demand to deliberately grow and mature is still the imperative for the present-day church.

DULLNESS OF HEARING NEW THINGS

As indicated before, a disinclination to grow from infancy to maturity is evidence of carnality. In 1 Cor. 3:1, Paul equates the position of infancy with that of the carnal man. This is also highlighted in the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 5:10-14

- 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.
- 11 Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.
- 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
- 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.
- 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil

Dull = nothros = slothful, lazy, sluggish

The Hebrew saints are described as 'dull of hearing' profound revelation regarding the truth of Melchisedek. The writer of the book of Hebrews finds it 'hard to explain' simply based upon their inability to hear. The difficulty in explaining was not because of the lack of understanding or ineptitude of the preacher/writer, but because of the state of the hearers. They were sluggish and slow to hear. Part of the reason for this was that they stagnated in their growth and movement toward maturity in God. Present stagnation or retrogression in spiritual growth NOW, disqualify one from accessing certain realms of God's speaking LATER.

The Hebrews are described as infants, only knowing the milk of the Word (elementary things), and did not migrate to becoming 'skilled in the Word' (KJV). Solid food biblically is for the mature - who through a process of regular application of the Word - i.e. 'practice' - have developed a discerning mind.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of TRUTH, who makes known to us in our day what could not have been revealed to people in the time in which Jesus walked the earth. But the disclosures of the Spirit to us requires our co-operation with Him and with those He sends to us to reveal the hidden things of wisdom from His Word.

John 16:12-15

- 12 I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot **bear them now**.
- 13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
- 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.
- 15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you

Sons of God ought to be spiritual, not natural or carnal. May the limitations of that associated with the natural and carnal dimensions not impede the greater entrance into the Word of God that we so earnestly yearn for and desire.

JOHN 14:21 "He who **has My commandments and keeps them** is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by **My Father, and I will love him** and will **disclose Myself** to him."

Fleshly carnality as a barrier to accessing things of the Spirit will be explored in our next session.

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QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR PERSONAL REVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Distinguish between the spiritual man, the natural man and the carnal man.
2. How does the naturally minded person appraise spiritual things?
3. If a natural man hears spiritual words from God, how does he process this or interact with it.
4. What are some indications of carnality?
5. What limitations automatically present themselves whenever God desires to speak profound wisdom to a context where there is a predominance of the carnally-minded man?

N.B.: I strongly recommend that the reader listen to audio recordings of the five sessions of Thamo Naidoo's teaching on the 'Spiritual Man' delivered at his 20th Apostolic School of Ministry – Nov. 2011. This teaching provides accurate perspective to the Divine design for the position and function of man's spirit and soul in his body. Go to www.thamonaiddoo.com; 'Downloads'; 'ASOMs'; '7-12 November 2011'; then each day there is one session on the subject. Also consult Dr SY Govender's teaching on 'ZOE LIFE' from www.apostolicleader.co.za. In our present study at hand, we simply discuss some of the issues relevant to this topic in as far as it has reference to HEARING God's Word correctly with a view to obeying it fully from the vantage point of an enlightened spirit.

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