

THE BODY: INSTRUMENT OF THE SPIRIT (1)

Introduction: Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Paul declares that we all are complex beings that includes an outward man and an inward man.

1. Though many attempt to separate the body and the spirit, God has so designed us that we are made up of spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23).
2. Indeed, our spirits communicate with each other only through the instrumentality of the body. Our spirit within us is responsible for the actions of the body (Rom. 12:1). If the spirit is corrupt, sin will reign in our bodies.
3. Our spirit (inward man) must control the body (outer man; Rom. 6:12-13).
4. What does the Bible teach about our spirits and our bodies?

A. SAINTS MUST “LOOK” AT THINGS THAT ARE ETERNAL.

1. **Context:** In the first half of 2 Corinthians (1:12—7:16) Paul discusses the trials and conflicts of his preaching.
 - a. He first offers defense of his character to change plans (1:12—2:17).
 - b. He then defends his ministry (3:1—6:10). Paul has persevered.
2. In chapter 4 the apostle outlines how it is that he has persevered.
 - a. He has done so in the midst of blindness and darkness (4:1-6).
 - 1) Yet he states, **“We preach not ourselves”**; *i.e.*, Paul has consciously placed himself out of the driver’s seat and let God be first in his life and thus direct his ministry. This is repeated in 10:12.
 - 2) Paul was content to be a reflection of Christ (3:17-18).
 - b. Paul has persevered in the midst of suffering (4:7-15). This suffering was experienced by his physical body and developed his character.
 - 1) Many view the “flesh” of man as intrinsically evil: no good to be found in the body. Not true, our bodies are a temple (1 Cor. 6:19).
 - 2) Afflictions upon the physical body strengthens man’s spirit.
 - c. Paul has persevered because he was inspired by hope (4:16—5:10). How? (1) He is reminded that the things which are not seen are eternal (4:16-18) and (2) He knows that he has an eternal home (5:1-10).
3. How, then, does our text (4:16-18) instruct us how to persevere?
 - a. **“We do not look at the things which are seen, but. . . not seen”** (4:18)
 - b. “Look” (*skopein*) means more than to gaze at a thing: it signifies “to look at the mark” we intend to hit (*see*: Gal. 6:1; Phil. 2:4; 3:17; 3:14).
 - c. Here the word means “to endeavor to obtain”; “keep our minds upon.”
 - d. Less important thing is denied to emphasize important (Matt. 6:19, 25).
 - e. Paul challenges us to a new outlook in life; indeed a new self-image.
 - 1) In seeking to obtain the necessities of this life, we must so conduct ourselves as to strengthen inner man and lay up rewards in heaven.
 - 2) A self-examination test: “How do others perceive me; who am I?”
 - 3) Paul vividly expresses his change at baptism (Col. 2:12; 3:1-4).

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 [SCRIPTURE READING] 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:12-13 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your Bondservants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted

Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Philippians 3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:19, 25 19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;. . . 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Colossians 2:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Colossians 3:1-4 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.