

THE BODY: INSTRUMENT OF THE SPIRIT (2)

Introduction: Read 1 John 3:9. Last time we studied 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 which reminds us that we are comprised of an outward and inward man.

1. Each part of man (body, soul and spirit) are inseparably connected to every other part (*cf.* 1 Thess. 5:23). Our spirits communicate only *via* our bodies.
2. Though our bodies are temporal (temporary) and our spirits are eternal, through suffering our bodies develop the character of our spirit (4:7-15).
3. Thus we “look” (*skopein* – “gaze, hit the mark, endeavor to obtain”) at the things that are unseen (spiritual) rather than the things seen (physical).

B. THE BODY CANNOT SIN WITHOUT SPIRIT’S CONSENT.

1. Some hold that the Spirit regenerated man never sins—*i.e.* the sins committed by a saint are sins of the body, in which the spirit has no part.
 - a. This is an effort to support the “impossibility of apostasy” doctrine.
 - b. This doctrine “implies that the spirit, full of love for the enemy, seeks to do him good, while the body, full of hate, murders him; that the spirit, pure and holy, can seek the conversion and salvation of a person, while the body full of lust, seduces and accomplished the moral ruin of the same person” [Robertson L. Whiteside].
2. Ben Bogard argued from 1 John 3:9 in his debate with N.B. Hardeman that a child of God can not so sin as to be finally lost. He claimed that a Christian may sin with his flesh but never with his soul (spirit).
 - a. This text actually reads: **Whosoever is begotten** (perfect tense; *i.e.*, has been begotten and remains so) **of God does not sin** (pres. tense – does not practice sin as a way of life), **for His** (God’s) **seed** (the Word) **abides** (pres. tense – keeps on abiding) **in him: and he cannot** (conscientiously) **sin** (keep on practicing sin) **because he is begotten of God.**
 - b. John does not say God’s child can’t sin (for we all do; see 1:7-10), but the saint is continuously being restrained by God’s word (comp. 5:18).
3. Rather, the Bible teaches the spirit of a man is the responsible part of man.
 - a. In Romans 6:12-14 Paul addressed the intelligent, responsible part of man. Some part of man distinct from the body is made responsible for what the body does: the spirit of man.
 - b. To that spirit God gives a charge: **“let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body”** (12); neither **“shall it have dominion over you”** (14).
 - c. If, then, the spirit allows sin to reign in the body, the spirit disobeys God, and, therefore sins.
 - d. The language shows plainly that when the spirit yields and allows the body to sin, the spirit is obeying the lusts of the body instead of God.
4. We are servant of whom we obey (Rom. 6:16). Jesus so vividly illustrated this principle in Matthew 15:16-20 regarding “unwashed hands.”

1 John 3:9 [SCRIPTURE READING] Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God

1 John 1:7-10 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 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.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed --10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

1 John 5:18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

Romans 6:12-14 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. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?