

THE THREE-FOLD NATURE OF MAN - KENNETH HAGIN

The study of man's three-fold nature—the spirit, soul, and body—is one which always intrigued me. I have sought earnestly to learn the difference between the three. It is easy enough to distinguish between the body and the other two. But it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the spirit and the soul. Nothing but the Bible can do that. Misunderstanding on this subject abounds. Much error has been taught, even from the pulpit.

For years I studied the books used in various theological schools on the study of man in my search for the truth in this area. I studied the books taught by the Full Gospel Bible schools. I had the books used by the denomination which I had belonged to previously. But I found little satisfaction from all these. They were all based on the teachings of individuals and not on the Bible.

I talked to some of the most able Bible teachers in Full Gospel circles. I talked to some who had earned doctorate degrees in theology. It was surprising how little most of them knew on the subject of man's spirit, soul, and body.

Some have said to me, "I always thought the spirit and the soul were the same. I've always preached it that way." But I pointed out to them that they couldn't be the same. Otherwise why would the Bible say, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12)? If they were the same, they could not be divided. If they were the same, Paul would not have said, "... I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23).

It would be just as scriptural to say that the body and the soul are the same as it would be to say that the spirit and the soul are the same. In reality they are three very distinct things.

After much prayer and study over a long period of time I arrived at my conclusions on the three dimensions of man in this way. I knew without argument that with the physical body we contact the world. The body deals in the physical realm. No one will dispute that. Then, as I studied I saw that it is the spirit of man that contacts God, for God is a Spirit. Only a spirit could contact a spirit. The new birth is a rebirth of the human spirit, for Jesus told Nicodemus, ". . . . Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). Nicodemus, being natural, could only think naturally, so he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus answered, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Then I decided I would go through the entire New Testament, seeing what Paul and the other apostles said on this subject. I found where Paul said in Romans 2:28-29, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Paul was saying here that the spirit is the heart.

Then in I Corinthians 14:14 we read, "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth" The Amplified Translation reads, "My spirit (by the Holy Spirit within me prays" In Verse 18 Paul said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Paul used the terms "my spirit" and "I" interchangeably.

Having seen that with the body we contact the physical realm and with the spirit we contact the spiritual realm, that left only the soul to locate. Since the body deals with the physical realm and the spirit deals with the spiritual realm, that left only one other realm that man is involved in—the mental realm. So with the soul we contact the intellectual realm.

1) Spirit—The dimension of man which deals with the spiritual realm.
The part of man that knows God.

(2) Soul— The dimension of man which deals with the mental realm.
Man's intellect. The sensibilities and will. The part that reasons and
thinks.

(3) Body— The dimension of man which deals with the physical realm.
The house in which we live.

I want you to begin thinking of yourself in a new light. Don't think of
yourself as just a physical being. Think of yourself as a spirit being
who possesses a soul and lives in a body.

- Kenneth E Hagin (Man On Three Dimensions)
- Spiritual Notes