

Lifebytes:

33. Do You See As God Sees?



Restoration Ministries International

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Dear Friends,

Maybe you're like us—wondering how, with so many in this nation claiming to be “Christian”, the U.S. is in such moral decline. Part of the answer lies with those who are leading the multitudes of congregations that sprinkle every neighborhood. Jeremiah's lament rings sadly true today: *“The shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the LORD; so they do not prosper and all their flock is scattered”* (Jeremiah 10:21).

The people of Jeremiah's day who had been set apart to represent the one True God to the nations had instead been ‘scattered’ to the carnality of Baal and Asherah worship. Today, *Humanism* is the real god of many who call themselves “Christian”. Steeped in this anti-christ worldview which controls public education, people are encouraged to satisfy their sin nature and bury their conscience.

Some of the duped perceive the moral decline of this nation as a *political* problem. Christian organizations have been established to fight the decline on the political front. But the battle will never be won there! Nobody is listening.

*But they **did not listen or pay attention**; instead, they followed the **stubbornness of their evil hearts**. So I brought on them all the curses of the covenant I had commanded them to follow but that **they did not keep** (Jeremiah 11:8).*

Do you see, the root problem isn't political or even a matter of people against people. As we'll address in this Lifebyte, evil is *spiritual* and must be won on a *spiritual plane*. Your strategy begins with:

- you knowing *yourself* in spirit;
- you seeing *others* through your spirit;
- you having *God's wisdom* of what is

happening in the spiritual realm.

The Apostle Paul urges that *“we regard **no one from a worldly point of view**”* (2 Corinthians 5:16). That counsel is crucial if you and your family are to complete your pilgrimage to salvation *in the manner our Lord calls for*. One of the earthly snares for many who would follow Jesus is their failure to fully grasp how our heavenly Father perceives humanity.

God sees us first as spiritual beings. Upon our death, our Lord awaits the return of the spirit He gave each of us at conception. The homegoing of your spirit into His Presence is the true climax of your pilgrimage to your salvation:

Your spirit returns to your Maker.

Enroute to our salvation, the physical world and our interaction with that arena generally hinders our ability to see ourselves foremost as *spiritual* beings. Among these impediments is our eyes through which we obtain 89% of the information we receive. Our spiritual awareness is also bottlenecked by our **soul**, that is, our *mind, will and emotions*, through which we filter information from the physical world.

It's within your soul that your sin nature abides, that powerful force for evil that works to keep you from heaven. Your inherent sin nature influences you to rely on your soul's input. And, along with any spiritual strongholds you've tolerated and refused to demolish, your sin nature will oppose your being led by the Holy Spirit through your spirit.

As we've shared in our **Jesus In Your Home** video series and in the Hebraic article on the **Gospel of the Covenant**, when you embrace our Father's Covenant, He seals you with His Holy Spirit.

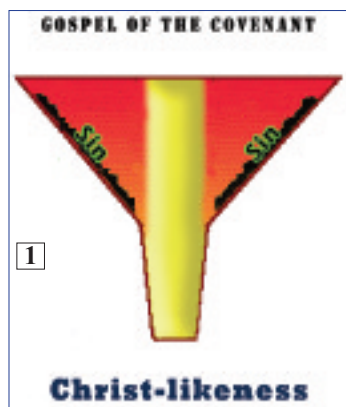
A battle is then set in motion over who or what will rule your soul: the Holy Spirit or your sin nature. Paul clearly details the nature of this internal warfare:

Those 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. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace...

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:5,6,12,13; see also Galatians 5:16,17).

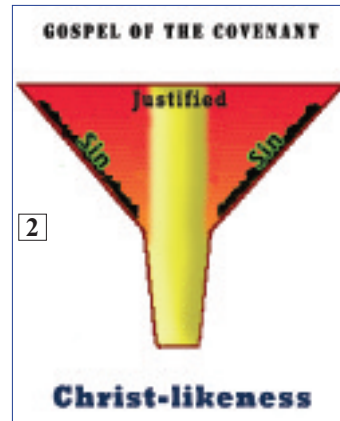
Do You Know Yourself in Spirit?

If you're a follower of Jesus, an important relational union is inside you: *The Holy Spirit and your spirit*. This element of immediate connection with God is the most important and overlooked relationship in Christendom. In 30 years of following Jesus, we've encountered very few who rely on the Spirit's presence within them. This is why we want to share this lesson with those of you who trust more in the influence of your sin nature-controlled soul than you do on your spirit-to-Spirit connection.



In the *Gospel of the Covenant* we share the image of a funnel which God gave Mike as a vision many years ago to explain why people weren't becoming more like Jesus [Diagram 1]. (For more on the funnel and its implications, see Segment 19 of *The Home* in our *Jesus In Your Home* video series.)

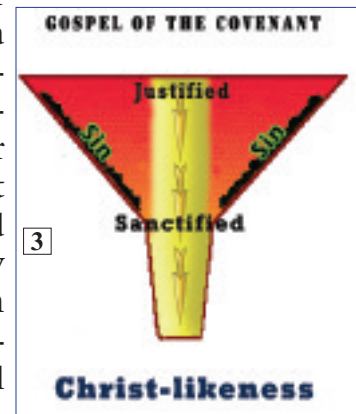
Let's review the funnel for the sake of our discussion in this Lifebyte:



When you embrace our Father's Covenant, you enter the funnel at the top. That's the moment when you're *justified* through the shed blood of Jesus. You begin your

pilgrimage to salvation [Diagram 2].

Your pilgrimage to salvation also entails being *sanctified* into Christ-likeness. This transformation is not only a character change. It's a process of relying ever-increasingly on your spirit-to-Spirit connection and pruning away your reliance on your sin nature-controlled soul [Diagram 3].



The truth behind this spiritual reality is vital for you to grip. As you can see, sin lurks on the sides of the funnel. Your sin nature would like nothing more than to lure you out of the center to cling to the sides in unconfessed sin [Diagram 4]. If you fail to repent, you remove yourself



from fellowship with God and stem your sanctification. In effect, while you may call yourself “Christian”, you’re not a follower of Jesus — you’ve chosen to forsake the light

to entertain darkness (see Matthew 5:14, 15; 2 Corinthians 6:14).

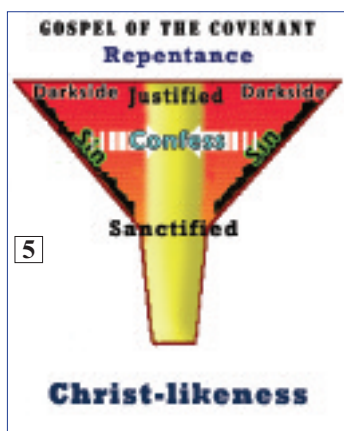
Your spiritual nature and intimate relationship with God have been altered through your sin and unrepentance. How do you change that condition and return to the center of the funnel to resume your pilgrimage downward into Christ-likeness? **YOU REPENT!!!**

Remember, confession is just the *beginning* of repentance. When you repent, you not only *turn away from* your past sins. You’re also transformed as your values and actions become aligned with God’s Word in obedient trust.

In the first step of repentance, your sin is forgiven when you respond to the Holy Spirit’s conviction and *confess it*. You turn away from your sin and turn toward God for forgiveness and reconciliation and fellowship through Jesus. This gets you to the center of the funnel.

Sanctification is the second part of repentance — replacing your sinful attitude or action with God’s way. In effect, you begin to do as Jesus would. You deliberately choose to make God’s command in that area part of your life as you yield to the Holy Spirit. Only in this way can Jesus’s command truly be implemented in your life: **“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance”** (Matthew 3:8).

Your growth in the nature of Jesus, that is, your sanctification, takes you down the funnel. As you journey down the stem to Christ-likeness in the Spirit, your fruitfulness for the Kingdom grows as you serve our Father’s purposes for your life.



Gross misunderstanding among many in today’s Christendom abounds over the nature of biblical repentance. We want to review **repentance, confession and sanctification** for you and your family

so that you may stay within the center of the funnel and progress downward [Diagram 5].

Let’s go back to the biblical definition of repentance. The Greek word *metanoia* means **a change of mind** — not just how you think, but your *entire heart and life* as the Spirit of God works in you. The process of repentance begins with your confession. The Greek word for confess, *homologeō*, means that **you agree with God that you have sinned against Him.**

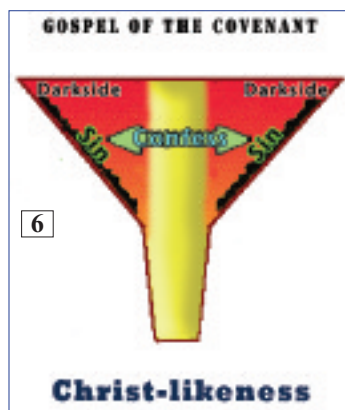
Again, the confession part of your repentance demonstrates that you agree with God that you have sinned. But that’s incomplete if you don’t *bear fruit*. Sanctification is the second part of repentance: your “change of mind about your sin” results in progressively acquiring the character of Jesus. This is what brings about spiritual fruit in your life as you’re transformed into the nature of Jesus by the spirit-to-Holy Spirit within you.

This process of change is often painful. In effect, it entails a lifelong

series of altar experiences in which you place your old, sin-nature-influenced habits and attitudes on God's altar. Every motive and behavior that's been developed through the influence of your sin nature must be put to death.

This is the only way the motive and character of Jesus can be instilled in you. And with each death to your sin nature, your life in Jesus grows and becomes more fruitful.

Just a final note about repentance: Many who call themselves Christian confess their sins but refuse to let themselves be sanctified [Diagram 6]. In reality, they stay at the same level along the funnel sides, just bouncing from one side to the other but making no progress down the funnel through obedient trust. What is God's perspective about them?



'They go from one sin to another; they do not acknowledge Me,' declares the LORD (Jeremiah 9:3).

Make sure your repentance includes replacing your sinful behaviors and attitudes with God's way. Earnestly cooperate with the Spirit to press on progressively to the bottom of the funnel in Christ-likeness.

- God sees you either as **righteous** or **unrighteous** depending on your repentance through Jesus.
- He sees you either **becoming more like Jesus** or **choosing to living in sin**.

- He sees you either **relying more and more on your spirit-to-Spirit relationship** or still being **controlled by your sin nature through your soul**.
- He sees you either **pressing on to complete your pilgrimage in heaven** or loving the things you see and value in this world and **choosing the broad road to hell's destruction**.

The choice is yours. Know yourself no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit—because the spirit is for eternity.

Do You See Other People Through Your Spirit?

What a wonderful blessing that the Holy Spirit enables you to see others through your spirit rather than from a worldly viewpoint!

If you're following Jesus, you walk according to His purposes in the spiritual giftings the Spirit has given you. Knowing and cooperating with the spiritual anointings of others strikes fear in the heart of Satan. Your cooperation with one another is synergistic as followers of Jesus *endeavor together* for the Kingdom through their gifting.

Please, if you haven't yet gone through our book, *God's Instruments For War* (a free download), we encourage you to not only identify your own gifts and use them, but also learn how to cooperate with the Spirit's power in other followers of Jesus in your relational sphere.

There's such beauty when a marriage is perceived on a *spiritual* level (as well as all the other dimensions!) as the giftings of each spouse are fully utilized. On the other hand, we've seen a lot of unnecessary frustration when the Spirit in either spouse is quenched.

Keep in mind that you can also know people in the spirit through the *demonic* side of the spirit world. Followers of Jesus who have demolished their strongholds can hear through their spirit the strongholds that influence other people.

Strongholds develop in the soul. Along with the sin nature unclean spirits do all they can to keep you from pursuing Christ-likeness in love-grounded obedient trust. The ultimate goal of these demons is to prevent your spirit from ever getting back to your Creator.

If you rely on your soul (your mind, will and emotions) for establishing your faith practice or any other guidance, rather than your spirit, heed this warning:

*See to it that no one **takes you captive** through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on **human tradition and the basic principles of this world** rather than on Christ (Colossians 2:8).*

If you're following Jesus as a person of the Spirit, you're not able to share biblical fellowship with those who rely on their soul. While you can make yourself available to show His love and concern, don't be deceived into thinking that you're fellowshiping with them. There's a shared spirit-to-Spirit dimension of fellowship with God and His own that's set apart from the sin-based soul. Be very discerning about those with whom you extend fellowship!

Those who rely on their soul and *refuse sanctification* into Christ-likeness are lovers of the "Darkside" [Diagram 7]. John grieves over such people: "*And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil*" (John 3:19).

Anyone can call themselves a "Christian". But those who are captive to Satan live in darkness.

Their sin nature-controlled soul rules their mind, will and emotions. You can

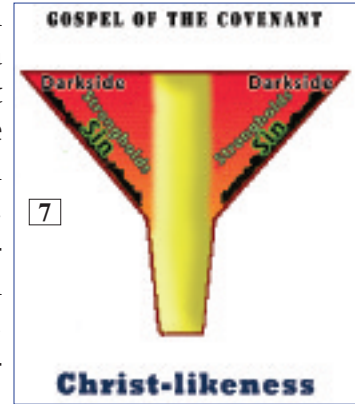
recognize who they are because they *can't understand* you. Paul aptly addresses this point:

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:13,14).

Unbelievers as well as self-described "Christians" who live as unbelievers do are used by Satan to accomplish his nefarious schemes. Paul yearns that they might "*come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will*" (2 Timothy 2:26).

Satan uses unrepentance and tolerated spiritual strongholds to hold people captive, even those who consider themselves "Christian". The enemy of your soul snickers when you extend "fellowship" to those he has under his control and influence. It makes his intent to seduce you into sin all the easier.

We shared a revealing observation in our book, *Demolishing Strongholds*:



When the stronghold list was given out to congregations, most people who attended had the same prevailing strongholds. When we've used the list in businesses, many of the key employees have identified the same predominant strongholds.

In effect, it is not the people but the *spirits in the strongholds* which are controlling the goals, methods and values of families, congregations and businesses. (We're uncertain how this occurs, but the data are overwhelming.) Again, the symptoms may seem different on the surface, but the stronghold behind the symptoms is often the same.

Groups of Christians who are influenced and/or controlled by the same strongholds are unwittingly used by Satan to accomplish his will. Finding comfortable compatibility with their shared familiar spirit(s), many even establish house churches or find themselves in the same congregation.

In his insightful book, *Piercing the Darkness*, Frank Peretti chronicles a pastor who is under demonic attack on several fronts. One day while standing near the fence in the field behind his home, this beleaguered man is given a bit of wisdom from God. Spotting prairie dog holes in pastures on both sides of the fence, he suddenly realizes that the holes have been made by the *same prairie dogs*.

It's at this time the man connects that these attacks on him and his family are *not* disconnected and separate, but *satanically coordinated*.

The two of us have experienced coordinated assault on many occasions. Most often, when we're pursuing an assignment our Lord has given us to do, several different, seemingly-unrelated sources attack us or try to hinder or discourage us from completing His task.

Through strongholds the devil spiritually links the half-hearted or disobedient to accomplish his evil agenda.

Don't be a willing party to this dark coupling. It's essential for your spiritual freedom that you and your family remain free of spiritual strongholds in your soul.

Steer clear of "pseudo-believers" the devil has under his control, and make sure you're "clean" and in the center of the funnel. Stay repentant, and demolish any strongholds you may have allowed in your soul. The only voice you want to hear within is the Holy Spirit!

When fortresses of demonic influence—strongholds—have been built in your mind, will, and emotions, your intimacy with our Lord and with others crumbles. Your:

HEARING from God is altered;
BELIEF in God is shaken;
DESIRES are distorted;
ACTIONS are disobedient;
RELATIONSHIPS are debased.

Remember your spiritual marching orders! "*We **demolish** arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we **take captive every thought** to make it obedient to Christ*" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Staying free of strongholds and bringing every thought of yours into obedience to Jesus is your personal responsibility. NOBODY is going to do this for you. Practice asking yourself: Is this a thought, word or deed that Jesus would entertain? If not, take it captive and follow His way.

Remember this evil pattern of stronghold development:

- 1) Satanic-inspired **THOUGHTS** are introduced into your mind.
- 2) Entertaining these thoughts brings on **EMOTIONS**.
- 3) Giving in to emotions eventually leads to taking some sort of **ACTION**.
- 4) Continual participation in this behavior causes you to develop a **HABIT**.
- 5) Once a habit is developed, a **STRONGHOLD** is built by that indwelling spirit.

The Bible draws a line of demarcation that distinguishes followers of Jesus who enjoy fellowship with God and remain in the middle of the funnel, and ALL others. Make sure you're confident of this spiritual distinction and live by it. Your pilgrimage is impacted by the fellowship you keep. Don't lose sight that:

Those in the center of the funnel help each other press downward in the funnel into Christ-likeness. Confession and sanctification enable you to progress downward. Those on the sides are bent on evil, and they're looking for company. Unrepentance and strongholds makes you one of them.

The entire progression of your relationships need to be built on, and connected by, the Holy Spirit. As in the **Restoration Diagram** our Lord impressed on our hearts, your relational priorities begin with our Father and Jesus and flow outward into the next levels.

Personal and communal righteousness cements these relationships together. And sadly, darkness at any level hurts all the others.



Do You Know What Is Going On In The Spiritual Realm?

One of the strongest ties that links you and Satan is *deceit*. Keep this in mind as you read the next two passages. In the first, Jesus rebukes those who were wrongly convinced they were serving God. Our Lord, however, makes very clear the source of their allegiance:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

If you're a person who trusts the strength of your mind, will and emotions more than your spirit-to-Spirit connection, God has this word for you:

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9).

It's all too easy to give way to the world's pattern of evaluation and decision making. But you can never truly understand God's ways in the world around you unless you learn through your spirit via the Holy Spirit. HE is the source for wisdom. And, God's wisdom means that you see everything around you from His vantage point.

If His vantage point isn't a way of life for you, then you're screening what you believe through a deceitful heart. In other words, you'll believe that which the Deceiver wants you to—and that isn't good! At the very least, you'll find yourself trapped on the sides of the funnel or crawling completely out of it.

One of Satan's greatest achievements in Christendom is to entice people to bear resentment, bitterness and hatred toward others. In fact, in one major denomination the most common shared bond is *bitterness*—yet many either rationalize it or deny its obvious influence.

You **MUST** safeguard yourself and your family from any type of ill-feeling toward any other human.

EVERY person is made in God's image, and Jesus loved each one enough to die for them.

You need to see the ones who frustrate or mock or torment you as Jesus sees them, through eyes of holy, longing love. Especially in the decadent and depraved world around us Paul makes plain that we can never be *against anyone*, for each has been made in the image of God and is someone for whom Jesus died:

*For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the **spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms** (Ephesians 6:12).*

Do you perceive the *invisible nature* of the spiritual war for the souls of mankind that's raging around us? In fact, the more deeply you hunger to follow Jesus, the more stridently you encounter skirmishes being waged against *you*. But spiritual warfare comes in response to your devotion to Jesus. Yet, your ultimate responsibility is not to win the war but to become more like your Master.

Some things for you to consider in your spirit:

1. Many who are prophetically gifted

have warned for decades that the spiritual strongman that controls Washington, D.C.—the seat of our nation's government—is **Deceit**. Lie upon lie and cover-up after cover-up keeps Satan's worldly institutions in power. And, as the enemy of righteousness boasted to Jesus, all governments of this earth are indeed his to influence (Matthew 4:8,9).

Be careful where you place your allegiance! It's one thing to be an upright citizen. That's commanded in the Bible. But we do so because of obedience to God and His Word, not because of misguided loyalty to worldly systems under Satan's sway.

2. Yes, militant Muslims are going to continue to hate and to kill because Satan controls them. Their "Allah" is an antichrist spirit that has little regard for human life. Our persecuted brothers and sisters in Muslim-dominated countries know this all too well.

3. And yes, the Humanists who now control public education care nothing about God. The worship of man's intellect and accomplishments feeds their sin nature and is, in truth, their god.

There are many others who oppose our Lord Jesus and hate His followers. But you and your family can't hold onto an ill-feeling toward anyone and still follow in His steps! The only solution is for you to become more like Him. You must earnestly seek to love as our Lord Jesus loves. **Forgiveness** and **love** go hand-in-hand.

The only way for you to grow in both forgiveness and love begins with you remaining repentant, that is, willing to confess sin and pursue sanctification. Persevere in these spiritual truths. Concentrate more on that which our Lord wants to change in you than worrying

about the intensifying evil around you.

We need to become the Daniels, Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednagos of our day and stand as light in an oppressive world.

An excellent visual reminder of what love can bring about is the astonishing true story, *The End Of The Spear*. Read the account by Steve Saint, son of Nate Saint who was martyred 50 years ago in Ecuador, or see the movie.

Also, study and discuss the lives of martyrs of all times with your family. Help their hearts yearn for that kind of wholehearted devotion to *go anywhere* and *do anything* for our Lord's sake. The time is rapidly coming on the United States when this good account will be our pledge of allegiance:

“They overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death”

(Revelation 12:11).

