arise from their associations with the world, other human beings, and God, he came to believe that man consists not of two parts, but three. Besides body and soul, Paul saw that man had a third element, the spirit, which further distinguishes him from the animal world. Paul mentions these three elements in 1 Thess. 5:23. The idea that soul and spirit are separate entities is confirmed by the Hebrew writer: “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

It was Paul’s belief that the spirit controls human thoughts and emotions and is the link between man and God. Human beings share physical life with the animals, but it is through the spirit that God can speak to believers and that they can have fellowship and communion with God.

In his widely-acclaimed book, *Flesh and Spirit*, William Barclay describes for us Paul’s view of the human spirit. According to Barclay, Paul understood the spirit as that part of man which is implanted in him by God. Through this spirit, God’s presence and power are revealed, and man becomes capable of fellowship with God.

This spiritual union of God and man is described most clearly in Paul’s passage about the Holy Spirit and the spirit of man in Rom. 8:1-17. Without the Spirit of Christ, it is not possible to become a Christian (verse 9). It is the Spirit who makes believers children of God (verse 14) and who assures them that they are God’s children (verse 16). For Christians, the Spirit must be the law of their lives, their director, the standard by which they judge all things, the person whose gifts they most desire (verses 4, 5, 9). The Spirit brings them certain great gifts such as liberation from the law of sin and death (verse 2) and peace (verse 6). The Spirit brings them victory in the warfare of the soul. The Spirit brings them life. Their mortal bodies become alive with the life of Christ (verse 11). The Spirit brings them power (verse 13) and enables them to put to death the deeds of the body. The Spirit brings about their adoption as children and heirs of God (verses 16-17).

The Spirit-filled Life

It is important to know whether the Spirit of God is a natural and permanent part of man or if this Spirit is imparted at a particular time in a believer’s life. Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit, as a “gift,” is bestowed upon obedient believers at baptism (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19), and is thereafter a continuing presence in their lives. In speaking to Nicodemus of the new birth, Jesus said, “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again’” (John 3:6).

4

**Goodness**

Text: Psalm 107

1. How do verses 1-3 introduce the major themes of the entire psalm?

2. The psalmist gives four illustrations of God’s goodness in verses 4-9, 10-16, 17-22 and 23-32. What do each of these illustrations have in common?

3. What needs do the people have in each of these sections?

4. Which of these needs do you most relate to? (For example, we might experience the imprisonment of an addiction.)

5. Notice that in each situation the people call out to God for help. Is this usually your first reaction when you find yourself in distress? If not, what is?

6. Repeatedly the psalmist urges those who have been delivered to “give thanks to the Lord.” Why do we need to be reminded of this?

7. According to the psalmist, what are some ways we should give thanks to God for his goodness and love (vv. 22, 23)?

8. What do verses 33-42 reveal about the ups and downs of life?

9. The psalmist concludes in verse 43: “Whoever is wise, let him heed these things.” What things does he want us to heed?

10. How does seeing God answer the people’s cry for help in this passage make the fruit of goodness more real to you?

11. In what ways can we imitate the goodness of God displayed in this psalm?

*Thank God for his goodness and unfailing love. Ask him to help you develop the fruit of goodness in your life.*

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